



Preschool Connection

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Creativity

Why is it that most children love to draw, color and paint while only a few adults consider themselves talented enough to enjoy such pursuits? When a preschooler takes up a paintbrush for the first time, he never stops to consider whether or not he has "artistic ability". The very fact that he *wants* to paint leads him to an activity in which he creates a paint and paper world of his own. He paints what he feels and that's all that matters to him.

Creativity seems to be a natural, spontaneous trait in most

children. Parents who want their children to be creative should concern themselves not with "teaching" it but with sustaining and nourishing the creative spirit that is already there. The best nourishment a child can get is materials to work with and respect for what he creates. Too many teachers and parents reveal their lack of respect when they teach a child *how* to draw a pumpkin and *how* to make a puppet from a commercial kit. The effect of showing a child the "right" way is negative; the result is a less creative child. More than talent with a paintbrush, creativity is a way of

thinking about one's environment, a way of inventing new games, a way of using a found object for a toy, a way of making someone happy. Creativity is basically an attitude, one that comes easily to young children, but must be sustained and strengthened lest it be sacrificed in our sometimes too logical world.

(Excerpts taken from Learning through Play by Jean Marzollo and Janice Lloyd, Harper and Row, Puclisher, Inc. 1972)



MEMOS FROM YOUR CHILD

This little gem has been around for a while; I know it circulated among my friends when I was a young mother. I have no source to attribute the author's credit, but the clear messages are as timely today as they were a generation ago.

Don't spoil me. I know quite well I shouldn't have all I ask for. I'm only testing you.

Don't be afraid to be firm with me. I prefer it; it makes me feel secure.

Don't let me form bad habits. I have to rely on you to detect them in the early stages.

Don't make me feel smaller than I am. It only makes me behave stupidly "big."

Don't correct me in front of people if you can help it. I'll take much more notice if you talk quietly in private.

Don't protect me from consequences, I need to learn the painful way sometime.

Don't make me feel my mistakes are sins. It upsets my sense of values.

Don't be too upset when I say, "I hate you." It isn't you I hate, but your power to thwart me.

Don't take too much notice of my small ailments. Sometimes they get the attention I need.

Don't nag. If you do, I'll have to protect myself by appearing deaf.

Don't make rash promises. I feel badly let down when promises are broken.

Don't forget that I can't explain myself as well as I'd like. This is why I'm not always

very accurate.

Don't tax my honesty too much. I am easily frightened into telling lies.

Don't be inconsistent. It completely confuses me and makes me lose my faith in you.

Don't put me off when I ask questions. If you do, you'll find I stop asking and seek information elsewhere.

Don't tell me my fears are silly. They're terribly real. Don't ever suggest that you're perfect or infallible. It gives me too great a shock when I find out you're neither.

Don't ever think it's beneath your dignity to apologize to me. An honest apology makes me surprisingly warm toward you.

Don't forget I love experimenting. I can't get on without it, so please put up with it.

Don't forget how quickly I'm growing up. It must be hard to keep pace with me, but please try.

When you read this carefully, you realize the important truths that lie behind each reminder. Pass it along to your friends who are parents. Post it up on your bathroom mirror for helpful support when the days with your preschoolers seem too much.

Children would tell us these things, if they could only articulate them.

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These activities are not a test to see whether your child knows the skills. If your child has trouble, give enough hints so that he or she can be successful. If the activity is too difficult or becomes frustrating, stop that activity and do something else that is fun. The main goal is to spend quality time with your child each day and to help your child be successful!

1 The Pleasures of Paint

1. Use good cans (half full). Use good basic colors: red, yellow, blue and perhaps one other color.
2. Make sure your child has his paint clothes on and that the paint area is protected with newspapers.
3. RELAX! Teach your child to be careful, but don't overdo it. If your child worries too much about tidiness, he'll not have much fun painting.
4. Let him paint whatever he wants. It doesn't matter whether his pictures are recognizable to you. A youngster enjoys sloshing colors on paper according to his own imagination and emotion. Let him be. Encourage his creativity and hang his pictures where everyone can see them!

2 Beautiful Junk

- Kitchen Animals:** Disposable food containers can be washed and dried, then taped and tied together to form animal bodies. Use popsicle sticks for legs.
- Cities and Villages:** Save various sizes of boxes and cardboard rolls for a miniature city or town. Decorate with crayons or paint. Populate with clothespin people.
- Styrofoam Mobiles:** Many gifts and appliances are packed in Styrofoam. Don't throw it away! Your child can paint it, cut it, poke it with colored toothpicks and hang it up as a mobile!

3 Collage

A little bit of everything and a lot of paste

4 Curiosity Walks

1. Take a curiosity walk with your child, but pick a time when you have time and won't be rushed. Just relax and be curious! Your only objective is to look, listen, touch, smell and hear everything you can. Follow your sense, talk about what they tell you.
2. Follow your child's initiative
3. Build on your child's interests: What is it? How does it feel? How does it smell?
4. Supply descriptive words: soft, loud, squishy, bumpy, etc.
5. Later talk about what you did together!