



ready at five

Talking About Art

Young children love art . . . especially making it! But, to be school-ready in the Arts, children must also be able to look at artwork and talk about what they see. What does talking about art mean? It means describing the colors, lines, patterns, shapes or textures in the artwork. It involves identifying the subject of the artwork – Is it a person (portrait), a scene (landscape), or an abstract (imaginary)? And, it means talking about how the art makes one feel. Encourage your child to talk about art by trying some of these activities:

INFANT:

- Read picture books or look at pictures with your infant. Talk about what you see and how the art makes you feel.
- Listen to your infant “talk”. Repeat her babbles, sounds, and all attempts at early talking.

TODDLER:

- Talk about art concepts. At the grocery store, point out the apples and oranges. Ask your child questions about each fruit’s color, size, shape, and texture; discuss how they are the same or different.
- Point out “Art”. Show your child that art and images are all around us – in magazines, on the walls, in photographs, and on our clothes, rugs and furniture. Help your child identify colors, shapes, size, texture, patterns, lines, etc. in these “works of art”.
- Using pictures from magazines have your child create a new creature. For example a “Horat” with the head of a horse and the body of a cat. Have your child tell you about the creature and why he designed it.

PRESCHOOLERS:

- Encourage your child to talk about abstract artwork. For example, make “Blot Art”: have her drop different-colored dots of paint with an eyedropper or paintbrush onto a piece of the paper; fold the paper in half with the paint on the inside, and have your child roll a rolling pin over the paper to spread the paint. Open the paper and have your child use her imagination to decide what the blot looks like and talk about what she sees.
- Ask your child to draw his picture (a self-portrait) using different colors to create a mood or feeling. For example, your child might use only warm colors (like red or orange). Then, talk with your child about how the colors make him feel.
- Have your child talk about the artwork she creates or brings home from “school”. Ask your child questions about how she created the artwork, why she chose specific colors or lines, and how she chose the subject. Show your child that you are proud of her: hang artwork on the wall, bulletin board, or refrigerator.

Book Suggestion

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