



It's the Doing That Counts: Support Children's Creativity and Expression

When you think of the word "creative" or "creativity", what does it mean to you? Does it mean doing or making something? Perhaps you believe being creative means being able to play a musical instrument, paint a picture or write a poem. The definitions of creativity are varied. But they all include:

- Being able to think of new ways of doing things or looking at something in a new way
- Being able to solve problems and come up with unique solutions
- Being able to create something that is new, different, original

Creativity is multidimensional. It can be a trait, skill, ability, or an approach, or all of these. When you are creative, you go beyond the typical or normal approach to arrive at something completely new and unique.

Elements used that can be further developed in the creative process:

- Self-expression: Children can express what they see, feel, hear, and think
- Curiosity: Children are allowed to follow through on their hunches, impulses, and natural desire to find out what things are, how they work, what will happen "if"
- Exploration/Experimentation: Children can try different ways to use an object, toy, or work on a project
- Imagination: Children are free to fantasize, engage in imaginative play, or come up with many possibilities for whatever they are focusing on, often trying things or coming up with possibilities we think are 'impossible'
- Open-ended thinking: Children are stretching their thinking skills by not having to come up with only one possible outcome or answer

These elements or qualities that are natural in creativity are important to children's development. They provide a foundation for children to acquire problem-solving skills, feel good about themselves, develop a sense of uniqueness, and help to expand their intellectual or cognitive skills, as well as their perseverance. These are important skills that children can use in daily life and continue to use as they grow into adults.

It's the Process Not the Outcome

All children are creative. All the elements used in the creative process are natural and inborn for children. All children need self-expression, are curious, like to explore, are imaginative and don't know what is the expected outcome or answers unless they are told. All of these natural qualities can be supported by providing opportunities for children to use them.

The outcome of most creative efforts is usually something you can touch, see, hear or taste (such as a quilt, a building, a song or a delicious meal). When your child uses crayons, a finished drawing may be the result of your child being engaged and creative. However, it's not the drawing you want to encourage, but the process of creating it. Try not to focus on what your child creates or be concerned with the way it turns out.

Being creative is also not the same as having "talent". Not all children will have great skills in music, art, dance, writing, or problem-solving. But they all deserve the opportunity to participate for the sake of fun and expression. Your child doesn't

have to be “good” at it, she has to do it and feel free to do it. So, what can you do? Let go of expectations and let your child think, imagine, explore, be curious and express herself!

Activities to Support Creativity

Parents and child care providers can encourage creativity in children. The best way for your child to be creative is through play. Play is the foundation of creativity and is the way that young children learn. To encourage your child's creative development:

- let your child play - free and spontaneous play
- give enough time for play
- provide materials that are interesting and varied, and encourage her to explore
- allow your child to take the lead in creativity without having an expected outcome
- support your child's efforts and help him feel good about his attempts
- engage your child in activities that provide a wide variety of experiences (art, music, building, storytelling, dramatic play, reading, puzzles)

Allowing Your Child to Express Himself

Encouraging creativity builds children's thinking skills. Children learn to problem solve and come up with their own ways to do just about anything. Parents and child care providers can find it difficult to allow children enough time to fully explore materials and be involved in activities. It may also be hard for adults to drop all expectations of how they think something should be done (for example: how a house should be drawn or how to build a bridge). But it's important to allow children to express and try their own way. Self-expression and being involved in creative activities not only helps them learn, but is a lot of fun for children. Let your child learn by playing, exploring, imagining, creating, and ultimately discovering new ways of seeing the world.



For More Information Visit:

<http://www.ccaparentnetwork.org/members/1899/12/30/its-the-doing-that-counts-support-childrens-creativity-and-expression/>



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