



*We see the world clearly when we are children and then spend the rest of our lives trying to remember what we saw. G.Keillor*

## **For Arts Sake: The What, Why, How of Process Art**

You need not be an art specialist to provide art materials and watch children create. There simply has to be a desire to let children freely explore, knowing there is no right or wrong way to express themselves.

Many years ago, when I was a classroom teacher, I had no training in making art with young children. I did know about process vs. product and did not understand why every child was guided to make the same thing. When I saw the finished 'products' lined up, above children's eye level, I came to see this as 'parent pleasers'. Now some 40+ years later, I still see this and feel like I am back in the 1950's. I recently watched a young teacher, so eager for the end product, finish a child's painting. I was horrified.

After presenting workshops for several decades, this is my first time with art. I put it off, as there is a lot to lug around and, of course; the mess. But as I see many adults not comfortable with 'art', and many children being denied this passage of their development, I felt it important to give it a try; just as I hope you will. My goal is that you will forget your pre-conceived ideas, let it go and leave any expectations at your classroom.

When you get beyond not having absolute control and see the wonder and joy this brings, you will witness first hand what comes naturally to young children. Process art is simply, about making art, whatever that may be. It's not crafts, it is just art. Often, teachers and care providers have a problem with this. It can be messy, adults are not in charge, there may not be any 'parent pleasers' to bring home and it might require more clean up time.

Some children will jump right in, others will observe, or ignore the materials. That's ok. For children to get the most out of the experience it's in their best interest to allow them time and space to explore without our verbal input or modeling. They need to approach the materials in their own way. We simply observe, replenish materials & help with clean up as needed. I do not recommend smocks, as they tend to inhibit children. Invest in good washable materials.

It is best to not hover and instruct. If you desire to comment, instead of telling them 'good job' or ask what they have made or tell them 'I like your painting', you might talk about what you see, how colors blend, how did you do make lines go this way or that, or I can see you worked a long time.

Give it a try. I'm guessing you will not regret it. The children will thank you in countless ways.

*Go forth. Be artful and playful.*

## **What is Process Art & Why Is It Important Listen to the Experts**

**Tips for Reluctant Grown-Ups  
See Website Workshop Handouts Activities Page**

### **Benefits**

Impacts learning and fine motor skills-gross motor skills-coordination-sensory exploration-literacy math-science-language-art history-creativity and self-expression-art techniques-risk-taking-spatial reasoning

#### Language

Opportunities for language stimulation, from building vocabulary to sequencing and storytelling all the way to critical thinking and reasoning. Open-ended art activities allow you to follow the child's lead during the process, encouraging spontaneous speech. Also learning new ways to express thoughts and ideas, building connections that support linguistic and cognition.

#### Cognitive

Process art promotes cognitive development by allowing young children the opportunity to practice skills that are critical for learning and processing information. Freedom to experiment with different materials and figure out how to make them work together teaches cause and effect reasoning, problem solving, and imagination. Important skills to generalize and organize the academic knowledge acquired as get older.

#### Fine & Gross Motor

Manipulating art mediums and tools encourage fine motor development, important for adaptive (daily living) Fine motor skills important precursors to handwriting. Large scale process art activities, "big art" or "active art," encouraging gross (large) motor movements

#### Social and Emotional

Exploring process art activities in a group setting encourages social skill development. exploring art, friendships and relationships. Open-ended art activities confidence builder in young children- when they feel pride in something they conceptualized and created from start to finish, it helps boost their self-image.

*Source: Stephanie of Twodaloo*

## What is creativity?

- It's a sense of freedom to think, sense of freedom play, come up w new ideas, new ways to do things.
- It's that freedom to do it makes creativity hum & pop.
- Creativity happens all day long for children.
- Need to encourage, value it, respect it, give permission. ok to be creative
- Permission saying... I believe in your thoughts, I respect you, want to know what's inside you, what new ideas you have, what new ways to do things that you may have in your life.
- All children are born creative. Able to think of new ideas, play, explore & experiment.
- Every child is creative but if not encouraged, fall away, lose ability to think creatively. Think can only do what's right or wrong

*MaryAnn F. Kohl*

## Resources

<http://www.learnplayimagine.com/2012/10/the-importance-of-process-art-for.html>

<http://prekandksharing.blogspot.com/2012/02/making-transition-from-product-to.html>

<http://prekandksharing.blogspot.com.au/2012/02/childrens-art-process-versus-product.html>

<http://www.two-daloo.com/building-language-with-art/>

<http://tinkerlab.com/what-do-you-wish-you-had-known-about-making-art-with-children/>

<http://www.mericherry.com/2014/01/11/process-art-for-kids-its-no-mess/>

## Books

Time to Create Hands-On Explorations in Process Art for Young Children-  
Christie Burnett

Preschool Art: It's the Process, Not the Product-MaryAnn F. Kohl

Art Lab for Little Kids: 53 Playful Projects for Preschoolers- Susan Schwake

The Artful Parent-Jean Van't Hul

