

Supporting the Development of Creativity

by Laurel Bongiorno

A three-year old sits at the kitchen table extremely focused on his art. He's gathered white paper, a glue bottle, scissors, small bits of colored paper, tissue paper, and finger paint from his own special art box. He chooses which paper to cut and which to tear. He intently glues each small item to the white paper, creating a collage. He then finger-paints bright red all around his gluing, creating a framed effect. With delight, he shows his sister his creation, and begins to make another piece of art.

A four-year-old waits for instructions while her mother gathers materials for her to create a flower basket. Her mom places a piece of large white paper, a glue bottle, a pair of scissors and small pieces of tissue paper on the table and says, "Okay, you can make this however you want --- BUT the basket is the base and I cut that for you, and then the tissue papers pieces are the flowers. Let me show you how to tear the tissue paper." The four-year-old pastes the basket in place and glues the flowers, creating the basket of flowers as planned. She shows her mother what she's made and says, "Is this right?"

These examples show two very different types of art experiences. In the first, a *process* art experience, the child has many opportunities to explore the materials, think, express himself, and create. The second is a *product* focused art experience where the child follows directions given to her to make a predetermined end-product.



These two types of art experiences don't support children's development in the same ways. It's important to know the difference in order to offer children art experiences that support their creativity, enjoyment of art, thinking skills, and healthy development.

Process Art Experiences Support Many Aspects of Children's Development


Physical Development: Your child's small motor skills develop as he glues, draws, paints, and plays with clay or homemade dough. Small motor skills are important for future writing.

Language & Literacy Development: As you talk with your child her vocabulary expands when you name new art materials, tools, and concepts such as *scissors*, *collage*, *purple*, *wide*, *sticky*, and *smooth*. Your child often tells you about the ideas she's expressing through the art and this type of conversation supports literacy development.

Social and Emotional Development: There is joy and self-exploration in self-expression. Art supports the development of self-regulation and self-control as your child focuses, makes choices, and feels successful. The ability to focus is important to future school success.

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Upcoming Events including end-of-year schedule

April 20 & 21 (Thurs & Fri): Earth Day presentations 

April 21 (Fri): 3's Field Trip to Farmer Stan's

April 24 - 27 (Mon - Thurs): 2's Dad's Week

April 29 (Sat): Spring Fair 11am - 3pm (Rain or shine)

May 1 - 5 (Mon - Fri): Teacher Appreciation Week

May 1 - 4 (Mon - Thurs): 2's Mom's Week

May 10 & 11 (Wed & Thurs): Mother's Day Teas for 3's; 10am in the 3's classrooms.

May 12 (Fri): Mother's Luncheon for 4's; 10:30am in the Smith Center (No Extended Day)

May 19 (Fri): Parent Board Mtg, 9:30am in the library

May 23 (Tues):

- Last day of classes.
- 2's Picnic from 11am - 12:30pm

May 24 (Wed): 3's & 4's picnic from 11:30am - 1:00pm (no classes this day)

Summer Program:

- May 30 - June 2 — "Science" Week
- June 5 - 9 — "Pirates & Mermaids"

Have a great summer!

Process Art

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Product Art Experiences Do Not Support Rich Learning

Product art offers children a few learning opportunities (following directions and developing small motor control) but does not offer the rich opportunities for cognitive, language, and social and emotional development open ended art experiences offer.

In addition, **children react differently** to these two types of art experiences.

Children doing **product art** might say:

"Can I be done now?"

"Is this right?"

"Mine doesn't look right."

"I can't do this!"

Children doing **process art** might say:

"Can I have more time?"

"Can I have more paper?"

"Is there any yellow?"

"I want to make another one"

Parents Can Offer Exploratory Process Art Experiences:

- Provide a place for art materials such as a special bin or drawer
- Save recycled materials (like magazines) children can later use to create collages
- Include watercolor paints, finger paints, and offer brushes and interesting painting tools such as toothbrushes and potato mashers
- Offer many drawing materials like markers, crayons, and colored pencils of different sizes
- Have lots of blank paper (rather than coloring books)
- Include tape, glue, and scissors
- Make homemade [play] dough
- Try art outside – use natural materials like leaves in art projects or paint outside for a change of setting

Dr. Laurel Bongiorno, Dean of the Division of Education and Human Studies at Champlain College, writes and presents on a variety of early care and education topics -- play as learning, parents' and teachers' understanding of play, process art, and early childhood leadership. She is a past president of the Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children. <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/supporting-development-creativity>

SAVE THE DATE



Volunteers Needed!

The Spring Fair is a great outing for the family — but not without *your* help. Please donate an hour or two to help with one of the many fun parts of the fair. You'll still have plenty of time to enjoy good food and fun with your family, and to scope out prize opportunities.

Sign-up here to help: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0445abae2da6f58-spring4#/>

Thank you!

Clues to Identifying Product and Process Art

Product Art: *"Mine doesn't look right."*

- Your child follows a sample, pattern, or model and follows instructions
- Adults know in advance what the artwork will look like
- There's a right way and a wrong way
- Adults feel the need to "fix" the art
- Patterns and cut-outs are easily available online

Process Art: *"I want to make another one."*

- There's no sample, pattern, or model
- Your child explores lots of interesting materials
- Adults have no idea what children will create
- There's no right or wrong way to do the art
- Children are relaxed and focused
- Your child wants to do more
- The art is truly an "original" every time