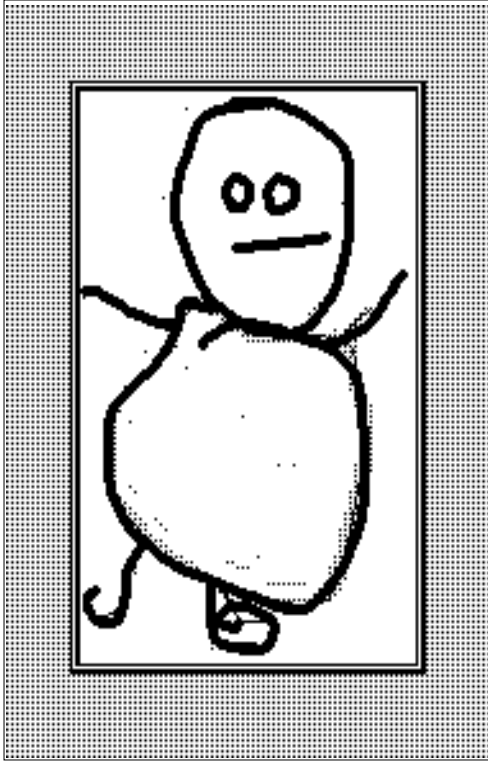


Displaying Children's Artwork

How teachers handle children's artwork when it is finished says much about how they value children's efforts. Children experience pride, joy, and satisfaction when they see their work displayed. Children's art displays can be a meaningful experience, aiding development and aesthetic values.



Matting Children's Artwork

Materials:

- Construction paper in a color that repeats a color in the drawing or painting
- Scissors
- Stapler or glue

What to Do:

- Cut the construction paper at least two inches larger than the drawing or painting on all sides.
- Staple or glue the child's artwork to the construction paper.
- Give to relatives as gifts.
- Display in honored places.

A painting or drawing can be placed on a large piece of colored construction paper with pieces of rolled masking tape, pins, staples, or thumbtacks. This creates an easy and inexpensive way of producing a reusable frame. Even the simplest drawing or painting takes on a lively personality with a little color around it. Try using bright colors that repeat a color in the drawing or painting; keep in mind, however, that the picture should stand out, not the frame.

Ideally, all children's artwork should be displayed at all times. Informal balance is usually more interesting than a formal arrangement. Balance light and dark, bright and dull areas, as well as sizes and shapes. This adds to the quality of the art display. Display areas, no matter how small, should not be overcrowded, and a display should not be left up so long that it becomes stale and faded.

Cay. It is best to keep in mind that the purpose in displaying children's artwork is to let everchildren's art displays should be planned with the children in mind even though adults will be enjoying them too. A great deal of teaching and learning can take place in front of a well-planned display. Children enjoy what children are thinking and doing.

Teachers often assume responsibility for deciding which artwork to display. A better alternative is to ask children to make the choice. Giving children the opportunity to decide which painting or drawing they want displayed conveys a sense of respect for their judgment. Also, the children's opinions may be quite different from the teacher's! Children can help in planning art displays. They can select their best work for display. A display area that is at the child's eye level can be

managed by the children in the classroom. Masking tape can be substituted for pins, staples, and tacks. A shelf at the child's eye level works well for displaying three-dimensional projects like block, clay, or LEGO constructions. Photographs of the three-dimensional projects can be displayed on the wall in the block construction area.

A written description next to children's art displays gives teachers a way of documenting how the work was created, what materials were used, what problem-solving processes the children experienced, and how the artwork represents the children's knowledge and feelings about a topic. Not all children's artwork has to be about something. Some children may just enjoy exploring and experimenting with the materials. Children may also include emergent writing in their drawings and paintings.

Things to Keep in Mind When Displaying Children's Artwork

- Remember that the child's eye level is much lower than that of an adult. Place displays low, where children can approach, touch, feel, and even smell them if they feel like it.
- Display children's artwork unimproved. This applies to any finished work as well as work that is to be used as part of a larger display. For example, do not cut a child's painting to form leaves, flowers, or other decorative designs. If leaves are needed for a display, the child should be presented with paper this shape before drawing, painting, or making a collage on it.
- Display reproductions of famous paintings or original art by professional artists in the same display with the children's artwork.
- Leave some undecorated wall space to allow children to rest their eyes and avoid overstimulation.
- When displays are changed, always leave some areas unchanged so children won't feel uncomfortable in what might appear to be new surroundings.

Another way to display children's artwork is to create books. The books can be placed in the art area or on the children's bookshelf. Artwork that the children create on the computer can be printed out in vivid colors and framed or made into books. Children can tell about their artwork at group time. Books can also become mini-portfolios to document children's growth. Changeable Books, described below, encourage the children to make choices and change pictures when new artwork is created.

Creating Changeable Books

Materials:

- Three or four zipper plastic bags
- Cardboard, tag board, or heavy construction paper
- Scissors
- Stapler
- Tape (electrician or waterproof plastic tape)

What to Do:

- Line bags up evenly on the side that does not "zip" open; staple together.
- Tape securely over stapled edge.
- Cut a piece of cardboard, tag board, or heavy construction paper to fit inside each bag.
- Each bag or page can hold two of the child's drawings. Change the pages of the book as often as you and your child want. Also try this with photographs or cutout magazine pictures.

