

Getting Your Child Excited about the Arts

“All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.”—Pablo Picasso, Spanish painter

Kids often line up in one or two camps when it comes to the arts: either they're interested, or they're not. Or, they think they're either an artist or not. Yet all kids are artists, and art can be interesting—once your child discovers the type of art that excites him or her. Research from [*Developmental Assets: A Synthesis of the Scientific Research on Adolescent Development*](#) shows that kids who are involved in the arts tend to achieve more at school, have higher self-esteem, are more creative, and are more self-motivated. In essence, the arts are a key way to help your child succeed. Get your child more interested in the arts with these ideas.

Try it...

For all parents

- Incorporate art into your lifestyle. Even if you don't consider yourself an artist, note how you have an eye for art. It may be through cooking, decorating, the clothes you wear, or in another activity. Art is much broader than just doing art projects.
- When you notice that something is beautiful or artistically pleasing, talk about it. For example, maybe you like the architectural design of the community center, or the color combination of the school walls. Or a photograph, painting, or drawing captures your eye. Ask your child what he or she finds beautiful. To become more aware of everyday beauty, visit the blog – [One Year of Beauty](#).
- Attend art showings at your child's school, in your community, and in your congregation. Many coffee shops now display art, as do city and county halls, community centers, congregations, and local businesses. Many schools and communities are now recognizing local artists through art events and displays.
- Examine art from other cultures, such as madhubani folk art from India, pysanky eggs from the Ukraine, or West African masks. Try creating an art form from another culture—or one from your culture.
- Do art with your child. Even if it's just finger-painting, coloring, or doing an art project, make art together. For art activities, visit [Art Kids Rule!](#)

For parents with children ages birth to 5

- Make art part of your daily routine. Create opportunities for your child to paint. Draw. Color. Scribble. Create objects out of Play Dough®.
- Check out a picture book with beautiful illustrations. Talk about the art you enjoy.

Ask your child which pictures he or she likes.

- Visit children's museums. Many of these are hands-on activity museums, but they expose children to art as well as activity.

For parents with children ages 6 - 9

- See if your child is interested in taking an art or craft class. Community centers and nature centers often offer one-time or short-term arts and crafts activities for kids.
- Post your child's school art on your wall. Consider framing ones you especially like. You don't need to invest much for a frame—many arts and crafts stores sell inexpensive frames that you can use over and over.
- Spend time together with the comics section of your Sunday newspaper. Ask your child which comics he or she likes best and why. Point out the different art styles. Consider having your child create a comic strip for fun.

For parents with children ages 10 - 15

- See if your child is interested in any of the manga or anime arts that are often popular with kids this age. (You can usually find them in the graphic novel section of your library or bookstore.) Some kids enjoy drawing this type of art, others enjoy trying to create costumes or hairstyles of the characters.
- If your child dislikes art, consider that it may be because he or she hasn't discovered an art style that excites him or her. Many kids at this age enjoy cartooning or making jewelry. Keep introducing your child to different art styles.
- See what your child thinks of the technological arts, such as computer art, digital photography, videography, architectural drafting, or mechanical arts. Because many kids at this age enjoy technology, they may get interested in art through technological media.

For parents with children ages 16 - 18

- For a family outing, visit a museum and look at the art. Also watch for special art exhibits that come to town, such as those that feature a specific artist or art movement.
- If your teen enjoys art and is good at it, consider suggesting that he or she create an art exhibit for his or her senior year in high school. Or see if your teen is interested in selling art, or in submitting something to an art competition called Teen Ink Magazine. It is a publication devoted to publishing teen art and writing nationwide. For more information, visit [Teen Ink](#) and click on Magazine Edition.
- Fill your house with art, whether it's inexpensive art that you find at garage sales or professional art. Having art in your home shows teenagers how much you value it.
- Build Developmental Assets by commissioning your teenager (and other kids) to create art for you to display in your home. Author Louise Erdrich says her father paid her a nickel for every story she wrote when she was a child, and she says this built her confidence in her ability to write and to get paid for it.

how they can help your child grow up successfully.