



## **Creative Art With Young Children... It's the process not the product!**

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### **OK OK so just what does “process not product” REALLY mean???**

- ♥ It means NOT having bulletin boards covered with 24 identical penguins and you saying, “But I let them glue the eyes wherever they wanted.”
- ♥ It means not “making” the kids do art
- ♥ It means having H-U-G-E sheets of paper available
- ♥ It means seeing the possibility of painting with things other than brushes
- ♥ It means no more dittos, patterns and cut out art
- ♥ It means that a copy machine is NOT required
- ♥ It means it doesn't have to look like anything. Ever. Even if it is “fish week”
- ♥ It means being aware of the stages of scribbling (samples on the next page!) as identified by Rhoda Kellogg
- ♥ It means not making models or examples for the children
- ♥ It means not drawing for the child
- ♥ It means refraining from over commenting

#### **A nice rule of thumb:**

**If it takes YOU longer to get it ready than it takes THEM to do it....**

**Chances are it is NOT process oriented art!**

### **A FEW MORE MORE CREATIVE SUGGESTIONS**

Always ask a child if he or she wants his/her name on the paper. If they say YES, ask them “WHERE do you want your name?” Write it wherever they indicate! If the child says, “I can write my own name”, give them the pen. If a child says “I DON'T want my name on my paper” let it alone. **And don't sneak back and write it when they aren't looking.** Children know their work and will keep it if they want it.

Resist the urge to say WHAT IS IT? Resist the urge to really SAY anything about their work/art. If a child comes running to you saying LOOK LOOK LOOK! Then do just that - look look look!! The child did not say look look look *and comment*.

If a child asks, **“DO YOU LIKE MY PAINTING?”** Put the question back to them and ask, “Do *you* like your painting?” Then you can be clever and turn the paper around, upside down, or 45° and say, “How ‘bout when I hold it this way? Or this way?” “Lay down and tell me if you like it better when I hold it over you.”

After a child has indicated that they are finished “working” or painting, creating, printing, coloring, etc. say, “Can I get you more paper?” or “Do you need some more paint?”. Get donated paper from your local newspaper or printer.

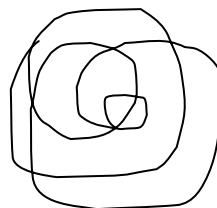
Never make models for the children to copy. Avoid ditto sheets, cookie cutter art, coloring books, cut & paste projects and pattern art AT ALL COSTS! Give the children an area to work at that is filled with the materials they need like: coloring markers, chalk, crayons, glue, scissors, paper, masking tape, hole punch, envelopes and sticky dots - - the loose parts of art!

If you must sit to “work” with the children, although I do not recommend it, use your non-dominant hand and copy what the children are doing! Let them lead you, otherwise they will all copy you and without realizing it you have made a model and an example for them to try to copy. Inadvertently you have shown them a “right” way to make something. They will begin comparing their skill level to yours and to each other. Not only does this create competition, it also creates frustration and dissatisfaction.

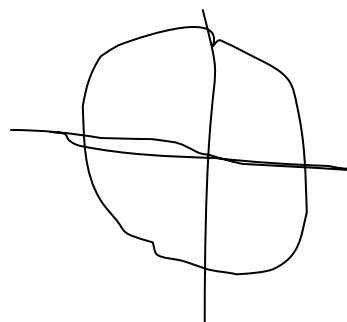
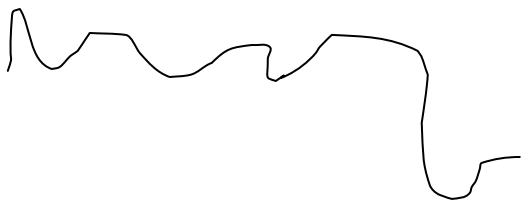
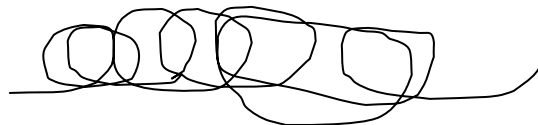
**IF THE PARENTS COME IN, LOOK AT THE BULLETIN BOARD AND WHISPER IN YOUR EAR, “WHAT IS IT?” YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK!**

**THEIR ART WILL NOT AND SHOULD NOT “LOOK LIKE SOMETHING”!**

*Did you know there are 80 Stages of Scribbling before they can WRITE!??*



This is what a few of them look like!



## **RED PAINT IN THE HAIR??!!**

Red paint in the hair? Blue paint on the jeans? Sand in the shoes? Peanut butter on the favorite shirt? White socks that look brown? Sleeves a little bit damp?

### Your child probably. . .

Worked with a friend

Solved a problem

Created a masterpiece

Learned a new skill

Had a great time

Developed new language

### You probably. . .

Paid good money for the clothes

Will have trouble getting the red paint out

Are wondering if your caregiver isn't paying close enough attention to your child

### Your caregiver probably. . .

Was aware of your child's needs and interests

Spent time planning a challenging activity for the children

Encouraged the children to try new things

Made smocks available for the children

Was worried you might be concerned

Try to remember your favorite activity when you were four years old. Was it outdoor play with water, mud dress-up clothes? Young children really learn when they are actively involved in play – not when someone is talking to them. There is a difference between “messy” and “lack of supervision”. The caregiver made sure your child was fed, warm, took a nap, washed hands after toileting and before eating, and planned messy fun things to do because that is how young children learn! Send your child to school in clothes that can get dirty! Keep extra old clothes at the play site for times when the child gets really wet or messy. If you need to take the child out, bring the dressier clothes when picking up, and allow time to change. Keep calm. Remember in a few years the teenagers will use the shampoo, mirrors and all the towels! Young children need time to be kids. If you have concerns talk to your child's caregiver about active play!

*Taken from the YMCA/CRS Newsletter, Summer 1996, who gave credit to OPTIONS Summer 1995 Newsletter*



## Tips for facilitating Process Oriented Art Activities

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**Develop a creation station.** Provide a place where the kids can engage in what I call “free flow art”. Have available (at all times) glue, scissors, markers, crayons, recycled paper, making tape, hole punchers, etc.

**Allow the easel to be available everyday all day.** Bring the easel outside, put it in the garage, on the driveway, out on the playground, on the grass, have one inside too. Have huge sheets of paper and a few cups of paint. Have a drying rack close by and resist the urge to write the child’s name, date, age and medium all over the paper. Remember that an easel does NOT have to be from an educational store... paper taped to a wall is an “easel”.

In addition to the creation station mentioned in Tip #1, **have additional art going on** too. Plan to do plunger prints, marble painting or crayon melting that day too.

**Children must be wearing PLAY CLOTHES!** Clothes will get painty, messy, sticky and dirty. This is OK! School is not a fashion show! You need to know that teachers don’t say to your children, “Hey! Let’s paint our belly buttons!” However, when children do *do* this (and they will), your child is better off with a caring, loving, supportive teacher who facilitates the experience than with someone whose first response is STOP THAT!

## ***A tip from the ooey gooey lady***

### **BABY GAP SYNDROME**

Don't you wish you had a dollar for every time you have said, "Please send your child to school in clothes you don't care about!" We can encourage, demand, threaten, bribe, write notes home, scream, post signs and tell parents until we are blue in the face about the importance of wearing "play clothes" to school, but to no avail! It is frustrating to feel like our words are ignored, and even more so when, after all our efforts and insistence, the children still come to school suffering from what I call, "baby gap syndrome".

And it affects the children the worst - over the years I have seen children cry because they got a little bit of paint on their shirt, have witnessed emotional breakdowns on the play yard because mud was on the new sneakers, had children tell me to throw their "dirty shirt" away so mama won't get mad and have had children bound into school announcing that they aren't allowed to paint anymore because it "ruins my clothes". I have seen children proudly drag their parents out onto the yard to show off the tree forts, castles and mud houses they spent all day building and creating, designing and painting only to be asked, "Why are you so dirty?", or be told, with a heavy sign, "Oh no...there's paint on your new shirt!"

What kinds of messages are being sent to the children when there is so much emphasis on their clothes and shoes? Can the shirt really be more important than the opportunity to engage in a new creative experience? If it is, then it is a shirt that does not belong in preschool. I actually had a child come to school once wearing a green, crushed silk, flower girl dress...and her tap shoes! Like you, I have really struggled with this over the years.

What are we to do?

We tell our families, "Send them in clothes you don't care about!" and then I show a slide show of the children "in action" and they immediately understand why! I met a director who tells parents, "If your child doesn't get dirty at school, then we aren't doing our job!".

Another friend who provides family childcare tells all her new clients, “I guarantee I will ruin their clothes!” And a colleague who teaches preschool tells her families, “If you want the children to be able to wear it in public again, don’t send it here!” The reason I like to show parents the slide show is so that they can then see for themselves what the children are doing. They can witness the creative process first hand! I have discovered that parents sometimes have a misconception that their children are getting dirty because teachers are not paying attention. Slide shows, short video clips and photographs are tools for educating the parents not only on the creative process, but also of your involvement and investment in the activity as well.

Educators and providers need to be able to verbalize why creative art and other kinds of messy play is important and be able to identify for the parents the skills that are being developed as the children are engaged in these experiences. Remember that the parents aren’t there during the day to see the creativity, cooperation and process first hand; all they might see is the red paint in the hair and the glue on the jeans.

At our schoolhouse the children are not made to wear smocks. We use washable paint for all projects and, at orientation, parents are informed of the high level of creativity we encourage at our school and as such, are required to have lots and lots of extra clothes in their child’s cubby. Knowing that having lots of extras can be taxing for some families, there is also a big tub of clothes I have accumulated over the years at garage sales and consignment shops that children can “borrow” if they run out of extras.

Through parent workshops, parent meetings, articles about hands-on, creative messy play, a back to school orientation and well-written contracts and parent handbooks, you can begin to battle baby gap syndrome.



## How to get free paper!

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Call a local architect and ask for a donation of recycled **blueprints**.

Call your local newspaper, community paper, penny saver publication, ect, and ask, “When is **end-roll** pick up day?” The end roll of newspaper paper is too small for the large machines but is still a lot of paper for your class!

Call the local print shop and ask about **poster board or/and cardstock end-rolls**, again, like the newspaper rolls, it’s too small for the machines but lots of paper for you!

While on the phone with the print shop, ask if they generate large amount of **scrap cardstock or poster board** from custom projects. If so, ask if you can haul that away too for them.

Every December we haunt the local office supply stores, stationery stores, Staples, Office Max and Office Depots for **desk calendars** that are about to expire.

**Recycled newspaper** is an excellent form of art paper! As grown ups we might want new clean crisp white paper but the children will paint and create on any surface... offer newspaper at the easels to vary the kind of paper used for art projects.

Know a photographer? They often use long sheets of bulletin board style **colored butcher paper** on photo shoots. The paper gets wrinkled and then they can’t use it again. But you can!



## **Favorite Art Projects:**

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Art Spinners	Nose Painting
Bath Puffs	Nylons filled with popcorn
Berry Baskets	Plungers Prints
Bubble wrap prints	Q-tip painting
Car Tracks	Record Player Spin Art
Colored glue designs	Roll the painty ball down the slide
Crayon Melting	Roller brushes
Doggie Toys	Rollerbrush flashlights
Equal parts of flour, salt and water	Rubberband Brushes
Fish Prints	Shaving Cream Color Transfer
Glitter and Glue	Shoe Painting
Golf Ball Painting	Squeegie Prints
Hat Painting	Squirt Bottles
Koosh Ball Painting	Straw Blowing Designs
Lego Prints	Swinging on your tummy
Lipstick Kisses	Tile Print Blocks
Magnet painting	Toothbrushes
Massage Tools	Under the table coloring
Monoprints	Wig Painting