Encouraging the Visual Arts

In their book *Sparks of Genius*, Robert and Michelle Root-Bernstein say, “Creativity and imagination are the keys to producing life long learners.” Experiences in the arts are one of the best ways to stimulate a child’s creativity and imagination as well as other life skills including: perseverance, concentration, planning, delayed gratification, and a positive self-image. The following tips will help you encourage the budding artists in your child care setting!

- Provide an abundant variety of art supplies that are conducive to open-ended creativity (see Handout #2 for some possibilities).
- Make certain children have ample time to become deeply involved in their art work. The Director of the Washington DC Children’s Museum, Ann Lewin, has said, “Children are being hurried through their lives without allowing their natural rhythm to unfold. This, more than anything, will stifle their creativity.”
- Demonstrate the use of materials, but resist the urge to tell children what to do or how to do it.
- Avoid hovering and/or pressuring children to create a work that “looks like something.”
- To the extent possible, allow children to get messy with their art. Providing smocks and covering the floor with a shower curtain or tarp can help eliminate worries about ruined clothing or flooring.
- When possible, let the child decide when to stop working on his or her artistic creation.
- Limit the use of duplicated pictures & coloring books, as they may restrict creative impulses and do not teach fine motor control. It’s best to have children draw their own pictures.
- Engage children in conversation about their creations. Make sure you are sending the message that their work is appreciated.
- Avoid making statements that judge a child’s artwork, for example, “That’s a nice picture” or “That’s good.” Instead, comment on the child’s efforts (“You sure made a lot of painting today!”) or what you see the child doing (“Your arm is moving so quickly!”). Asking questions about the artistic process is also a good idea (“How did you make that border?” or “Which part of your project did you enjoy most?”).
Cut pockets out as one piece. Fold back up. Wrap flaps around the back and glue down. Glue in lapbook. Cut out the "Exercise ABC's" cards and glue them on 4X6 index cards or print on cardstock. Laminate if desired. Store in the corresponding pockets. Use as an exercise game—Have child choose from the pile and then do that exercise.

Exercise ABC's
A-M
Cut pocket out as one piece. Fold back up. Wrap flaps around the back and glue down. Cut out the “Exercise ABC’s” cards and glue them on 4X6 index cards. Glue A-M on one side and then N-Z on the other side. Store in the pocket. Use as an exercise game—Have child choose from the pile and then do that exercise.
Aa  Make circles with your Ankle

Bb  Balance on one foot

Cc  Clap your hands

Dd  Dance
Ee

Elevate your arms

Ff

Flex your muscles

Gg

Grab the stars

Hh

Hop on one foot
Ii
Act like an Inchworm

Jj
Jumping Jacks

Kk
Kick your legs

Ll
Lift your legs
Mm March in place
Nn Nod your head
Oo Jump Over a pillow
Pp Push-ups
Qq  
Quickly walk in place

Rr  
Run in place

Ss  
Sit-ups

Tt  
Touch your toes
Uu
Lay on the floor, put legs in the air, and ride a Unicycle

Vv
Pretend you are a Volcano

Ww
Windmills with arms

Xx
Pick your eXercise
Yy
Pretend you are using a Yo-yo

Zz
Run in a Zigzag
Parachute Games

Mushroom

This is not so much a game, more an essential starting point for parachute play. Get everyone to spread out the parachute and hold the edge, spaced out more or less evenly so they're standing in a circle. Pull the chute taut and lower it to the ground (or knee level). On the magic word (e.g. Mushroom!) everyone pulls the chute upwards (don't let go). It will fill with air and rise up like a giant mushroom - or igloo. To get it as high as possible everyone must take a couple of paces towards the center as the chute rises. It's good to practice this so that the group can learn to work effectively as a team and get the chute really high. It won't work without co-operation.

Variations on Mushroom

Once you've mastered the basic mushroom it's fun to experiment. See what happens if:

- Everyone mushrooms and then runs to the center, still holding the chute.
- Everyone mushrooms, then lets go, especially outdoors on a windy day!
- Everyone lets go at exactly the same time. If there isn't any wind, the chute will retain its perfect mushroom shape and rise straight up in the air. Indoors it may go up to the ceiling. To get this right it's best for someone to shout "One.. Two.. Three.. Go!", or similar, immediately after the "Mushroom!" instruction. For everyone to let go at exactly the right instant will take practice and concentration.

Groups of children who haven't played with a parachute before will probably be delighted and fascinated by the effect for quite a while before you move on to any other games. It's particularly spectacular when the sun is shining down through the chute.
• **Rollerball**
  Everyone holds the chute taut. Place a large ball near the edge. Try to make the ball roll around the edge of the chute. To do this someone starts the ball rolling. As it comes towards you, you lower the edge you are holding, and as it goes past you raise your edge. When all the players do this in synchronization it creates a wave going round the edge, pushing the ball round in front of it in a smooth, steady circle. It can not be done without concentration and co-operation! However, it is very rewarding for the group to eventually achieve a smooth, continuous motion. Once you've done this try speeding up - or change direction.

• **Big Turtle**
  Have the children get on their hands and knees under a large "turtle shell" and try to make the turtle move in one direction. As a cooperative game, children have to work together to get the turtle to move. **Variation:** Have the turtle go over a hill or bench or through an obstacle course without losing the shell.

• **The Ocean**
  We pretend the parachute is the ocean. I have them give me the name of an ocean. Children move the parachute in response to the 'weather report' they heard. (Encourages children to be creative). For example, I’ll say, "I heard on the weather report this morning that there was a slight breeze over the Atlantic. What would that look like?" The children respond by making small waves in the parachute. Other suggestions have been - high winds, snow (we would have to pull it tight to make the ice), twisters, etc. Once they get the hang of it the possibilities are endless.
• **Jaws**
  Everyone sits on the floor in a circle holding the parachute stretched out with his or her legs underneath it. The chute is the sea and they are sitting on the beach, happily dipping their toes in the water. By shaking the edge of the chute realistic ripple or wave effects can be generated. Once the waves are going well someone is selected to be a shark and disappears under the chute. They move around underneath and because of the waves it will be difficult to see where they are. The shark chooses a victim and grabs him or her by the feet. The victim can give an appropriate scream before disappearing under the chute. This person now becomes a new shark. To prolong the game you can have the original shark revert to being a bather - or to make it more lively you can have several sharks in there at once. To finish the game you can choose 'once a shark, always a shark' - so everyone eventually becomes a shark. You can introduce freak weather conditions - or even a killer whale!

• **See-Saw Pull**
  From a sitting position, have the children pull the chute back and forth in a see-sawing motion.

• **Make Waves**
  While gripping the parachute, everyone moves their arms up and down to make small and large waves.

• **Ball Roll**
  Have the children try to roll balls into the hole in the center of the parachute.
- **Chute Lift**
  Ask the children to lift the parachute high over their heads and down again. Talk about the soft sounds and breezes that are created. Move the parachute faster and notice the different effects.

- **Mushroom**
  From a standing position, lift the parachute from the ground to waist height, counting one (lift) and two (lift). On three (lift), have everyone raise the parachute high over their heads and then crouch down, pulling the parachute tightly behind them. A mushroom effect is created as the parachute settles.

- **Parachute Tag**
  Lift the parachute high overhead. Call one child's name and have her run (skip, hop, twirl or crawl) to the other side before the parachute comes down and tags her.

- **One Hand Run**
  Have each child hold the parachute with one hand, extending the opposite arm out for balance. Run around in one direction, then change and run around in the other direction. A variation would be to use music as the cue for changing direction (i.e. direction can be changed every time the music stops).

- **Parachute Run**
  Have the children take turns running on the parachute as it lies on the ground, while the other children make waves. See how long the children can maneuver on the waves before falling down. The length of turns can be determined by songs that the children choose to sing (i.e. everyone's turn lasts the length of one song).
• **Popcorn**
  Place a number of beanbags on the chute. Shake the chute to make them rise like popcorn.

• **Poison Snake**
  Place four to six pieces of yarn on the chute. By shaking the chute, try to make them hit the players on the other side. Keep track of who gets bitten. Put the pompoms in the middle. Sprinkle various sized pompoms in the top of the shoot and try to get them into the middle pocket. You could have teams with different colours and count how many they get in.

• **Shaking the Rug and Making Waves**
  Shaking rug involves rapid movement either light or heavy. Making waves are large movements to send billow of cloth up and down like waves. Waves can be small, medium or large. Kids can alternate turns to see who can make the best waves.

• **Merry go Round**
  Turn the body so that the chute is held with only one hand, walk, hop, jump, skip around holding the chute. It looks like a merry-go-round.

• **W A V E**
  Where one person puts hands up and person next to her follows action. (like the wave at a baseball game)
Outdoor physical activity cards

Can you hula-hoop?

Throw some bean bags into the hoop.
Outdoor physical activity cards

Stand with a partner.
Pass object over your head.

Stand with a partner.
Pass object between legs.
Outdoor physical activity cards

Lay out some hoops and jump between them.

How many times can you hop on one foot?
Outdoor physical activity cards

Throw and catch a ball with a friend.

How many times can you bounce a ball?
**Trivia Ball**

Think fast!

You will need a small, light ball to play this game.

Players sit in a circle and decide on a category (for example: animals, movies, books, or colors).

One person throws the ball to another player in the circle.

Then, that person has to immediately name an item in the category and throw the ball to someone else.

If a player can't think of anything, or repeats something that's already been said, that player is out.

The remaining players think of a new category and the game starts again.

The last person left is the winner!

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**Footsie**

Be quick with your feet.

To play, you need at least three players.

Players lie down and put their legs in the air. One player puts a ball between her feet and passes it to the next player.

If a player drops the ball, she's out.

Keep doing this until all the players but one is out.

**Hankie Hop**

Balance the hankie and hop in for the win.

This is a game for 4 or more players and should be played outside or in an open area.

Form two even teams and give each team a handkerchief.

To play, the first player of each team has to balance a handkerchief on his foot and hop to the finish line and back. Then the next person in line goes.

If a player drops the hankie, he has to start over.

The first team to finish wins.

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**Cotton Ball Fun**

Ready, Set, Scoop!

This game is for three or more players.

To play you'll need two blindfolds, two large bowls filled with cotton balls, two medium bowls, and two large spoons!

To start, two players are blindfolded and sit on the floor with bowls filled with cotton balls on their laps, empty bowls on their heads, and spoons in their hands.

One player is the referee and says, "Go!"

Players then have 30 seconds to spoon the cotton balls from the large bowls in their laps to the medium bowls on their heads.

The player who scoops the most cotton balls wins!

On your mark, get set, SCOOP!

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**Musical Hoops**

Like musical chairs, only hoopier.

This is a game for 6 or more players. One player is the referee.

To play you need a hula-hoop and some music.

Players stand in a circle holding hands with a hula-hoop hanging on one person’s arm.

The referee starts the music and players pass the hoop to the next person by wiggling through it. Players must keep holding hands.

The player stuck with the hoop when the music stops is out.

To make the game more difficult, try playing with two hoops.
Four Corners
1 - Get a group of people to play with you. You need at least 5 to play.
2 - Assign corners. You can call each corner: corner one, corner a, corner blue, whatever you want, as long as there are four corners.
3 - Have one person do the counting. The counter counts to 10 while everybody goes to a corner. As soon as the counter reaches 10, without looking, they call out a corner. The people at that corner are out and must sit down.
4 - Keep playing until there are 4 people left. When there are 4 or less people left, each person has to go to a different corner.
5 - The last person in wins!

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Red Light / Green Light
In this game, one person plays the "stop light" and the rest try to touch him/her.

At the start, all the children form a line about 15 feet away from the stop light.

The stop light faces away from the line of kids and says "green light". At this point the kids are allowed to move towards the stoplight.

At any point, the stop light may say "red light!" and turn around. If any of the kids are caught moving after this has occurred, they are out.

Play resumes when the stop light turns back around and says "green light".

The stop light wins if all the kids are out before anyone is able to touch him/her.

Otherwise, the first player to touch the stop light wins the game and earns the right to be "stop light" for the next game.

What Time Is It, Mrs. Fox?
This game is for 3 or more players and should be played in an open area.

The object of the game is to walk past Mrs. (or Mr.) Fox without getting caught.

To play, pick someone to be the Fox.

Everyone else should line up on the starting line.

The Fox will stand about 20 feet away with her back turned.

The rest of the players say, "What time is it Mrs. (or Mr.) Fox?"

If Mrs. (or Mr.) Fox answers a time like, "It's five o'clock" players take five steps forward. If she answers, "It's one o'clock" players take one step forward, and so on. The players can take any size step they want.

If Mrs. Fox says, "It's time to eat you!" she turns around and chases the other players back to the starting line.

If Mrs. Fox catches someone, he becomes the next Fox.

Ship, Shore, Deck
Ahoy Mateys! Welcome aboard the good ship ZOOM!

This game is for 4 or more players and should be played in an open area.

One player is the captain of the ship, and the rest of the players have to follow her orders.

The captain gives four commands. When she says "ship," players have to run to the right.

When she says "deck," players have to run to the middle.

When she says "shore," players have to run to the left.

And when she says "hit the deck," players have to run to the middle and lie down on their stomachs.

If a player makes a mistake, he's out.

The last player left at the end is the winner.

Ready, set... bon voyage!
HOW TO MAKE A HOMEMADE WATER WALL FOR KIDS (www.happyhooligans.ca)

A homemade water wall is a fantastic addition to a backyard play space! With a few scraps and some recyclables, you can provide hours of learning, entertainment and water play for your toddler or preschooler!

A couple of years ago, I was so inspired by all of the water walls featured at Let the Children Play that I decided to make one of my own! Of all the backyard water play activities we’ve done over the years, our water wall remains one of our very favorites! Today I’m showing you how easy it is to make a homemade water wall for your own backyard!

Don’t think for a minute that making a water wall is complicated. It might look like it is, but it was a really easy DIY project that came together quite quickly after I figured out what I would use for my actual “wall”.

WHAT CAN YOU USE TO MAKE A WATER WALL?

I used two pieces of an old bench which worked out really well as there are two sides for the kids to play at. Mine also folds up and tucks away at the end of the day, which is a bonus. You could also use a board, a wooden fence, a chain link fence, a piece of lattice etc.

Pop over, and check out Jenny’s water wall post to see if there’s a board that will work for you.
HOW TO MAKE A HOMEMADE WATER WALL FOR KIDS:

I went through the recycling bin and rummaged through our cupboards to find various bottles and containers to use. I also had an old piece of pool-hose which worked really well.

I attached the containers to the wood with a staple gun, just kind of lining things up and pouring water through to make sure the placement was right before I stapled.

If you’re using lattice or chain link fence for your wall, you can attach your containers with zip-ties, heavy duty twist ties or florist’s wire.

RECYCLE THAT WATER!

To keep water consumption down, I place a couple of plastic bins at the bottom of the water wall so the water can be re-used as they play. The kids LOVED it. The first day that I introduced the water wall, the hooligans played at it for over an hour. It was a huge hit!

YOU CAN MAKE A SAND WALL TOO!

Our water wall was so popular, I used a similar process to make a sand wall for our sandbox!

I had a piece of scrap lattice which I fastened to the sandbox/playhouse with screws, and I attached the containers by poking holes in them, and securing them to the lattice with long twist ties.

Both the water wall and the sand wall were easy to make and they provide hours of entertainment and fun!
2 Ingredient Cloud-Dough: the ultimate sensory dough! Cloud dough requires only 2 common household ingredients, and it’s ready in minutes. It smells heavenly, and it’s a delight to run your fingers through!

I’m a sucker for a good, homemade sensory play recipe, and this flour and baby oil Cloud dough is something I’ve been waiting all winter to make! I’ve seen cloud dough on plenty of other blogs, and every one mentions the mess-factor so I’ve been for warm weather so we could make it, and take it outside to play with.

WHAT IS CLOUD DOUGH?

Cloud dough (also known as moon dough or moon sand) is silky and moldable and takes just two ingredients to make. It’s an amazing sensory dough! The Hooligans absolutely loved it. I’m not kidding when I say it kept them engrossed for well over an hour.

Since first writing this post, I’ve also come up with a coloured cloud dough recipe and a toddler-safe cloud dough for little ones who still put everything in their mouths.

You’re going to love how easy Cloud Dough is to make.

CLOUD DOUGH RECIPE:

Add one cup of baby oil to 8 cups of flour. Stir well. I used a pastry cutter to mix mine, but a spoon or whisk would be fine.

Transfer your dough to a bin or basin (I purchased this kitty litter box at the dollar store, and it’s perfect for sensory activities), and that’s it. You’re done!

Set out some containers, scoops and molds and let the little ones at it.

There’s something so soothing and relaxing working with this dough. The Hooligans were so QUIET while they played!

You’ll want to wear old clothing or an apron. Check out the aprons I make from the legs of our old jeans! This is definitely messy play. I personally suggest taking it outside. If you want to use it indoors, I’d advise putting down a plastic table cloth to contain any spills.

I had another activity set up as well. I filled the wagon with warm soapy water, and added containers, spray bottles, sponges and some farm animals.

The Hooligans went back and forth between the two activities but the Cloud Dough bin was by far the most popular place to be today.

HOW DO I STORE IT, AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

Cloud dough will keep indefinitely when stored in a container with a lid.
Online Cardboard Box Ideas

http://www.minieco.co.uk/cardboard-instruments/

http://www.notjustahousewife.net/2012/05/3m-projector-review-and-150-target-giftcard-giveaway.html#comment-21796

http://dirtandboogers.com/homemade-toys-bean-bag-toss/


http://petitandsmall.com/5-diy-puppet-projects/

http://www.kidsplaybox.com/art-activity-throw-ball-painting/
Online Outdoor Game Ideas

http://www.lifewith4boys.com/2013/03/10-camping-games-for-outdoor-fun.html

http://blogs.babycenter.com/life_and_home/7-fun-sidewalk-chalk-games-to-get-outside/?crlt.pid=camp.lsjD9jgt0rbm


Summer Snack Ideas

http://fakeginger.com/2014/04/14/dirt-worms-chex-mix/

http://www.mrshappyhomemaker.com/fruit-pizza/


http://mylitter.com/coupon/healthy-snacks-apple-sandwiches/

https://declutterorganizerepurpose.wordpress.com/2010/12/13/fast-healthy-meals-for-kids-by-pillsbury/
Utah’s Be My Neighbor Day is all about growing — growing better families and better neighborhoods through the simple act of growing a garden. Growing a garden together is the perfect activity to develop what researchers have identified as the nine characteristics of successful families: love and appreciation, time together, encouragement, commitment, communication, adaptability, faith, connection and clear responsibilities.

Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood uses these characteristics to teach children about being good neighbors. Daniel Tiger and his friends learn by sharing, performing acts of kindness, and expressing gratitude. Parents can watch with children and utilize the resources on our website to reinforce the lessons Daniel teaches in each episode. Working together throughout the summer, parents and children will strengthen these characteristics, just like Daniel, as they grow their gardens, families, and neighborhoods.
GROW YOUR GARDEN

Gardens add beauty and life to our neighborhoods. When families garden together, they have stronger relationships, improved health, and reduced expenses. Planting fruits and vegetables can add an affordable, healthy option to every family member’s diet. Visit kbyueleven.org/BeMyNeighbor for resources to help you grow your family garden.

GROW YOUR GRATITUDE

Daniel Tiger shows that having an attitude of gratitude is important for adults and children. Grateful people are happier and can even live longer. Children who say thank you often have more positive attitudes at school and home. For tips on growing gratitude in your home and neighborhood, visit kbyueleven.org/BeMyNeighbor.

GROW A FRIEND

When Daniel Tiger serves, he builds strong friendships in his neighborhood. Children can do good deeds to spread positivity and service throughout their neighborhoods. Ideas and resources for performing good deeds are available at kbyueleven.org/BeMyNeighbor.

GROWING TOGETHER

Strong neighborhoods are built when friends share gardens. Community gardens are available throughout Utah to those who wish to grow their community by gardening together. Find out more about Utah’s community gardens and shared resources at kbyueleven.org/BeMyNeighbor.

Be My Neighbor

Sharing our harvests helps us grow giving, caring communities. As you grow a row of fruits and vegetables for your family, plant an extra row to give to your neighbors and donate to your local food bank. Visit kbyueleven.org/BeMyNeighbor to find a list of Utah food banks and instructions for produce donations.