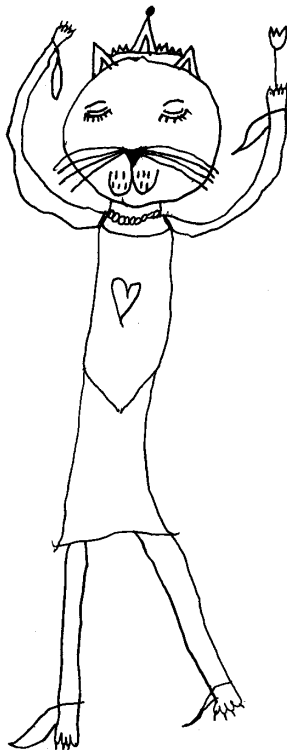


Developing a Creative Art Program that Helps Children Grow

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Creative Play LA / Art Therapy & Sensory Play Workshops

Ten simple steps to get your arts program off the ground and flying high.



How do you develop a good program? How can you improve an already creative program?

Here are some ideas:

1) Offer lots of variety. Different materials teach different skills. Offer a wide range of materials including paints, clays, collage, crafts, woodwork and any other art materials you can find or purchase. Change the types of materials often. Offer both art projects and craft projects. Separate arts from crafts and know the difference.

2) Develop an enrichment vocabulary and use it. When parents comment on the arts and crafts their children make with you, speak to the parents about what their child learned while making the craft. Use words that show you know about the educational value of arts and crafts—and help parents learn these concepts too.

3) Fix up your art area. Make the room or area look creative and inspiring

4) Call your art area something “jazzy.” Call it something with PIZAZZ—something with SPIRIT. “Arts and Crafts” sounds “static,” not dynamic or exciting. Create a new image for your facility’s art program by inventing a new name for your art area. Put up a big sign with lots of wild colors and imagination to it—and promote your new image by having fun with it. Here are some starter ideas for names:

Creation Station

The Creativity Zone

Imagination Arts

“Make-It-Fun” Activity Center

Center for Arts and Discovery

Imagination Exploration Zone

5) Train your staff on the value of arts and crafts. Give them hand-outs, and make creativity handouts required reading. Encourage staff to select a creative art activity which they either invent or select from a resource book—and present that craft to others at a staff meeting. Discuss arts and crafts when you interview recreation leaders or child care staff.

6) Display kids’ art. On the walls, in display cases, anywhere you can.

7) Dedicate a bulletin board to “Creativity.” Collect magazine articles on creative arts and crafts ideas—and the value of creativity—and post them near your art area for kids, parents and staff to see. Encourage everyone to add new articles to this board.

8) Do a regular inventory of your arts and crafts supplies. Have this on someone’s job description. Restock arts and crafts supplies monthly or quarterly. Plan ahead. Order lots of variety in your supplies.

9) Let staff know that arts and crafts are a vital part of their job. Encourage staff to put active energy into craft sessions and take an active approach to working with kids. Let them know that inspiring creativity in the artroom is an important part of their jobs. Stay organized. Plan art projects ahead of time. Keep a file of ideas that worked well. Find a way to reward staff for their creativity.

10) Share your own enthusiasm in the art room. Put on music, sing, create and work with art supplies along with the children. Have fun. Be a role model, and you’ll spark creativity in others.

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