

# CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

## *Young Children and the Arts*

A Companion to  
Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development  
and Learning from Birth through Five Years of Age

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# Introduction

Being a parent or an early childhood educator is demanding work. Providing experiences that will help children develop physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially has lasting implications both for the child, the family and for society. When children participate in and respond to quality arts activities and experiences, their learning and development is enhanced. Families and educators need tools and resources to help them succeed in providing creative, developmentally appropriate arts experiences. **Creative Connections** is one such tool. The guidance contained in this document supports parents and early childhood educators by providing helpful information and direction to better understand their children, share in appropriate arts activities, and use creative arts to foster full development of their children.

This document builds upon the pioneering work done by the Arts Education Partnership in recognizing the importance of the arts in children's development and their understanding of the world. **Creative Connections** serves as a companion document for **Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development and Learning from Birth through Three Years of Age** and includes information for children ages birth through five years.

**Creative Connections** can be used as a reference guide, or as a resource for planning arts activities and experiences. Use **Creative Connections** by first locating the child's age in months and choosing a developmental area. Use the **Indicators** (The baby/child may) to identify **Activities** (You can) that will support the child in meeting that indicator. Use the **Examples** (The baby/child might) to determine if the child has met that indicator. You also can determine a starting point by identifying behaviors or actions that a child is already displaying. Once you've identified those behaviors or actions, use the Activities and Examples to develop plans that support the child's progress to the next Indicator. We urge you to use this document to support your child's development through experiences and activities in the arts.



# Guiding Principles

All three of the following principles should be used to guide the development of arts-based programs and resources for young children. Each Guiding Principle can be constructively used in all resources for young children to achieve the greatest benefit from the curriculum and the learning environment.

## **FOCUS: The Child**

**PRINCIPLE:** Children learn best by being actively engaged in the processes of creating, participating in and responding to quality arts experiences, adapted to their developmental levels and reflecting their own culture.

A child-centered curriculum is based on the assumption that the learner is the primary focus within the learning experience and environment. Research reveals that children's art is a result that arises from children's play. To make the most of this learning opportunity, some facilitation by adults is required.

As they engage in the artistic process, children learn that they can observe, organize, and interpret their experiences. They can make decisions, take actions, and monitor the effect of those actions. They can create form and meaning where none existed before. The arts experience becomes a source of communication and interaction for children and adults.

Studies are beginning to show that stages of artistic development are no more than approximations or informed predictions of what most children will do at a certain age, given the quantity and quality of arts experiences that are available to children in the cultures of their homes, child care programs, communities, and schools.





## **FOCUS: The Arts Experience**

**PRINCIPLE:** Arts activities and experiences, while maintaining the integrity of the artistic disciplines (as developmentally appropriate), work best when they can be meaningful to children, be play based, follow a scope and sequence, and connect to early childhood curriculum and appropriate practices. High quality, developmentally appropriate arts activities may contribute to children's learning across the domains.

Young children need increasing competence and integration across art and content domains integrating activities that include opportunities for words, gestures, drawings, paintings, sculpture, construction, music, singing, drama, dramatic play, movement, and dance.

Children learn more through meaningful activities in which the arts are integrated with other subject or content areas. Activities that are meaningful and relevant to children's daily life experiences provide opportunities to teach across the curriculum and assist children in seeing the interrelationships among things they are learning.

Arts experiences that recognize children's active role in learning offer many opportunities for them to construct and elaborate meaning communicated through language and other expressive modes.

## **FOCUS: Learning Environment and Adult Interactions**

**PRINCIPLE:** The development of early childhood arts programming (including resources and materials) works best when it is shared among early childhood educators, parents, and caregivers, arts education specialists and practicing artists, and the process should connect with community resources.

Children need interested adults and others to listen to their plans, respond to their ideas, and offer assistance and support for their explorations. The appropriateness of the learning process and content is predicated on the developmental level of the child. Therefore, planning is often most effective when it is first child-centered, then content relevant. Educators, parents and caregivers should have a basic understanding of the child's cognitive, physical, and socio-

emotional development, and be familiar with developmentally appropriate resources. Research indicates that young children can participate in artistic activities with developmentally appropriate everyday materials, sufficient time, adequate space, and the opportunity to be engaged by knowledgeable adults.

Additionally, a child's solitary exploration of open ended materials and engagement in the stimulating process of creating their own expressions of art can provide a meaningful experience for the child.

## Guiding Principles in Action

The following are examples of how the Guiding Principles can be put into action in developmentally appropriate arts experiences for young children.

### **FOCUS: The Child**

Children are active learners, drawing on direct physical and social experience as well as culturally transmitted knowledge to construct their own understandings of the world around them.

#### **Meaningful arts experiences for infants and toddlers: (Birth through two years of age)**

- Best occur in one-on-one experiences and occasionally small group experiences.
- Introduce young children to visual stimulation, physical material and movement exploration, and various art based experiences.
- Draw from the best and simplest elements of the visual and performing arts.
- Are language rich and centered around one-on-one interactions with a significant adult.
- Reflect a child's environment and everyday life and develop these experiences into different art forms.
- Are embellished with encouraging language from adults and can be a source of sensory stimulation.
- Provide a balance of sensory stimulation (using sounds, movement, etc.) that is sensitive to cues and signals of the child.
- Reinforce early language and literacy skills as adults connect language to toddlers' activities.
- Respond to the baby's vocalizations and gestures with imitation and use repetition when introducing new sounds and gestures.



### Arts experiences for preschool children: (Three years through five years of age)

- Occur in one-on-one experiences, as well as small group and large group contexts.
- Reinforce child-initiated opportunities of expression and exploration.
- Engage children in creating, reflecting, and sharing their own art in child-friendly environments and settings.
- Are integrated across the curriculum and build upon the program goals.
- Allow for child-initiated choices and action within the arts activity.
- Engage children in process-oriented activities to explore, create, and reflect on their own art and their experiences in the arts.
- Emphasize the experience and engagement with the arts and learning through the arts rather than finished products or performance.
- Foster imagination, narrative response, and have their origins in children's play.
- Initiate children into child-friendly and appropriate sharing, and audience roles.
- Connect to children's experiences and knowledge.
- Include repeated contact sessions with art form(s), draw upon progressive opportunities for involvement, and provide links to real life.
- Evolve from and encourage interest in children's literature, and introduce, as well as build on, relative vocabulary.



### Arts experiences for children in the early grades: (Kindergarten through Third Grade)

- Foster imagination, creativity, and problem solving.
- Reinforce child-directed opportunities of expression and exploration.
- Engage children in creating, reflecting, and presenting their own art in child-friendly environments and settings.
- Build upon the curricular goals and sequential skills of each artistic discipline and make interdisciplinary connections with learning across subject areas.
- May lead to presentations of children's artwork when they are socially, emotionally, physically, and developmentally ready, and in small group, informal settings.
- Emphasize the process of engaging in and learning the arts and are not solely dependent on finished products.

## FOCUS: The Arts Experience

Through arts education, very young children can experience nontraditional modes of learning that develop intrapersonal, interpersonal, spatial, kinesthetic, and logic abilities, skills, and knowledge, as well as traditional modes of learning that develop mathematical and linguistic abilities, skills, and knowledge. Because children learn in multiple ways, a variety of possible activities for each child help insure success in multiple ways of knowing and doing.

### Well-conceived arts activities:

- Are balanced between child- and adult-initiated activities, reflective and active activities, indoor and outdoor activities, and group and individual activities.
- Provide many opportunities for child-initiated action. Children need to make their own choices and see their choices acted upon.
- Are stimulating and contain quality materials for children to use, including a selection of books and open ended arts materials.
- Allow children time to repeat and practice new skills.
- Focus on children's experiences and the process of participating in the arts rather than on isolated performance or curricular goals.
- Encourage expression and imagination.
- Are flexible in structure, allow for improvisation and encourage spontaneity, problem solving and critical thinking.
- Introduce children to works of art and cultural resources in their community, including performances, exhibitions, and literature, of the highest quality that are developmentally appropriate in content and presentation.

## FOCUS: Learning Environment and Adult Interactions

**ALL adults can enhance or extend the effectiveness of arts experiences with young children by:**

- Combining simple language with visual cues and modeling to guide infants'/toddlers' participation and engagement in arts experiences.
- Working together to create a learning community that includes arts specialists, artists, parents, families, caregivers, teachers, and educational consultants.
- Planning arts activities that reinforce the learning activities of the child care program, classroom, and home setting (including cultural events and customs).



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- Being familiar with young children's stages of development.
  - Using repetition (moving, dancing, dramatizing, pretending) and scaffolding (expanding the activity, providing language, adding to child-generated ideas) to enhance children's arts experiences.
  - Participating in arts activities with children in locations where they feel comfortable.
  - Relying on current, everyday materials and resources to inform the planning of arts activities with children.
  - Recognizing that play is a critically important vehicle for children's social, emotional, and cognitive development as well as a reflection of their development.
  - Guiding children but avoiding rigid participation or presentation of rules and structures.
  - Facilitating developmentally appropriate child-initiated and child-centered activities or projects in the arts.
  - Providing guidance to young children on using materials (e.g., media, musical instruments, and technology).
  - Providing activities and materials to create, participate, and respond to their own or others' works of art.
  - Providing ongoing opportunities and materials for creative reading and storytelling activities (e.g., puppet shows, books, stories read by adults, role-playing).
  - Using a child's language in as many experiences as possible (e.g., labeling objects and works of art).
  - Using descriptive language when commenting on or giving feedback about a child's work ("I notice that you drew lots of red and green lines.") rather than empty praise (i.e. "what a pretty picture.")
  - Recognizing the child's efforts and works (e.g., displaying artwork and giving positive feedback) and having a place for all children's efforts, not just "the best."
  - Documenting and communicating each child's progress and achievements in the arts.
  - Inquiring about and understanding the arts curriculum in the child's school.
  - Being good listeners and observers.
  - Communicating regularly with school and child care administrators and teachers about the arts program.
  - Being strong advocates for quality arts education experiences.
  - Participating in intergenerational programs by connecting young children with teenagers and young adults.

Many museums, cultural organizations, and teaching artists offer hands-on workshops, activities and performances that are age-appropriate for early learners. To ensure the best possible arts experience, consider the following points when planning field trips to arts and cultural organizations, or visits to your program by outside artists:

- Contact them ahead of time to ensure that specific, age-appropriate programs and resources that meet the developmental needs of the children within your care are offered.
- Contact them to schedule a visit or program and ensure that they can accommodate the needs of your group (including the number of children) on a given date and time.
- Ensure that the organization's programs for young children reflect an awareness of the children's cultures and community.
- Ensure that the visit connects to an appropriate lesson or theme.
- Ensure that they have experience working with young children.
- Ensure that they provide opportunities for children and the adults that care for them to experience performances, art making, and/or exhibits together.
- Request resource materials to extend the arts experience, including pre- and post-performance activities, simple art activities, vocabulary to reinforce, and references regarding related children's literature.
- Prepare the children in your care for their arts experience by introducing related ideas and vocabulary through children's literature and hands-on activities.
- Ensure that the artist or organization provides information to educators, parents, and caregivers about their venue and the nature of the visit before children attend, including expectations for appropriate behavior that may be reviewed in advance with the children in your care.
- Limit the group size of children participating in a program when possible, keeping groups to 10-20 children each, and planning for the appropriate number of adult chaperones.



# Young Babies - Birth to Three Months

When babies are awake, they can be nurtured through sights, sounds and gentle touches. Babies are happiest in a calm environment and in a regular routine (e.g., don't let babies cry for long periods of time).



Indicators (The baby may):	Sample Arts Experiences that Promote Learning	What Adults and Children Can Do Together in the Arts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sleep, suck, grab, stare, listen, cry, and make small movements.</li> <li>• Use facial expressions such as smiling and frowning to express their needs.</li> <li>• Respond to voices, both loud and soft tones, by turning their heads and moving their arms and legs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stimulate eye movement and auditory development through contrasting images (e.g., black and white or colored objects) and voices (speaking or singing).</li> <li>• Increase awareness of space, movement and sound by hanging mobiles, playing soothing music, and making animated faces. Babies discover that they can change what they see, hear, and touch.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch for babies' cues and signals, such as a response to music and objects (cues include smiles and reaching). Respond and mimic babies' vocalizing, cooing.</li> <li>• Allow babies to hear soothing music, birds singing, water babbling, and other soft sounds.</li> <li>• Speak in high-pitched, sing-song tones ("parentese") while looking directly into the baby's eyes.</li> <li>• Hang mobiles within a foot of the eye line. Sing, talk and read books to babies. Include finger play.</li> <li>• Use gentle movement when holding babies (e.g., rocking, bouncing and swaying).               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hold baby close to chest while swaying gently to music or humming.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Gently pat the baby to the steady beat of a song, or provide tactile stimulation (massage) to hands and feet.</li> <li>• While holding/gently swaying the baby, vary movements to include different levels (sitting, standing) and locomotor movement (walking, waltzing, marching).</li> </ul>



# Young Babies - Three to Eight Months

Holding, cradling, and hugging will nurture babies and develop their sense of touch and space. Young babies show pleasure by looking intently, joyful smiling and laughing, arm and leg movements, and other gestures.



Indicators (The infant/toddler may):	Sample Arts Experiences that Promote Learning	What Adults and Children Can Do Together in the Arts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond to people’s voices by turning their head and eyes.</li> <li>• Vocalize with some intonation and begin making repetitive sounds.</li> <li>• Respond to objects and people they can see and touch, and voices and music they can hear.</li> <li>• Make meaningful noises, coo, and babble.</li> <li>• Respond to friendly and angry tones of others’ voices.</li> <li>• Begin to roll over and sit upright by the end of this stage.</li> </ul>	<p>Continue previous experiences as well as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage recognition of new aspects in the environment by touching objects, and hearing adults name them, and observing functions.</li> <li>• Stimulate innate sense of discovery through sound, music and movement, i.e., through shaking a rattle, creating a rhythm with baby spoons, rhythmic clapping or swaying to the music or listening to the sounds of instruments such as violin, flute, or guitar (or other music).</li> <li>• Build vocal skills through stories and songs; encourage expression by making faces, gestures, and sounds.</li> </ul>	<p>Continue previous experiences as well as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate simple signs into storytelling and songs.</li> <li>• Begin to place baby-safe materials, such as rattles, shaker eggs, or appropriate toys with textures and sounds, in babies’ fists.</li> <li>• Encourage babies to reach and sway arms.</li> <li>• Use appropriate soft, multi-textured, and colorful materials for babies to touch (e.g., blankets, light scarves or toys).</li> <li>• Use vocal sounds combined with facial expressions to express feelings, such as happy and surprised.</li> <li>• Encourage babies to laugh and smile by rhyming, singing, and using and repeating pat-a-cake type gestures.</li> <li>• Use nap time to read nursery rhymes and sing lullabies.</li> <li>• Read picture books together, describing and pointing to images and giving names to objects.</li> </ul>



# Eight to Eighteen Months

Crawlers and walkers are able to see and begin to know how things work. They experiment with their world and use their senses to understand everything by touching, seeing, hearing, etc. They also need extra attention and supervision (especially as they begin to crawl and walk). They benefit from someone talking to them about what they see and hear.



Indicators (The toddler may):	Sample Arts Experiences that Promote Learning	What Adults and Children Can Do Together in the Arts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience new senses of adaptation and anticipation (e.g., through hide-and-seek, peek-a-boo).</li> <li>• Become more deliberate and purposeful in responding to people and objects.</li> <li>• Comprehend simple words and intonation of language (such as “all gone,” and “bye-bye”).</li> <li>• Begin speaking and actively experiment with their voice.</li> <li>• Follow simple instructions, especially with visual or vocal cues.</li> <li>• Hold large crayons, move them between hands, and make marks on paper.</li> <li>• Place blocks one on top of the other.</li> <li>• Demonstrate continuous vocabulary growth up to 30 words.</li> <li>• Crawl, pull self up, walk, climb and may begin to run.</li> <li>• Actively show affection and express positive and negative feelings.</li> <li>• Shows interest and pride in creations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage imitation of voices, sounds, and movements.</li> <li>• Expose them to different sounds, movements and expressions that others make.</li> <li>• Encourage exploration of different sounds they can make with their voice or by clapping their hands.</li> <li>• Develop motor skills by using simple musical/rhythm instruments such as toy drums, wooden sticks, shaker eggs, bells and xylophones.</li> <li>• Initiate repetition of patterns in voice, movement, and sounds</li> <li>• Develop balance by simple dance movements while sitting or standing.</li> <li>• Provide non-representational manipulative items that encourage imaginative play alone and with adults.</li> <li>• Model and affirm the expression of genuine emotions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move to different play areas to see nature, people, and images. Talk about what the children see.</li> <li>• Encourage them to respond to and initiate actions, words, expressions and feelings as part of their involvement in music, movement, story books and illustrations.</li> <li>• Play music and move the children’s feet, legs, and hands to the beat. Play clapping games within songs.</li> <li>• Explore shapes, textures and colors of everyday objects (e.g., clothing, cereal boxes, etc.).</li> <li>• Talk about what is around them and make up songs or chants to go with what they see and hear.</li> <li>• Hang pictures at eye level. Name, describe, and point to items in the pictures. Ask questions and direct attention to encourage curiosity. Verbally give directional cues, as well as count, describe, and compare.</li> <li>• Use character voices and gestures when reading stories.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities to explore safe and appropriate media in visual arts (e.g., finger painting with water, drawing with large crayons).</li> </ul>



# Eighteen to Twenty-Four Months

Toddlers move quickly and with greater skill during this phase. They begin teaching themselves and learn from watching other children. Words become associated with movement and accompanying body sensations. This assists in providing an early understanding that symbols stand for objects and experiences. Identity becomes an important issue during this stage, tied to increasing independence.



Indicators (The toddler may):	Sample Arts Experiences that Promote Learning	What Adults and Children Can Do Together in the Arts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy others' actions and voices, speak in two-word (short) sentences, name objects, and look at books on their own.</li> <li>• Build thoughts, mental pictures, and verbal labels associated with learned concepts.</li> <li>• Stand on tiptoes, catch a ball with arms and chest, and walk up and down stairs.</li> <li>• Unbutton large buttons, and unzip large zippers.</li> <li>• Begin to match and sort and learn where objects belong.</li> <li>• Show curiosity and recognize themselves in a mirror or photograph.</li> <li>• Demonstrate vocabulary growth up to approximately 200 words.</li> <li>• Use words to express feelings.</li> </ul>	<p>Continue previous experiences as well as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children learn to make aesthetic choices such as what color to paint the sky and what songs they like to sing.</li> <li>• Encourage imagination and pretend play by prompting children to move like a cat through a jungle or dance like an imaginary character to music.</li> <li>• Build vocabulary through drama, role playing, and acting out stories (with puppets or pictures). Acting out stories also generates questions and allows for multiple answers.</li> <li>• Learn about feelings through songs, poems, artwork and stories.</li> </ul>	<p>Continue previous experiences as well as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities with safe, simple, everyday materials such as paper plates, "pop-sicle sticks", torn paper, nontoxic paint, and Play Dough (or air dry clay) are appropriate. Allow children to explore and experiment with materials (with supervision).</li> <li>• Hold hands while dancing and listening to music.</li> <li>• Vary the qualities of movement, e.g. fast/slow; high/low, forward/backward.</li> <li>• While dressing children, pretend socks are puppets or animals.</li> <li>• Act out children's favorite stories or routines using real and pretend props (toy phone, doll, scarves).</li> <li>• Build a library of books and take weekly trips to the local library.</li> <li>• Show and tell stories from photographs and art.</li> <li>• Have simple musical/percussion instruments available to play.</li> </ul>



# Twenty-Four to Thirty-Six Months

Toddlers become increasingly coordinated in their movements and gestures at this time, including fine motor skill development. Language development increases rapidly, and they begin rote counting up to five. They develop an interest in other children and being near them. They begin developing an interest in pretend play.



Indicators (The child may):	Sample Arts Experiences that Promote Learning	What Adults and Children Can Do Together in the Arts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop symbolic thought and build mental concepts or mental pictures.</li> <li>• Make first representational drawings.</li> <li>• Engage in self-directed imaginative play.</li> <li>• Listen, repeat, and experiment with words on an increasing basis. Speak in sentences with three or more words.</li> <li>• Understand self in relation to others.</li> <li>• Paint with large brush and tear paper.</li> <li>• Complete a form puzzle with large knobs.</li> <li>• Begin to turn pages one at a time.</li> <li>• Repeat representative gestures and motions such as “Itsy, Bitsy Spider,” or “I’m a Little Teapot.”</li> </ul>	<p>Continue previous experiences as well as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop problem solving skills and empathy by predicting what will happen next and pretending to be favorite characters in books, stories, or songs.</li> <li>• Help to develop analytical skills by listening and responding to music, poems, and drama activities, and looking at visual art and describing the details.</li> <li>• Promote physical development and self-confidence through dance and creative movement. Children learn how to use different parts of their bodies to express themselves.</li> <li>• Drawing, painting, dancing and singing promote different concepts such as loud and quiet, hard and soft, fast and slow, light and dark, etc.</li> <li>• By stringing large beads or drawing on paper, fine motor skills are developed.</li> <li>• Include other children in arts experiences.</li> </ul>	<p>Continue previous experiences as well as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to build on experiences in music, drama, dance, and art and make arts-based activities a daily routine.</li> <li>• Incorporate singing, storytelling and dance into daily experiences (e.g., eating lunch, nap time, and saying goodbye).</li> <li>• Identify shapes, textures, and colors in foods and clothing.</li> <li>• Assist children in using brushes and paint and molding objects with clay.</li> <li>• Create simple costumes for dramatic play and acting out stories, using pieces of fabric and old clothes.</li> <li>• Use puppets to introduce a new idea or ask for help in solving a problem.</li> </ul>



# Three to Four Years

Preschoolers' strengths and motor skills along with their more adult-like body proportions allow greater opportunities to explore the world. Children can count to five and higher during this stage. They start to play with other children and are more likely to share. They are generally more cooperative and enjoy new experiences.



Indicators (The child may):	Sample Arts Experiences that Promote Learning	What Adults and Children Can Do Together in the Arts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask many questions, mainly those that begin with “why.”</li> <li>• Talk about things and make up stories.</li> <li>• Print large capital letters using pencil or crayon.</li> <li>• Cut figures with scissors, and may be able to print first name.</li> <li>• Push and pull a wagon.</li> <li>• Attempt to get dressed on their own.</li> <li>• Gain a sense of direction and relationship to others’ space.</li> <li>• Begin to show social skills and manners.</li> <li>• Match shapes, colors, and patterns.</li> <li>• Draw faces with some detail.</li> <li>• With direction, play group games such as “Ring Around the Rosie,” and musical chairs.</li> </ul>	<p>Continue previous experiences as well as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to the child’s ability to learn causality through storytelling and drama. New problems pose questions and encourage children to seek their own answers and act on choices.</li> <li>• Help develop language skills by reciting poems, dramatizing stories, and finger plays.</li> <li>• Number skills are developed through music (e.g., counting rhythm and beats when playing a musical instrument).</li> <li>• Dance helps to build motor control, body relationships, and directionality.</li> <li>• Fine motor skills are developed through drawing, sculpting, and other hands-on activities with the visual arts.</li> <li>• Social skills are encouraged by group activities such as dramatizing stories, learning dance steps, and singing songs together.</li> </ul>	<p>Continue previous experiences as well as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let children take on the role of a character in a favorite story and act out solutions to the problems the character faces. Allow children to predict what will happen next in a story.</li> <li>• Tell and act out family stories about grandparents, aunts and uncles, and others.</li> <li>• Identify and talk about feelings/emotions of characters in books and stories; connect to their own feelings and behaviors.</li> <li>• Imitate and initiate movements made by animals, objects (such as trains and clocks) and nature (such as wind and rain).</li> <li>• Construct collages using paper, glue, scissors, and magazine cut outs. Talk with them about the collage or create a story together.</li> <li>• Record children’s narratives and words in writing along with their artwork to reinforce language development.</li> <li>• Go outdoors to play in the mud, drawing pictures with sticks and shaping mud as you would with clay/ Play Dough.</li> <li>• Hum tunes to familiar songs and encourage children to add the lyrics that go with the melody.</li> <li>• Allow children to observe themselves in the mirror while dancing.</li> <li>• Bring small groups of children to interactive performances and exhibits.</li> <li>• Take children to child-friendly museums, libraries, and live performances to introduce them to different aspects of their community.</li> </ul>



# Four to Five Years

Preschoolers learn from interaction with others. They begin to understand that they have feelings and opinions that are different from others. Children at this stage are more likely to understand and remember the relationships, concepts, and strategies that they acquire through first-hand, meaningful experiences. They have longer attention spans and enjoy activities that involve exploring, investigating, and stretching their imagination.



Indicators (The child may):	Sample Arts Experiences that Promote Learning	What Adults and Children Can Do Together in the Arts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy simple geometric figures, dress self, and use more sophisticated utensils.</li> <li>• Use language to express thinking and increasingly complex sentences in speaking to others. Express their own feelings when listening to stories.</li> <li>• Enjoy using words in rhymes and understand nonsense and using humor.</li> <li>• Be very imaginative and like to exaggerate.</li> <li>• Say and begin writing the alphabet.</li> <li>• Identify what is missing from a picture (such as a face without a nose).</li> <li>• Identify basic colors.</li> <li>• Have better control in running, jumping, and hopping but may be uncoordinated in their movements.</li> </ul>	<p>Continue previous experiences as well as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen non-verbal, cognitive skills by encouraging children to describe people in their world using pictures, body movements, drama and pantomime.</li> <li>• Provide creative experiences for emergent literacy and numeracy skills through activities such as making up stories, reciting poems and rhymes, and singing songs with puppets and stuffed animals.</li> <li>• Children begin to make observations by role-playing human and animal characters in a variety of imaginary settings.</li> <li>• Memory is strengthened by repeating stories, poems, and songs.</li> <li>• Children continue to develop fine motor skills using paint brushes, crayons, and manipulating clay and found objects.</li> <li>• By using clay or other art supplies, children learn to make choices and discover how to make things happen.</li> </ul>	<p>Continue previous experiences as well as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discover with children how the body can move to music and the differences when moving without music.</li> <li>• Form and repeat sequences of 3-5 simple movements to create a dance.</li> <li>• Create musical instruments with children using empty containers as drums.</li> <li>• In dramatic play and story dramatizations, adults may take on a role or character and interact with children also in role.</li> <li>• Make a patchwork quilt with scraps of materials glued onto paper or fabric. Create and illustrate stories based on the quilt.</li> <li>• Encourage children to assume roles of family members or literary figures in improvisations. Base the roles on children's experiences, family customs, books, or songs.</li> <li>• Integrate two or more art forms into experiences, e.g. draw a dance; insert a familiar song into a story or book.</li> <li>• Recreate drawings from favorite books and works of art.</li> <li>• Have children draw their self portrait, using a mirror to see details.</li> <li>• Bring clipboards outdoors with pencils to make observational drawings of nature: plants, trees, flowers, pine cones, tall grass, and familiar animals.</li> </ul>



# Five Years

Kindergarten children are able to make conscious decisions about art, music, dance, and theater and respond to them with feelings and emotion. They learn to compare and contrast different sounds, pictures and movements.

They become increasingly skilled at creating their own art, songs, stories and dance movements. Since children learn in an integrated fashion, it is vital that their learning experiences incorporate multiple domains of development including cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional.



Indicators (The child may):	Sample Arts Experiences that Promote Learning	What Adults and Children Can Do Together in the Arts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have good body control for doing cartwheels and better balance for learning to ride a bike.</li> <li>• Play jump rope and hop scotch.</li> <li>• Build inventive model buildings from blocks, cardboard and other materials.</li> <li>• Begin spelling, writing, and enjoy telling stories to other children and adults.</li> <li>• Become increasingly independent and try new activities on their own.</li> </ul>	<p>Continue previous experiences as well as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children will learn many ways of using their own language to tell stories. This can be encouraged by telling folktales and stories through pantomime, drawing, dance, and music.</li> <li>• Cutting and tearing paper for collage work helps develop fine motor skills.</li> <li>• Through the artistic process, children learn what works and what doesn't. They learn how to think about making choices when experiencing music, dance, drama, and art.</li> <li>• Participating in a story dramatization develops problem solving skills and use of descriptive language.</li> <li>• Children develop higher levels of thinking by learning to look at others' artwork or performances and developing an opinion.</li> <li>• When discussing music, art, dance, and theatre, children can talk in terms of what they find of particular interest, or what they find pleasing or unusual. This builds judgment and analytical skills and aesthetics.</li> <li>• Working together to create a dance, improvise a story, write a song together and create a mural develops skills in collaboration.</li> </ul>	<p>Continue previous experiences as well as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Represent familiar actions like making pizza and doing chores in creative movement and dance activities. Allow the child to choose movements and ask the reasons for those choices.</li> <li>• Create and recite poetry and paint pictures that express emotions, ideas, and experiences and themes (such as nature, questions they have, school and family) that are important to them. Ask questions and encourage discussion.</li> <li>• Children's artwork is not expected to all look the same. Encourage and support creativity by letting children create the art on their own.</li> <li>• Take on a role, interact with other characters, and create dialogue for increasing periods of play and storytelling.</li> <li>• Exhibit children's artwork at their eye-level, and hang it so others can look at and respond to it.</li> <li>• Make scrapbooks or portfolios to keep favorite stories, photos, and artwork.</li> <li>• Collect tapes and recordings of music and encourage children to select favorites.</li> <li>• Encourage improvisation and story dramatization and provide materials to create props.</li> <li>• Extend arts learning experiences and encourage children to reflect upon visits to museums, cultural events and performances by capturing their thoughts in drawings, stories, and other creative expressions.</li> </ul>



