

Approaches to Learning/Creative Arts

<https://www.easternct.edu/center-for-early-childhood-education/reflections-from-the-field/following-childrens-interests.html>

Teacher Ideas

- Thinking outside the box, problem solving and imagining. Freedom to experiment and make mistakes.
- Being aware of children's temperaments/learning styles, internal and external distractibility and their attentions spans.
- Modeling how to persist with **positive self-talk**.
- Observing and waiting before offering help see if children persist or decide for themselves to ask for help. Pose questions like: "Can you tell me what you're trying to do?" and "What have you tried so far?"
- Breaking down tasks: "You want to draw a dog? I wonder what shape its body could be."
- Using language like, "You kept trying and you did it!" and "I wonder if there is another way we could..."
- Be flexible with how children use materials.
- Teachers might feel that "product" art will reflect their skills in teaching children to follow directions. There are other opportunities to help them learn that skill.

Materials

- Recycled materials (large and small boxes, paper towel tubes) for constructing.
- Clay or colored beeswax for molding.
- In the block area, provide paper and pencils for drawing and planning.
- Natural materials indoors (painting with pinecones and pine needles).
- Bundles of big crayons (2, 3, 4) held together with rubber bands.
- "Outside bucket" of art materials. Easel outdoors.
- Tinkering table with loose parts.
- Hang pots and pans outdoors with homemade mallets.
- Spray bottle art using diluted washable paint and a big sheet of paper outdoors so that a few children can work together.

Art Talk: Children to describe artwork in their own words. *"Tell me about your painting"*
Introduce vocabulary and show techniques. *"With this palette, we can mix colors."*

Music/Movement/Dramatic Play

Homemade Instruments

- Plastic eggs filled with sand and taped.
- Oatmeal boxes with dowels for drumming (some wrapped in cotton).
- Sandpaper of different grits glued to unit blocks.
- Jingle bells on bracelet material.
- Paper plate shakers/Rubber band banjos.
- Paper straw “pan pipes”.
- Singing a book: *Down by the Bay* by Raffi
- Yoga as a group.
- Take dictation of children’s stories and act them out.
- Puppets available for children and to help teachers model problem solving.
- Bring props for dramatic play outdoors.
- Props for enacting books we’ve read. Children help decide what we need.

An Open Letter About the Creative Arts, Play and Learning

Dear Families:

These are some of the skills your child is practicing when engaged in open-ended art activities:

- Visual-motor skills (grasp, strength, control)
- Pre-writing skills (symbol awareness)
- Self-expression and communication of ideas
- Persistence
- Self-confidence

We support the interests of each child through hands-on and play experiences. We believe that your child will discover and learn by making choices to work through an activity, rather than being told exactly how to accomplish a task.

If we show children how to complete a project (and they all look the same) we will not be learning what is unique about your child or how we can plan experiences that build on his/her skills. With this process-oriented approach, you will find that no two art projects will look exactly the same.

