



Nurturing Your 3- to 5- Year-Old Child's Mental Health with Visual Arts Activities

Benefits of Visual Arts Activities for Your Preschool-Aged Child

Creative activities promote mental health in early childhood by helping children form secure relationships, manage their emotions, and learn. These skills serve them well for life.

One accessible and fun way to strengthen your relationship with your child and nurture their mental health/development is to do visual arts activities together. Visual arts involves creative, expressive, and playful activities such as drawing, painting, playing with clay, and doing crafts. Creating art with your child can:

- Increase their independence and self-confidence
- Improve their attention span
 - This can help at school
- Strengthen their social skills and relationships (especially when doing art with peers, parents, or teddy bears)
- Build their reflection, self-expression, and communication skills
- Enhance their ability to adapt, manage change, and cope with stress
 - Art can help your child [calm down](#)



A Framework for Visual Arts Activities

- 1) Prepare the materials
 - Use materials that are available and child-friendly
 - Examples include drawing supplies (e.g., crayons), painting supplies (e.g., tempera paints and brushes/fingers), items found in the house or nature, clay, and pastels
- 2) Introduce the activity and any guiding rules
- 3) Spark imagination
 - Try singing or listening to a song, reading and acting out a story, [doing a feelings check-in](#), discussing an experience, or playing with interesting objects your child found
 - Encourage problem-solving. Ask your child: what can we make with these materials? Can we make a story through our art? This approach can improve your child's literacy
- 4) Get creating
 - Don't forget to take breaks
 - Your art does not have to be perfect. The important thing is to enjoy the process with your child





Visual Arts with Your 3- to 5- Year-Old Child: Tips, Tricks and Resources

5) Reflection and sharing

- Ask your child open-ended questions about their art
 - What did they create?
 - What does their art mean?
 - How do they feel? Did that change while making art?
 - What did they learn?
- Remember to [mindfully listen to your child](#)

6) Clean-up

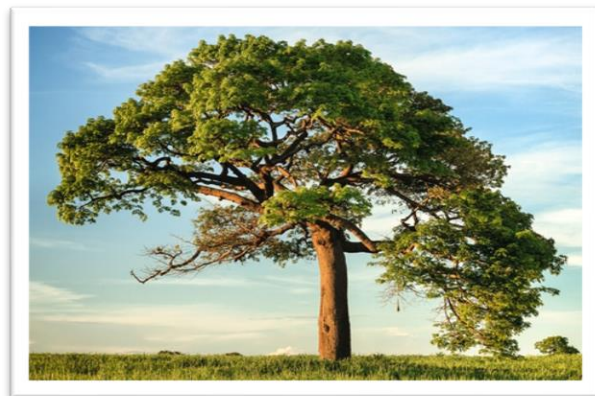


Additional Tips

- When in doubt, keep it simple. Be creative and have fun with the materials you have
- Alyssa Martens, Program Manager of Public Programs at ArtStarts (May 2022) suggests encouraging your child to focus on the [process of making art](#) rather than the product
- Let your child take the lead
 - Making decisions and mistakes promotes learning, self-confidence, and independence
- Check out the National Association for the Education of Young Children's [tips for parents](#)

Take the Project Outside

- Making art outdoors can improve mood, promote inner peace, and strengthen your child's connection to nature
- Try making art with [items you can find in nature](#)
 - Use items such as rocks, sticks, and fallen leaves
 - Remember to respect the environment
 - Try Heart-Mind Online's [nature-based art activities](#)
- Nature can inspire creativity. Encourage your child to observe their surroundings and let this guide their art.
 - Practice your [Bear Belly Breathing](#) outside!
 - Have your child pay attention to their senses. What do they see? Hear? Smell? How does their body feel when they are outside?



Resources

- 1) Videos: The [Sesame Street in Communities Caring for Kids](#) and [Learning Through Art](#) pages have videos and printable art guides on feelings, handling tantrums, gratitude, colours, and self-portraits
- 2) [Mood-boosting art activities](#) at [Heart-Mind Online](#)
- 3) [Place2Be downloadable art activities](#) about noticing feelings, calming down, and exploring change
- 4) Workshops: free weekly online videos at the [ArtStarts Explores](#) program with [ArtStarts in Schools](#)