



# Art, Literacy and Learning

**Anna Reyner, MA**

Art Therapist / LMFT  
art@annareyner.com  
310 497-2303

**Creative Play LA**

Art Therapy & Sensory Play  
Workshops & Resources  
www.CreativePlayLA.com

**A**RT activities are some of the best ways to promote literacy and brain development in early childhood. Early childhood is an especially important time for hands-on, self-directed learning. Art engages children's senses in open-ended play and develops cognitive, social-emotional and multi-sensory skills. Meaningful art experiences provide children with authentic self-expression—the freedom of choice, thought and feeling.

## The Synergy Between Art and Literacy

**Spatial Relations/Visual Literacy:** Art promotes print awareness and the ability to differentiate scribbles, markings and shapes—as well as directionality and position.

**Eye/Hand/Brain Coordination:** Art promotes the ability to interpret visual information, alter that information and respond to a continuous flow of new information being sent from eye to hand to brain.

**Verbal Creativity:** Combining literacy and art activities allows children to expand their oral communication skills and learn a wide range of sensory-rich vocabulary words.

**Visual Creativity:** Combining literacy and art experiences allows children to represent their ideas and feelings visually, and enhances imagination, visual language, and spatial relations skills.

**Aesthetics:** Combining literacy and art allows children to have daily opportunities for aesthetic expression.

**Self-Esteem:** Self-esteem is enhanced when children's emerging literacy skills and art explorations are valued and respected.

## Developmental Goals of Art

### Physical Development

1. Fine-motor development
2. Visual/perceptual development
3. Eye/hand/brain coordination
4. Spatial awareness

### Cognitive Development

1. Decision making skills
2. Problem solving skills
3. Cause and effect understanding
4. Non-verbal communication

### Social Development

1. Social and oral language skills
2. Sharing materials and taking turns
3. Respect for own work and work of others
4. Multicultural awareness

### Emotional Development

1. Independence in making choices
2. Creative self-expression
3. Sensory pleasure and satisfaction
4. Self-esteem



## Practical Ideas for Your Classroom

- Create a rich literacy environment by putting books, print materials and writing materials in all areas.
- Organize field trips to libraries and post offices, so children can experience real-world literacy concepts.
- Organize field trips to local artists' studios, and expose children to real artists at work in their community.
- Provide visual stimulation with pictures, photos, art posters and children's art throughout the classroom.
- Combine art and language activities to create books, posters, charts and dramatic play/storytelling props.
- Introduce a wide variety of art experiences, such as construction, collage, drawing, fingerpainting, modeling, outdoor art, group mural painting, watercoloring, printmaking, stitchery, sculpting.

