

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

- Encourage children to act out familiar stories by providing *props* to go along with stories or nursery rhymes.
- Build time into the daily schedule for the arts, including creative movement activities at the end of group time, or at *transitions*.
- Offer creative play activities both indoors and outdoors. For example, children might use chalk on a blackboard indoors or on the sidewalk outdoors.
- Play music outdoors where children can make large dance movements.
- Encourage children to move and dance to music in many ways (march, clap, stomp, gallop, jump, sway).
- Take pictures of the children doing creative activities and support children in taking their own photos. Display these pictures to help children *recall* what they have done and to help families appreciate the creative process.
- Give children many opportunities to experience beauty through all their senses (touching snow, looking at rainbows, smelling freshly mowed grass, tasting different foods, listening to birds when they chirp).
- Set an example by demonstrating spontaneity, a sense of wonder, and excitement.
- Allow children to freely create their own artworks. This lets the child focus on the creative process rather than the finished product. Refrain from providing an “adult-finished” product (support, don’t lead).
- Talk with children individually about what they would like to create, the materials they will need, and how they will carry out their plans. Encourage them to spend time developing their artwork.
- Encourage children to mix primary colors and predict what color will result from the mixing. Provide white paint to mix with colors to make pastels.
- Put out playdough of many different colors, encouraging children to mix colors as they mold and shape the playdough with their hands, craft sticks, rolling pins, and other materials.
- Ask children to talk about their artwork, what they like about it, how they created it, and what they might like to try in the future. Express an encouraging attitude without judgment (“You put a lot of effort and beautiful colors into your creation!”).
- Expose children to a collection of art from the past and present. Take children to museums, galleries, plays, concerts, and other appropriate cultural activities in the community or virtually online.
- *Model* a sense of wonder about various types of artwork by asking questions about how the artists created their work and what messages they were trying to convey. *Prompt* children to ask questions as well. Provide opportunities for children to use similar materials and techniques in the art area to create their works of art.
- Provide access, if possible, to *developmentally appropriate* art and music apps and programs that allow children to be creative.