

How can I encourage my child in the visual arts?

Children need practice in working with art materials. It does not matter what the final work looks like, only that the child has a chance to create something with the materials. Children do not need expensive toys or easels to express themselves – just a place where your table or floor is protected.

Here are a few ways children can experiment:

- playing with play dough
- painting with a brush or fingers
- drawing with markers, crayons or pens
- giving a piece of their signed art as a gift to a family member or friend
- making frames for their artworks and hanging them on walls or the fridge
- gluing natural objects like leaves or flowers into arrangements.



How can I keep my child interested in the arts?

As your child grows, here are a few other ways to promote artistic expression:

- write creative stories together
- read poetry
- go to museums and art galleries
- attend plays, musicals, folk festivals and craft shows
- talk about art works together
- sign up for voice, piano, guitar or other music lessons.

Artistic expression is a vital part of our lives. There is a strong, positive relationship between the arts and academic success. The arts also provide stress relief, alter our moods and add pleasure to our days. When children and parents or guardians spend time together enjoying the arts, they enrich their lives. Enjoy these experiences with your children.

For more information on artistic expression or the arts, please contact your school's principal.



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Encouraging Artistic Expression at Home

A guide for parents and guardians



EDUCATING FOR SUCCESS!

Young children enjoy music, movement and colour. You can encourage your child's creative side by providing space and materials to experiment in the arts. Encouraging artistic expression will not only help children prepare for school, but it also will help them continue to appreciate the arts as they grow. The arts help us learn through non-verbal parts of our mind, allowing for problem-solving, acquiring knowledge and reinforcing the connections between imagination and the physical world.

How do schools teach artistic expression?

In our elementary schools, there are three subject areas considered "the arts":

- music
- visual arts
- drama and dance.

Students also have the opportunity to express themselves artistically and creatively in other classes, such as English or history, through assignments and projects.

Why is artistic expression important?

- The arts allow children to be smart in different ways.
- Artistic expression promotes intellectual and emotional growth.
- The arts build and celebrate a sense of community and self.
- Students learn to express themselves both verbally and non-verbally.
- The arts are fundamental forms of expression for all cultures and historical periods.
- Artistic expression is an important source of enjoyment and means of communication.
- Engagement in the arts promotes the values of perseverance and the rewards for hard work.

How can I encourage artistic expression in music?

Beautiful music of many kinds is available everywhere. Early in their lives, babies like to listen to music, and, as they grow, children develop favourite songs they like to sing. Parents can help children develop their interest in music by:

- singing or clapping along to favourite songs; action songs such as the Hokey Pokey are great to help children learn about themselves
- making musical sound makers such as tambourines, rattles or drums to help children learn about rhythm and beat long before they can talk about it
- taping your children's musical efforts, or allowing them to perform in front of family and friends
- sharing your favourite music with your child; children know at a very young age that music makes us feel good, and your taking pleasure in music will make it seem important in your child's life
- taking your child to concerts for young people
- introducing your child to a wide variety of music; for example, music is a valuable tool for learning about different cultures.

As children's appreciation for music grows, they will develop their own tastes and preferences. It is important to encourage continued experimentation with all types of music.



How can I encourage expression in drama and dance?

Drama and dance are part of the Ontario Curriculum for students. Children are eager to move and act from an early age. Children learn more about drama from direct experience, than from watching television. They can gain an interest in drama and dance by:

- using puppets to imitate the sounds of animals or other aspects of life
- dressing up and pretending to be someone else
- telling and acting out stories about family history or interesting experiences
- making a microphone from a paper roll or other materials to gain practice speaking to an audience
- imitating people, animals or characters
- dancing or moving to music such as classical, jazz and anything else available.

Children with musical intelligence may show a strong interest in dancing. Dancing helps develop balance, coordination, beat and rhythm skills. Dancing and role-playing can be rewarding, developmental play activities with or without an audience.