



# It's the process Not the product

## Why is art process important?

Young children do art for the experience, the exploration, and the experimentation. In the "process" of doing art, they discover creativity, mystery, joy, and frustration, which are all important pieces in the puzzle of learning. Whatever the resulting masterpiece-be it a bright sticky glob or a gallery-worthy piece- it is only a result to the young child, not the reason for doing the art in the first place.

## Art process allows children to explore, discover, and manipulate their worlds.

Sometimes the process is sensory, such as feeling slippery cool paint on bare fingers. Other times it is the mystery of colors blending unexpectedly, or the surprise of seeing a realistic picture evolve from a random blob of paint. Art process can be a way to "get the wiggles out," or to smash a ball of clay instead of another child.

## How can adults encourage the process of art?

Provide interesting materials. Stand back and watch. Offer help with unruly materials, but keep hands off children's work as much as possible. It's a good idea not to make samples for children to copy because this limits their possibilities.

Sometimes adults unknowingly communicate to a child that the product is the most important aspect of the child's art experience. The following comments and questions serve as examples of things to say that will help encourage each child to evaluate his or her own artwork:

- Tell me about your artwork.
- I see you've used many colors!
- Did you enjoy making this?
- How did the paint feel!
- The yellow is so great next to the purple!
- I see you made your own brown color. How did you do it?

Process art is a wonder to behold. Watch the children discover their unique capabilities and the joy of creating. This is where they begin to feel good about art and to believe that mistakes can be a stepping stone instead of a roadblock in art as well as in other aspects of their lives. A concept children enjoy hearing is; "There's no right way, there's no wrong way, there's just your way."

