Process-Oriented Art Experiences for Preschool Children
“Art is not the same for a child as it is for an adult. For a child, art is primarily a means of expression.

“No two children are alike, and in fact, each child differs even from his earlier self as he constantly grows, perceives, understands, and interprets his environment.

“A child is a dynamic being; art becomes for him a language of thought.”

(Lowenfield and Brittain, 1987)
Are You Confident in Your Ability to Provide Process-Oriented Art to Young Children?

- DEFINITELY YES
- MAYBE
- DEFINITELY NOT
What Did He Mean?

“Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up.”

- Pablo Picasso
What does “creative” mean?

creative | adjective

1. Having the quality or power of creating.

2. Having or showing an ability to make new things or think new ideas.

3. Originality of thought, expression; imaginative.
**Art**

What does the word “art” mean?

*art*  |  noun

1. Something that is created with imagination and skill.

2. Something that is appreciated and beautiful or that expresses important ideas or feelings (emotional power).

3. Works created by artists such as painting, sculpture, drawing, music, literature and dance.
Creativity

What is creativity?

creativity | noun

1. the state or quality of being creative.

2. the ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, or the like, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations; originality, progressiveness or imagination.

3. the process by which one utilizes creative ability.
Creativity in Art

Children enjoy art because it is fun and provides them the opportunity to be creative.

Children can:

• Make choices.
• Explore and experiment.
• Be spontaneous.
• Experience the pleasure of self-expression.
• Enjoy the freedom of interpretation.
• Start over if they like (no model to imitate).
Approaches to Teaching Art

**PROCESS**
- Open-ended
- Exploratory
- Unique
- Individual

**PRODUCT**
- Close-ended
- Instruction-heavy
- Structured
- Modeled
1. Ms. Baker has baked sugar cookies for Valentines Day. Her two-year-old class will decorate them for an art activity.

2. In the four-year-old class, some are crumpling tissue paper and gluing it onto white, pink and red paper. Others are using markers to trace around a heart stencil – then using foam shapes to decorate. Some children cut out the shapes.

3. The children in a pre-K class are neatly coloring in a heart outline and will later decorate it with glitter based on the example the teacher showed them.
Process-Oriented Art Experiences

Unstructured

No Directions and

No Model
Process-Oriented Art Experiences

Open-Ended

No Pre-determined Result or Product
Process-Oriented Art Experiences

Discovery & Experimentation

Focus is on the Child’s Work
Process-Oriented Art Experiences

Self-Motivated

The Desire to Create Comes from Within
Process-Oriented Art Experiences

Creative and Unique

Individual Characteristics – Each Child’s Work is Unique

ECCC photo
Process-Oriented Art Experiences

Developmentally Appropriate

Success-oriented

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Imagine that someone had said to Vincent Van Gogh:

“Today we are going to paint a picture. Use blue paint for the sky and green paint for the grass.”

Would Van Gogh have become a famous artist?
Imagine that someone had said to Claude Monet:

“Today we are going to paint a picture. Use blue paint for the water and make the clouds white.”

Would Monet have become a famous artist?
Imagine that someone had said to Pablo Picasso:

“Today we are going to paint a picture of musical instruments. Make a guitar like this one and then you can add a piano that looks like this.”

Would Picasso have become a famous artist?
Imagine that someone had said to Paul Cézanne:

“Today we are going to paint a picture of a house with trees in the yard. This is what your picture should look like.”

Would Cézanne have become a famous artist?
What is the JOY of ART?

THE EXPLORATION OF THE EXPERIENCE
What is Child Art?

Child art is self-expression.

Child art is an open-ended process (it is not replicating a model).
What is Child Art?

Child art is experiencing the world through feeling and imagining.

Child art creates a sense of wonder and curiosity.
What is **NOT** Child Art?

Child art is **NOT** dittos, reproducible worksheets or coloring pages.

Child art is **NOT** coloring books or staying in the lines.
Is This Art?

B.Dean photos
What is **NOT** Child Art?

Child art is **NOT** imitating a model or making something to look like someone else’s work.

Child art is **NOT** crafts or replications.
Is This Art?

Pre-printing Practice: Trace the dotted lines and color the picture.
Is This Art?
Facilitating Child Art

Adults can facilitate children’s creative art experiences in many ways.

- Supply materials; rotate materials.
- Introduce new materials.
- Enhance learning through art opportunities (build children’s skills and knowledge).
Facilitating Child Art

- Extend art to other curriculum areas.
- Provide guidance (gentle instruction) related to art techniques and the use of creative materials.
Facilitating Expression

• Give children **daily** opportunities to actively explore art ideas and creative materials.

• Allow children to **discover** the wonderful possibilities art can provide.

• Encourage **self-expression** – no “right” or ‘wrong” – no “it.”
  (e.g. “What is it?” “What are you making?”)

• Avoid models or examples designed by an adult.
Facilitating Expression

- Celebrate the uniqueness of each child.

- Comment on the child’s process rather than the product.

  “Look at the bright red color that you used.”

  “You really focused on your art for a long time and made it the way you wanted it.”

  “You mixed two colors together and made a new color.”
Ways to Provide Meaningful Process-Oriented Art Experiences for Preschool Children
Basic Materials

Marking Tools

Painting Materials
Basic Materials

Molding Materials

Open-ended

Collage Materials

Little Munchkins Preschool photo
Let’s Look at Some Photos of Process-Oriented Art Experiences
Little Munchkins Preschool, New Brunswick – Photo Used with Permission
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Little Munchkins Preschool, New Brunswick – Photo Used with Permission
Many thanks to Little Munchkins Preschool in New Brunswick, Canada, for allowing the use of their inspiring photos.
Possible Road Blocks

- I am not artistic at all.
- It is what the parents want.
- It is so messy.
- What is educational about scribbles?
How To Present Process Art

Materials

Manipulation

Choice

ECCC photos
Let’s Ask Again…
Are You Confident in Your Ability to Provide Process-Oriented Art to Young Children?

DEFINITELY YES

MAYBE

DEFINITELY NOT
Resources

Art and Creative Development for Young Children, Jill Englebright & Robert Schirrmacher (2012), Wadsworth, Cengage Learning

Creative Activities for Young Children, Mary Mayesky (2012) Wadsworth, Cengage Learning

Supporting Young Artists, Ann S. Epstien and Eli Trimis (2002), HighScope Educational Research Foundation

More than Painting, Sally Moomaw and Brenda Hieronymus (1999), Redleaf Press