

Art/ Creativity Center



The art center is the perfect place for children to experiment and create. This should be an “open-ended” center that promotes the process of learning rather than the final product. This center has endless possibilities and is great because there is usually an original creation for the children to take home and show their parents. This center should be designed to encourage the children to work independently and freely create.

Essential Skills:



• Literacy:

- **Vocabulary and verbal expression** as the children engage in conversation with the teachers and peers about their work
- **Language development** as the children converse with each other while working in the center
- **Written expression** as the children dictate information to the teacher about their work and seeing the connection between spoken and written words
- **Creative story telling** as the children illustrate stories with materials made available in the center



• Math:

- **Recognizing and extending patterns** as the children create artwork
- **Geometric shape awareness** as the children include shapes in their artwork
- **Spatial awareness and relationships** as the children position objects in their illustrations
- **Measurement skills** as the children compare objects drawn and created in the art center
- **Classification skills** as the children describe similarities and differences in their artwork



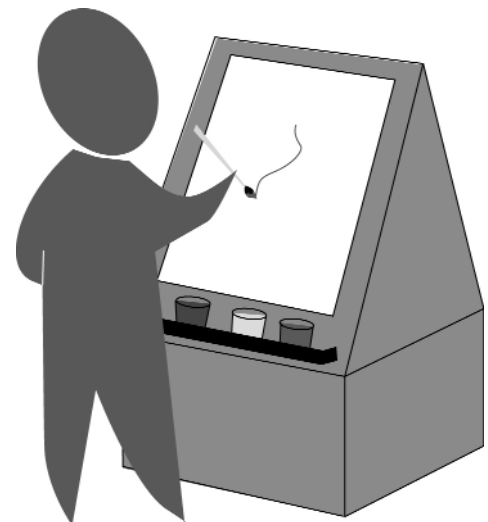
• Science:

- **Observations and ideas** as the children describe artwork made in the art center such as change in colors or size of materials
- **Experimenting with materials** as the children manipulate objects and materials in the art center to create artwork
- **Problem solving skills** as the children work in the art center
- **Cause and effect relationships** as the children experiment with different materials in the art center



• Social Studies:

- **Individual and cultural awareness** as the children share and observe ideas with others about work done in the art center
- **Community awareness** as the children understand their roles in the classroom by taking responsibility for cleaning up messes made in the center





- **Fine Arts:**

- **Art appreciation** as the children learn to use different materials to create original artwork as well as share work with peers
- **Expressing ideas** as the children create artwork
- **Elements of different colors, textures, and materials** as the children create original artwork



- **Physical Development:**

- **Fine motor development** necessary for holding writing tools appropriately for writing as the children manipulate the materials in the art center
- **Eye-hand coordination** as the children create artwork



- **Personal Growth:**

- **Self-direction** as the children freely create and express their own ideas and work
- **Self-control** as the children behave appropriately while in the center
- **Self-expression** as the children express thoughts and ideas through original artwork
- **Creativity and imagination** as the children freely create in the art center
- **Social development** as the children interact with other children working in the center and learn to respect others' ideas and creations made in the art center
- **Responsibility** as the children clean up messes made in the center

Equipment:

- Shelf to set all of the materials
- Table and chairs
- Containers for the materials needed, labeled with the word and a picture of the items

General Materials:

The following items should be available in the art center at all times:

- Crayons
- Markers
- Multi-cultural crayons and markers
- Pencils/ Map Pencils
- Scissors
- Glue
- Paper of various types and textures
- Easel
- Smocks or old t-shirts to protect children's clothing



Quick Tip: For younger children, ensure all materials are age appropriate and safe.

In addition to the above, it is fun to include the following on a rotation basis:

- Stickers
- Glitter
- Tape
- Paint/ Water colors
- Different paint accessories
- Dot paints
- Stamps
- Fun scissors that cut with different designs
- Magazines to cut
- Collage items:
 - Fabric
 - Buttons
 - Feathers
 - Ribbon
 - Pipe cleaners
 - Cotton balls
- Coffee filters
- Craft sticks
- Tape
- Play dough and cookie cutters
- Shaving cream
- Dry erase board and washable dry erase markers
- Chalk and chalk boards

How to Create the Art Center:

- **Location**

- The first thing you will want to do is find the perfect place in your room.
 - Remember, messes will be made in this center, so you want it in a place that has easy to clean floors such as tile.
 - It is a great idea if you can put this center by a sink. Not only will this allow for easy clean up, but it will also allow the children access to the water for watercolors and any other project that might require water.

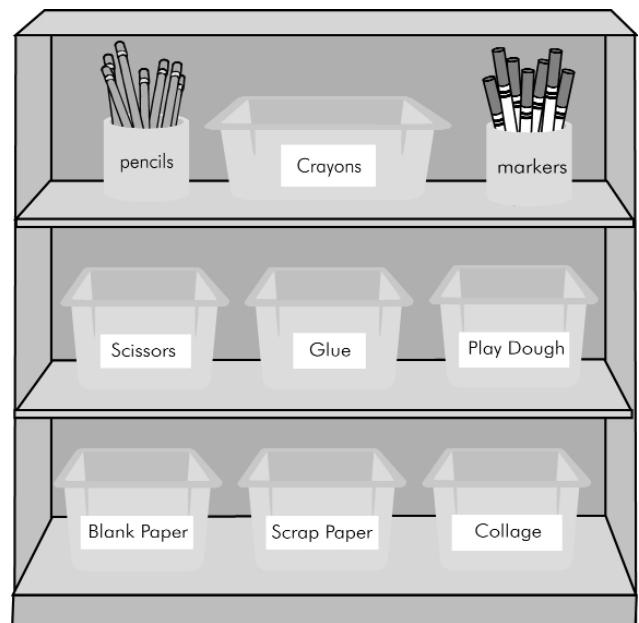
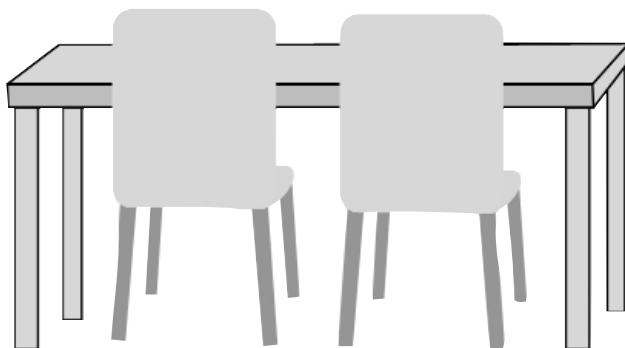
Quick Tip: If you cannot put the center on tile, use a shower curtain liner to put under the table to protect the carpet.

- **Equipment**

- Find a shelf that will hold all of the materials, preferably a shelf with three tiers.
- The next step is to find baskets, buckets, and tubs to hold the materials on the shelf. Remember to label the containers with the word and the picture of the objects to go in it.
- Label the shelf to indicate where the baskets are to be stored.
- Find a small table to go by the art shelf. After deciding the amount of children allowed in the center at one time, get the right amount of chairs to accommodate those children.

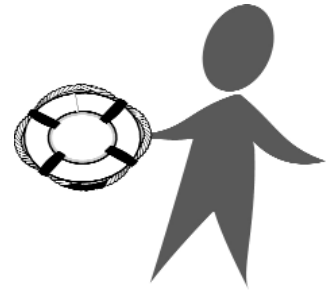
- **Set-Up**

- Here are some good ideas for the initial set-up:
 - On the top shelf, put three small, labeled containers for each of the following:
 - Markers
 - Crayons
 - Pencils
 - On the next shelf, put small, labeled containers to hold each of the following:
 - Scissors
 - Glue
 - Play dough with cookie cutters
 - On the bottom shelf, put three small, labeled containers for each of the following:
 - Blank paper
 - Scrap paper
 - Collage items
 - After the children become familiar with the center, start to add other items such as watercolors, dot paints, stamps, and magazines to cut as well as items that go with your weekly theme.



Helpful Hints

- Start with fewer items at the beginning of the school year. As the children mature, you may add items.
- Rotate items to keep the center interesting.
- Encourage the children to get items from the shelf and work with them at the table.
- Encourage the children to clean up their messes when finished. Have items available to assist in the clean up such as paper towels, brooms, and dustpans.



Quick Tip: Have an area to hang the work to dry.

What to Expect:

Quick Tips: Do not be afraid of messes in this center. They can always be cleaned up. A great way to promote responsibility is to have the children clean the messes they make.

• **Look for the children to:**

- Create original pieces of artwork in the center.
- Improve fine motor skills as well as become comfortable with writing.
- Enjoy having free choices to explore and create.
- Make a mess, a sign of creative minds developing.
- Converse with one another while creating artwork.
- Experiment with trial and error as they make something, examine it, ask for their peers' opinions, and either be satisfied with their work or adjust it to their likings.



• **Expect the teacher to:**

- Encourage the children to go to the center and to be as creative as possible.
- Encourage the children to take the baskets of supplies off the shelf and put them onto the table for easy access.
- Remind the children it is their responsibility to clean up after they complete their work in the center.
- Allow the children the freedom to be creative.
 - When adding new or theme related materials, do not be discouraged if the children do not use them as intended.
 - The purpose of the art center is to enhance creativity and develop fine motor skills. As long as the children are doing this, the center is serving its purpose.
- Encourage creative artwork by having a place in the room to display it. This reinforces the children's efforts and proves to them that their work is wonderful and worthy.

Quick Tip: Ask the child, "Tell me about your picture" or "Tell me about your work" and transcribe the child's answer.

• **Enlighten the parents by:**

- Explaining to them the purpose of creative artwork.
- Referring to the work as "original pieces of art".
- Informing them that the focus is not the end product but the skills gained through the process of creating in the art center.