

Children and Creativity

In today's world, only finishing in first place is considered to be successful, so children often equate success with being able to finish a project quickly and well.

Using speed as a measure of success may come at the cost of creativity. Caregivers and parents are faced with a challenge in trying to encourage children to be creative. Creativity is important, because the progress of humankind has advanced because of creative thinkers.

Inventions such as electricity, the light bulb and automobiles have contributed to the advancement of society and the quality of our lives – but those and other inventions weren't necessarily finished quickly.

Creativity is a form of self-expression where one uses abilities, skills and attitude to bring something new and original into being. Everyone possesses a certain amount of creativity, and young children tend to be very creative.

Of course, creativity also changes at different levels of personal development – presenting even more challenges. Self-expression allows children to create things based upon their own personal feelings and experiences and allows them to express and cope with those feelings. Experiences children have, even at the earliest of age, can affect their creativity.

A child's creative ability allows caregivers and parents to recognize their thoughts or feelings – thereby helping adults to better meet the emotional needs of children.

Parents and caregivers of young children need to find ways to emphasize the importance of being creative, such as modeling the creative process, encouraging individuality and admitting when we do things less than perfectly. When children are allowed to be creative, their developmental skills improve in all areas of development.

Creative children learn to feel good about themselves, seek many answers to a single problem, develop higher level thinking skills, become independent individuals, have better fine motor coordination and enjoy being different. Even more, in later years, creative children do not become followers.

To help children in the creative process, adults need to remember to set aside concerns about finished products.

The skills and lessons children learn through the creative process far outweigh the actual product. Ways that caregivers can help children focus on the creative process are to ensure that the activity is open-ended, refrain from judging the process, keep opinions and suggestions to a minimum, and focus on what is actually seen – not what is thought to be seen.

Children need to be encouraged to fall in love with something, to take pride in and develop their greatest strength and to learn independence to become truly creative.

Children need to be rewarded and valued for their creativity and encouraged to feel joy in their work. Children who are creative develop perseverance and the ability to 'stick to it.' These are skills that children need for life!