



## **Arts....not only it's fun but a good way to learn!!**

(In this article "the arts" means "art, music, dance, and drama")

Learning through the arts is a smart and fun way which enhances brain development, supports individual learning, and helps children prepare for success in school and in life. Arts-based learning is great for kids of all ages.

The thrilling "brain" news is that participating in art, music, dance/movement, and storytelling activities not only develops language, mathematics, science, and social skills, but these activities also strengthen the synapses between brain cells. These vital activities can actually create new neural pathways and fortify those that are already present.



### **Learning With Visual Art...**

- Encourage children to use their hands to manipulate clay, finger paint, weave, paint, and draw. This helps build fine motor skills - the same skills that children need to learn how to write letters and words.
- Ask children to express their feelings using color, texture, and structure. Children often use colors in their drawings and paintings to express a mood. And the textures of clay provide a perfect place to work out frustrations!
- Use art materials to observe, predict, experiment, and problem-solve. Open-ended art activities in which children have to make choices as to how to



create a sculpture or picture help foster the development of these scientific thinking skills.

- Invite children to talk about their art with words and stories in order to promote language development.
- Use discussions with other children and shared experiences to shape social and emotional interaction skills. By inviting children to "title" their art, you invite them to use art as a language.
- Introduce new art materials, such as painting with feathers. This invites children to build a strong sense of success and mastery.

### **Learning With Music and Dance/Movement...**

- Try yoga, jumping, running, and dancing games to help children develop large muscle skills, strength, balance, rhythm, and coordination.
- Use rhythmic clapping games, tip toe dances, and finger plays to develop small muscles of the hands and feet.
- Through singing repetitive songs and circle dancing games, introduce the math skills of patterning, sequencing, and counting.
- Engage children in rhyming songs and in singing word games to build the essential language learning skills of communication, listening, and speaking.
- Use music and movement to express emotions and develop autonomy and social interaction. This helps foster social and emotional development.



### **Learning with Creative Storytelling...**

- Invite children to act out and create stories to develop vocabulary, sequencing, listening, and memory skills.
- Explore familiar fairy tales and nursery rhymes to encourage children to learn to distinguish between fantasy and reality.
- Encourage children to act out their own feelings and the feelings of others in stories and dramatic play center activities. This helps provide a greater understanding of their own feelings and those of others.
- Explore play themes with a variety of culturally diverse materials to promote multicultural awareness.
- Invite children to express a "story" with their bodies. This provides opportunities for children to develop body awareness.



### **Arts Stimulate Mind and Heart**

As humans we are a combination of emotional mind and rational mind. These two "minds" work in tight harmony to create our experience of life. Activities in the arts invite children to play with the balance of "mind and heart."

There are no wrong answers in creative activities. Through improvisation and experimentation with the arts in a non-judgmental environment, children learn risk taking, more about themselves and their world!



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