



Presents ...

Branching Out

Resource Updates to Support the Growth and Goals of Educators

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During this global pandemic it has become apparent that people feel a need to express themselves through art. We have seen sidewalks and windows become canvasses, backyards and living rooms become dance studios, and kitchens become music studios. Somehow, we can all relate to each other through the expression of art. In this issue we will share some resources and tips to support the Arts with young children because we know how important it is for everyone to have opportunities to express themselves artistically.



Resources to Support Artistic Expression



Young Children Explore & Create Using Clay & Dough

Working with clay has many developmental benefits. It encourages sensory development, develops coordination and motor skills, builds imagination and attention span. This provocation for learning kit has everything a child needs to get creative with clay.



Sidewalk Chalk Spiral Art

Take your sidewalk art to a whole new level with this spiral art set. The materials in this supplementary learning kit are great to enhance children's motor development, hand-eye coordination and allow for artistic expression.

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Musical Instruments for Infants and Toddlers

Help the little ones express themselves through music and movement. This supplementary learning kit has some great resources to get those infants and toddlers making music and dancing around.



Sing-Along Bluetooth & MP3 Player with Dual Microphones

We all know that children love to sing and perform. This MP3 player with microphones will offer endless fun, especially when they can record and play back their musical masterpieces.



Farr Out Findings

“Me? Creative? No way!”

“I’m not creative, I can’t even draw a stick person!”

“It would be nice to be creative with the children but there are limited funds for art materials”

How many times have these thoughts travelled through your mind when the term creativity arises? Often when the concept of creativity is put forth, educators think of creativity in terms of only artistic expression. However, when creativity is looked at in a larger scope the true magic of expression for children begins.

To begin, creativity lives in the process, not the product of children’s art. This concept is familiar in the Reggio Emilia approach. Fostering creativity comes from the role of educators in asking questions instead of solely praising the child’s artwork. Instead of looking at a child’s painting and exclaiming “Great Job!” or “That is SO beautiful!” Try probing conversations with the children about their artwork as they create “Why did you use that colour?” or “I see lots of different lines here, can you tell me why you chose to do that?”. Asking questions and making observations supports children’s creativity as you join them in the process.

Creative learning experiences do not have to involve just art, as mentioned previously, look below for more ideas to foster originality.

- **Loose Parts Play:** The versatility of loose parts makes them perfect for artistic expression. Set out a variety of bits: for example, coloured ribbons, scarves, sticks, leaves, etc. Then provoke conversations with the children as they explore, create and design. Be sure to take photos to give displays permanence.



Creativity can be brought outdoors! Here are natural loose parts that have been used to make what looks like a Mandela.



Loose parts are a great way to incorporate natural elements into children’s art and allow for collaborative or individual experiences.

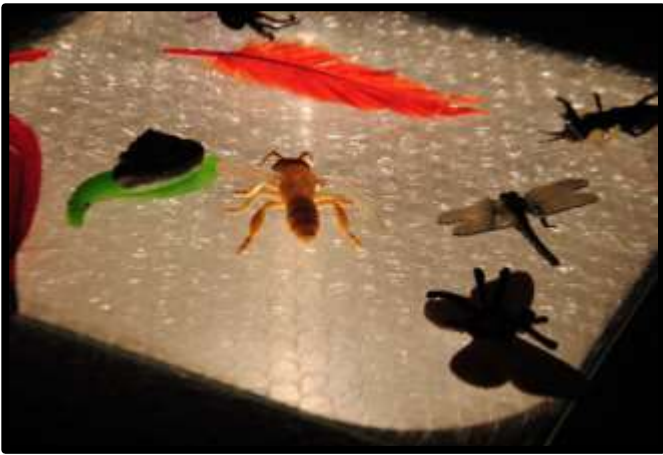
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- **Technology:** Often we discourage time spent on electronics since more than ever children are replacing play with technology. With guidance, however, we can use technology to support creativity and healthy childhood development. For instance, a few tools that are excellent for children to express originality are light tables, overhead projectors, cameras, and smart boards. Give children the reins to use these different tools to create as you observe and engage along with them.



Various loose parts and a projector create shadows on the wall that children can manipulate.



A white sheet, light and paper puppets created by children have made this wonderful shadow play!

- **Music:** Whether it be singing, playing instruments, creating music or dancing, children can express themselves with music while having fun!



A child holding a shaker is prompted by their educator to make their own music. Supporting not only expression but other essential areas of development such as gross motor movement & musical intelligence.



Music can be found any where and you don't need fancy instruments to encourage music and movement with young children. They are happy to create a beat using household items.



Take the Art Materials Outside

Sometimes we need a reminder that anything that we can do inside, can be done outside. If you have an art studio set up in your classroom, then why not create one outside? Adding the extra elements of nature may encourage other forms of artistic expression. Also, think about adding unique materials to the set-up; spray bottles, fly swatters, sponge brushes, rollers, and plastic flowers are some of the things you will see in the set-up below.



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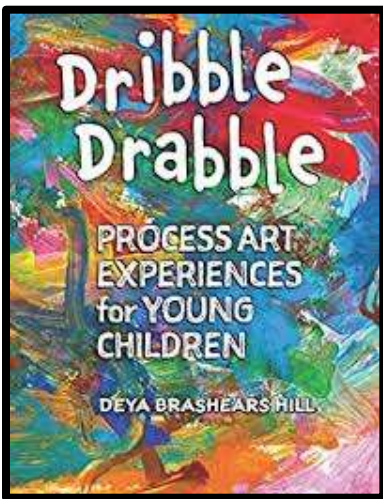


Tips to Encourage Creativity with Children

- Create a space for creative work indoors and outdoors.
- Experiences are open-ended.
- Talk about what you see.
- Give adequate time for expression.
- Choice of materials and loose parts are available.
- Offer beautiful books with illustrations that spark curiosity.
- Children's artwork is on display.

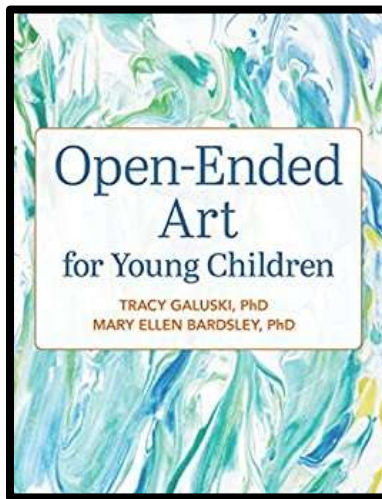


Resource Books Available for Borrowing



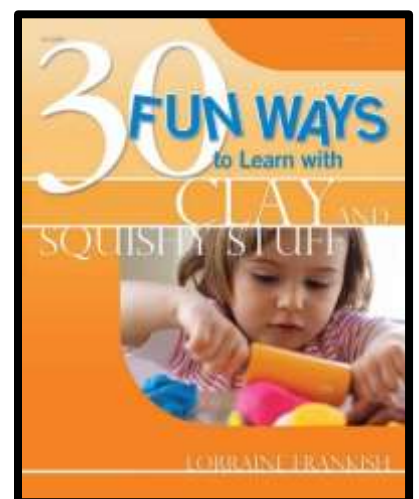
Dribble Drabble – Process Art Experiences for Young Children

Creative art should offer children opportunities for originality, creativity, fluency, flexibility, and sensitivity. Remember, there is no right or wrong way of doing things in art. This collection of activities focuses on the process and not the finished product, to allow for growth and fun. All activities are easily adaptable for children from age two to eight.



Open-Ended Art for Young Children

Open-ended art is defined as art activity where children are free to use their imagination as they explore a variety of materials without a planned outcome. Open-ended art provides children an important opportunity to think about, feel, and express ideas. It helps teachers slow down the pace of the day and appreciate the beauty that comes from simple experimentation with art materials.



30 Fun Ways to Learn with Clay and Squishy Stuff

Children love getting their hands dirty. Putting their fingers into clay and other squishy stuff gives them a chance to create and have fun while strengthening important developmental skills. From wet clay to paper pulp, sawdust to shaving cream, these open-ended activities focus on the process of creation, not the final product, and allow imagination to flourish.

Looking Back as we Look Forward

Here's a throwback to that time when ECCDC set up a Reggio Inspired Art Studio in our Learning Café. [Click here](#) for some inspiration!

We cannot wait until we can all be together again engaging in hands-on professional learning opportunities at beautiful venues across Ontario. In the meantime, let's take some time to reflect on the amazing session that took place on October 13, 2018 held at Woodend Conservation Area, Niagara-On-The-Lake.

This full day session offered *“Techniques and Approaches for Artmaking with Natural Materials”* in the morning and *“Deepening Ecological Connections through Art Materials”* in the afternoon and was facilitated by Julie Rochefort-Wood from 4 Elements Art.



“I loved the setting for this workshop. So much hands-on exploration!”

“Wonderful session. The development of place and connection resonated most. Thank you.”