



The Foundation Years at Home

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Being creative

When creativity is mentioned we usually think about people who are very good at painting, drawing, sculpture, music, singing or dancing. However, creativity is really much broader than that and can be just as easily applied to science, mathematics and information technology. Creative thinking and creative ideas are important in all areas of life.

Although we may not immediately think it, each and every one of us is creative in some way or another. All our creativities will be expressed in different ways depending on our individual interests, enthusiasms and talents. In the same way, all young children are creative and will find different ways of expressing their thoughts and ideas about the world they live in.

By encouraging your child to be creative you will be building up their experience of the world, helping them to become more confident in making choices and trying things out for themselves.

Supporting your child's creativity

Creative expression can sometimes be a rather messy business! To be creative children will want to choose where and what they want to play with and will often need to move things from one place to another. How you react to this will have an effect your child's growing self confidence in his or her own capability to be a creative thinker and doer.

For children to be creative they have to be able to try things out that they have never done before and take 'risks'. This doesn't mean exposing children to danger. It means giving your child opportunities to take on physical challenges and try things out for themselves. This will build their physical skills and give them a growing understanding of how to manage their own personal safety.

Creative children will also want to 'take risks with their ideas'. All children have wonderful ideas about why things happen and how things work. Help your child to feel confident about expressing their ideas - without the danger of anyone laughing at them or telling them they are wrong. They will then be able to enjoy building on these imaginative and creative ideas in their play.

Open ended resources

Open ended resources which have no fixed use or 'set of instructions' are the best things for encouraging creativity. They can be used in many different ways and as there are no 'right' or 'wrong' ways of using them, everyone's ideas of what to do with them are equally good.

Sand, water and clay are all open ended materials which young children enjoy exploring and playing with. These can be combined with one another, or with other open ended materials, to encourage children to develop and express their creative thinking and problem solving skills.

Light and shadow are probably the most open ended resources available to us but we don't often pay much attention to them. Children are fascinated by the effects of light and by shadows. Look out for shadows indoors and outside on a sunny day and explore how they change in shape, size and colour during the day.