WHAT IS MY PRESCHOOLER LEARNING FROM ART?

It might seem as though art activities are just messy, but they provide such important learning experiences for the children that we include them in our program as often as possible.

Painting, drawing and creating sculptures with clay or play dough increase children’s small muscle skill and strength. This is important for their writing ability.

Art can also be a way for children to express their ideas and feelings. Being able to think about something they can’t see and then create it in a drawing

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or painting is a big accomplishment for a preschooler. To create art, children must organize, reason, invent, and solve problems.

When children use the art materials we provide, we allow them to explore freely. We may ask questions such as “What can you tell me about the lines and shapes in this drawing?” This allows the child to decide if the art represents a real object or is simply a free design.

We never label children’s creations as right or wrong. Their artistic expression is as unique as they are, and we encourage that creativity.

We discuss how art can express emotion and inspire others to feel emotion. We see how some colors are cool and others warm. We look at paintings and talk about what the artist might have been thinking. Art opens up many new worlds to the children.

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We talk about how the lines on the paper go around in circles, or up and down, or about how mixing yellow and blue paint together makes green. This gets children thinking about the many possibilities for new creations. It also helps them to focus on specific parts of their art to improve their skills. What starts out as scribbling eventually may become shapes, and then faces, animals or letters.

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Gale A. Buchanan, Dean and Director