



Parent Tips

ready at five

Exploring the Arts

Young children love art! They are naturally curious, creative, and observant. Whenever your child sings a song, draws a picture, dances around the room, creates a story, tells jokes, or pretends to be someone else for fun, he is being artistic. Having exposure to the arts is an important part of your child being ready to start school. There are many ways you can help your child explore the arts. Try:

INFANT:

- Respond to your baby's feelings. Hold her often. Hug, touch and cuddle her with love. Smile at your baby, and react when she smiles at you.
- Sing! Sing songs you know or make up silly songs. When your baby responds or "sings" back, smile and react to him.
- Play music and dance! Move your baby's feet and hands to the beat of the music.
- Hang a baby-safe crib mirror at your infant's eye level or a brightly colored wall hanging/picture near the crib. See how your baby watches herself and looks at the pictures.

TODDLER:

- Make a mural. Cover a table with a large piece of paper or paper bag. Have markers, colored pencils or crayons available. Ask your child to make a mural (or picture) of anything she wants.
- Read to your toddler every day. Use character voices and body movements to act out the story. Let your toddler join in – for instance, ask her to make a cow's "moo" or a cat's "meow." Read rhyming poetry to your toddler.
- Play Simon Says, but try it without words: just watch each other and copy each other's motions.

PRESCHOOLERS:

- Place different types of dried pasta (spirals, rigatoni, elbow, or shells) in a bowl. Using paper and glue, suggest children make a work of art by pasting the pasta onto the paper.
- Use your imagination! Play with your child: pretend that a paper tube is a telescope and you are pirates looking for treasure; pretend that a sheet over a table is a tent and you are camping; or pretend that empty boxes are race cars and you are in the Indy 500.
- Put on a play or a puppet show.
- Change the rules of "Duck, Duck, Goose" and play "Duck, Duck, Dance". Instead of the "goose" running after the person who is "it," the "dancer" must jump up when chosen and move in a silly way.
- Make musical instruments: a drum from a box or a coffee can, a flute or a saxophone from a cardboard toilet paper or paper towel tube, a piano with "keys" drawn on paper. Have a concert!

Book Suggestion

Art by Patrick McDonnell • *Symphony City* by Amy Martin