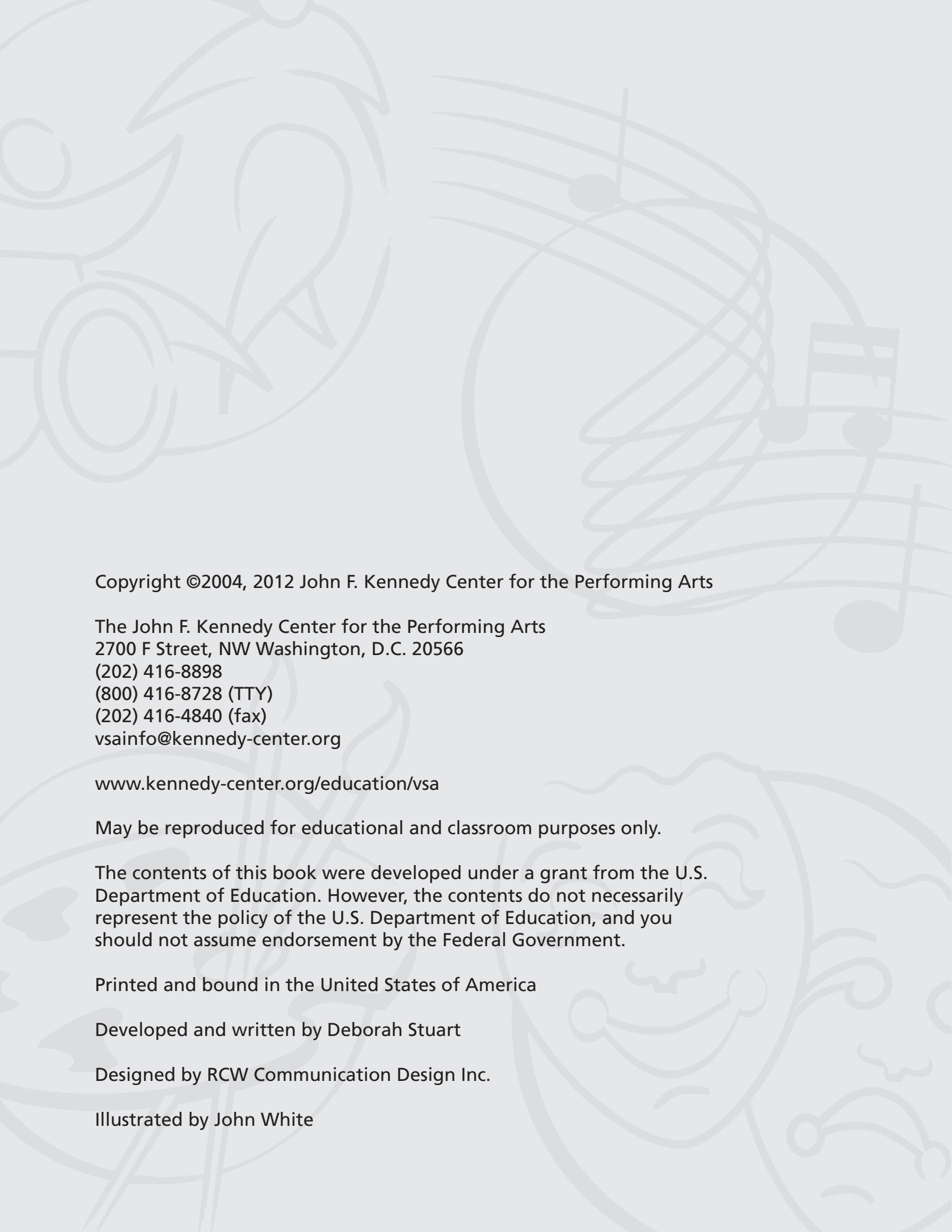


The background features faint, light gray line drawings of various art and music-related items. On the left, there is a palette with two paintbrushes. On the right, there are stylized leaves and a circular shape. At the bottom left, there are musical notes on a staff. At the bottom right, there is a smiling face with curly hair.

START WITH THE ARTS AT HOME

Encouraging
Reading Using
the Arts –
A Parents Resource

vsa The International
Organization on
Arts and Disability



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Dear Parents,

You are your child's first teacher! So much learning happens at home long before children even enter school. From infancy on, every day brings new opportunities for learning and growing. As you read, talk and play together, your child develops language, a curiosity about the world and a multitude of ways to express thoughts and ideas.

It is well known that reading to a child every day is one of the most important ways we assist in developing language. Sharing books paves the way for literacy and learning and is a key contributor to a successful school experience.

Did you also know that you can extend the enjoyment and benefits of the reading experience by using books as a jumping-off point to developing your child's expressive skills – through related arts activities?

Educators and child development specialists are learning more and more about the ways that the arts help children to grow and learn. Engaging in the arts encourages discussion, attention to details, and documents your child's understanding. Beyond expressing your child's unique voice, these activities encourage thinking processes that provide the foundation for learning. The arts give voice to choice.

VSA arts originally created *Start with the Arts*, as a resource guide for teachers of young students. The teacher's guide provides a wealth of activities to infuse creative activities in dance, drama, music and visual arts into the early childhood classroom. This parent booklet offers you a sampling of activities from this resource, which are particularly easy and fun to do on your own at home. Like the *Start with the Arts* teacher's guide, each activity includes suggestions for adaptive approaches to assure success for children with different learning and developmental needs.

Best of all, these activities are all linked to best-loved children's books. Expanding your reading aloud to include creative activities will make story time even more valuable and meaningful. As you and your child do arts together, you'll enter an exciting new world of discovery.

Reading and the arts every day!

About Start with the Arts at Home

Making This Book Your Own

This book isn't designed to give you "lessons" to be done in any particular order or prescribed way. You can browse and choose what appeals to you and spend as little as a few minutes before, during or after reading. You both might enjoy doing a bit of movement which the story suggests, or you might create a simple song to a familiar tune to accompany a favorite page or scene. As you share the experience of including arts as a way of expanding favorite books, you'll likely find your child hurrying to the Music Box to pull out an "instrument" to accompany the sounds of the action at hand. Waving scarves from the Dance Box during a windy scene or popping a sock puppet from the Drama Box on a hand to narrate a dramatic bit will become a natural part of your reading time.

Read-Aloud/Art Activities and How They're Structured

Let's take a look at how each arts experience is presented in this book so you'll know what to expect as you choose what you're going to do.

Activity and Description:

First you'll find a sentence or two about the nature of the activity - what it's about and how it relates to what you're going to be reading aloud with your child.

Read with Me:

There will be a read-aloud book suggestion which will provide the springboard for the arts activity. Each lesson is linked to one or two very familiar children's book. In addition, at the end of each activity, we'll list a few other books which would also do nicely, so you should be able to find a suitable book at your local library. If there's a song or recording which is related to the arts activity, we'll tell you about that as well. Remember that your children's librarian can suggest other books, videos and recordings too. So even if you don't find the exact book, there are sure to be some good ones on each topic.

Useful Materials:

There will be a few suggestions for preparation and a list of the simple materials you'll want to get together. Many of the activities can be done with imaginary materials and props, and you may well think of other things than the ones listed which you can use!

Before You Start:

Ways to link the activity to your child's past and to everyday experiences will be suggested. This will include talking about people, places and experiences familiar to your child. There will also be suggested ways to "get ready" to do the arts activity.

Adapting the Experience:

If your child has developmental delays or other disabilities which need to be considered, suggestions are made about ways to change and adapt the experience so they are best suited for your child's ability level.

Creating Art:

The activity will be described and often you'll be given several ways in which it can be done. You may decide to follow the suggested activity closely, or you may use it as a jumping off place for your own creative ideas.

Other Activities:

In addition to the core arts activity, there will be some ideas on ways to extend the experience with related projects. Again, these are just meant to suggest extensions, but you'll undoubtedly have lots of ideas of your own.

Enjoying Your Art:

At the end of each activity we have offered some suggestions about talking with your child about the arts experience. There are also suggested ways to share what you've done with others and ways to save and record your arts endeavors, such as keeping a portfolio, having an area to display work, making a book about a dance or play, or putting on a little performance for family members.

Other Resources

Tips for Reading Aloud:

We've included a short section on information about choosing books, information about reading aloud and ways to help your child develop language and pre-literacy skills.

Tips for Doing Arts at Home:

There's also information on making art with your child and suggestions for gathering materials to have on hand.

Resources:

Following the activities, you'll see some suggested resources, including magazines which are written for children 2-6, software which is designed to build literacy skills, web sites which are appropriate for pre-readers and books which can help you as a parent discover how to support your child's early learning.

There's also a bibliography of all the books we've suggested so that you can locate them easily. We've included a few groups of additional books which might be of special interest.

Exploring Books with Your Child

Making a Time and a Place

The most important thing is to read aloud every day. Have a scheduled time even if it's just for a short period. If you skip a day or two, don't worry. Just pick up again as soon as possible. Keep the session as short as they need to be so that they're always enjoyable. You'll be able to tell what works best for your child.

Choose a quiet time and place for your daily reading aloud session. It might be just before nap or bedtime - whatever's most relaxed for you. Some children will want snuggling while reading while others will want room to move around.

Finding and Choosing Books

There are so many ways to build a nice collection of books for your home at little or no cost. You can get books at stores, but also at garage, yard or local library sales. Help your child arrange the books in an order she chooses - books about animals together, alphabet books together and so on. Add your own homemade books to this home library.

Make regular trips to your local library if you can. Have your child get his own card as soon as possible. Show that you think it's exciting to go to the library; make it an eagerly anticipated outing and take out books for yourself as well.

Have a place where you can keep books easily available for your child to browse. This could be on a low shelf or in a basket where she can choose them and look at them whenever she wants. You'll find that she'll enjoy looking at favorite books and pretending (or beginning) to read.

Choose "classics" as well as new books. Your librarian will be able to suggest both. Rhyming books are considered very important in building skills in listening to sounds, so include poetry, books with strong rhythms in the text and nursery rhymes. You'll both enjoy books with really top notch illustrations. It's good to include books which don't have any text at all - where the story is told entirely through pictures. We've given some examples of these books in the bibliography at the back.

Some Things to Remember

Explore different kinds of books to see what your child enjoys most and then introduce new books gradually. Children will want favorite books read over and over again. This is natural and very good for their ability to begin to recognize words and to anticipate, predict and interpret what's in the story. You can keep the book fresh by asking questions, using new voices for the characters and having expanded conversations. But often what a child wants is just the favorite familiar story!

Let children touch and hold books and talk about the parts of the book. Show the child that the book has a cover and a beginning. Let the child know that the words go from the top of the page and are read from left to right. Always start your book by naming the author and illustrator. Finish by closing the back cover and, if you like, saying "The End!" You're letting your child know how a book "works."

As you read, point to letters and words, running your finger along under the print so that the child knows that it's letters which are making the words. You don't need to do this all the time, but include it in some of your read-aloud times. If a word appears often, take time to point to the word and let your child say it with you as it reappears. If you are reading a book which rhymes, stop reading before the rhyming word and let your child say it. This is a great way for your child to "read" his first words.

Talking about Books

The most important part of reading together is the conversations you'll have and the ways your child is building vocabulary and thinking skills. As you read, talk with your child about what's going on in the story. Ask open-ended questions (ones without yes-and-no or purely factual answers). Take turns guessing what will happen next. Relate to experiences you've had in your family or to things which are part of the child's life where possible. A wonderful tool for interaction with your

child about a book is to look at the illustrations before you read a book for the first time and ask, "What do you see going on in this picture?" Echo what the child tells you, expanding on the words and adding new ones. Here's an example based on the favorite book *Goodnight Moon*.

P – "Oh, here's the first picture in the book. What do you see going on in this picture?"

C – "Moon. And Bunny."

P – "The moon is shining through the window, isn't it? And you see the Bunny. What else is going on in this picture?"

C – "The Bunny is going night-night."

P – "You see the Bunny tucked in bed. Bunny is ready to go to sleep! Anything else you see?"

C – "There's a clock."

P – "Yes, there is a clock on the table by the bed. The clock must be telling the Bunny it's time to sleep."

Notice that you can take a lot of time on just one page. You can decide if you want to savor all the pages and give your child a lot of time to notice what she is seeing. You may be surprised what is important and remarkable to her! In turn, you can restate what she is telling you, adding new and important words. You can also do this with a book that is familiar, but it's particularly effective with a new book so that the child's first relationship with it is personal and not just passively hearing what the author is saying.

Creating Eager Readers and Writers

Point out all the places where there are letters and words and print. Have fun reading street signs, billboards, posters and menus. Your child will see that reading is important to you as you read books, magazines or newspapers yourself. Let a child know how important words are to tell you things you need to know – where things are in the grocery store, what street you are on, what events are coming up at the library.

Write down lists and notes and words for your child as he asks you to. Offer to put labels on things or to keep a calendar of special events with a word or two for what's going to be happening.

Let your child "write" letters to friends and grandparents. If the correspondence is a picture, you can have your child dictate what she'd like to say to go along with it. In fact, you can offer to write words to go along with any artwork – asking "tell me about your picture if you'd like and I'll write it down for you" (as opposed to "what is it?").

Don't worry if you yourself are not a strong reader. If you're reading aloud to your child, you can make up a story to go along with the pictures rather than reading the written words. Even if you're not comfortable reading books for yourself, looking at magazines and browsing books with photos and illustrations can be a way of showing that you enjoy books and reading and that they are important to you. If you want to improve your reading, your local librarian can help you locate a program for adult reading skills in your community.

There are so many exciting ways to make language, reading, and writing come alive for your child. You'll both have many adventures as you explore the wonderful world of words!

Exploring the Arts at Home

Here are some practical suggestions for using the arts to expand your reading experiences with your child.

Enjoying the Arts Experience

Art is about choice. It's not about "making something" or producing a production or a product. It's about enjoying the process of creation and finding ways to express new ideas and feelings and concepts which come from the sharing of a book while reading aloud.

Think of these arts experiences as something that you and your child can do together, and choose activities that are fully enjoyable to both of you. Rather than setting out materials for your child and then leaving them on their own to play or paint, start right out exploring together. The value of these activities is in the exchanges, the conversations and the shared discoveries that you and your child make together.

Feel free to alter virtually *anything* about the activity. Change materials from what's suggested, let movement and creative drama create a whole new scene, make music which is as silly or wild or spooky as you want it to be. There is certainly no right and wrong ways to do any of these activities. As in all art, there isn't any one correct outcome.

Putting Together Art Boxes

Having materials handy will make it easy to move spontaneously to arts activities. One practical and inexpensive way is to have several boxes for materials. Shoe boxes or milk crates will work just fine. You might create one for each art form. Your boxes could include (but are not limited to!) some items suggested below. Notice that much of this material is “found” – you and your child will discover lots more ideas!

Dance and Movement Box:



Crepe paper streamers, scarves or lengths of floaty cloth, balloons, bubbles, socks with bells sewn on, glowstick or flashlight, a blow-up beach ball. (The Music Box will provide instruments for dancing.)

Creative Drama Box:



Old clothes, scarves, hats for costumes, old sheets or spreads for curtains or drapes, discarded household items for props, odd socks for puppets. (Art Box materials can be used for decorating).

Music Box:



Any things that “ring and ding, shake and make a beat” – sticks and blocks of wood, bells and wind chimes, containers with pebbles, beads, rice or beans, cans with plastic lids or various buckets and pans for drumming, coconut shells or walnut shells to clap together, plastic tubing for florescent lights cut to assorted lengths to tap together.

Visual Art Box:



Crayons, markers, colored pencils, watercolors for drawing; scrap cloth, yarn, buttons and beads, feathers, used greeting cards and colorful magazine pages for collage; a variety of papers including colored, newsprint, brown wrapping paper, and lots of interesting scraps; paste and glue sticks; tools including child scissors, hole punch, old shirt for a smock, inexpensive foam paint brushes, a ruler. Scraps of wood, boxes and clay (Play Doh or inexpensive self-drying), pipe cleaners, straws, sea shells and pebbles can be assembled for 3-D art.

Talking about Art

We know that conversation with children is critical to language and pre-literacy development. Just as talking together about the books and stories you are sharing is an invaluable part of reading to your child, so talking about the art you do together will add immeasurably to this opportunity to build your child's vocabulary, observation skills and even higher order thinking!

Rather than giving information to the child about what you are looking at, ask them what they see. Talking about the art you are doing together really benefits from using the same approach you use in talking about reading! Rather than, "Oh look, our scarves look like the wind is blowing them!" you can simply ask your child, "What do you see when you look at our scarves floating?" You may see the wind but your child may see birds or flags! Think what a nice conversation this can lead to. "Oh, you see flags! What do you see that makes you think of flags? Oh, you see them flying in the wind. It's a windy day in the story and the flags are flying!"

When your child has made a picture or a construction and holds it up for you to see, you can use the same kinds of conversation and opportunities for expanding vocabulary.

While reading together take plenty of time to enjoy both the story and the ideas suggested. Reading aloud is as much about talking together as it is about the story.

Spend plenty of time looking at the picture and letting the child tell you what she sees in her own work. You can do this by asking the

same questions: "Want to tell me what you see in this picture you just drew?" "Can you show me where that is happening?" "Oh, I see that! What else do you see?" It's so easy for us to comment on what we see.

Here's an example. In picture of a rainbow the dialogue might go something like this:

P: "Can you tell me about what's happening in this picture?"

C: "Animals are playing." [Aha! The animals are the child's first interest!]

P: "The animals are playing together. Do we know what they are playing?"

C: "Games. It's a park."

P: "Oh, the animals went to the park to play games. Looks like fun. What else do you see happening in this picture?"

C: "There's a rainbow."

P: "Oh, yes – there's a rainbow overhead in the sky. The animals are playing in the park under the rainbow."

Your child will enjoy telling you about her pictures or her dances or small puppet dramas if you again use an open-ended way of asking. "What is it?" is a conversation stopper for many children. "Want to tell me about your puppet's story?" will provide a much better opportunity for sharing. "Your play / picture / song is wonderful" is judgmental, no matter how well-meaning a compliment. "I love the color red in your flowers" or "I think it's fun that your puppet is so bouncy" simply tells the child what *you* enjoy about their creation.

When I Grow Up

Acting out jobs and occupations

Playing at being a grown up is a basic part of childhood. And all children love to tell you, “When I grow up I want to be a...” Acting out some grown up activities together will generate lots of ways to explore the jobs done by family members, the jobs you see in the community as well as high-flying imaginary jobs! Your child might want to be a carpenter like mom or like the man who came to fix the door, or he might want to be the person who makes the moon come up at night. (With imagination, the sky’s the limit!)

Read with Me

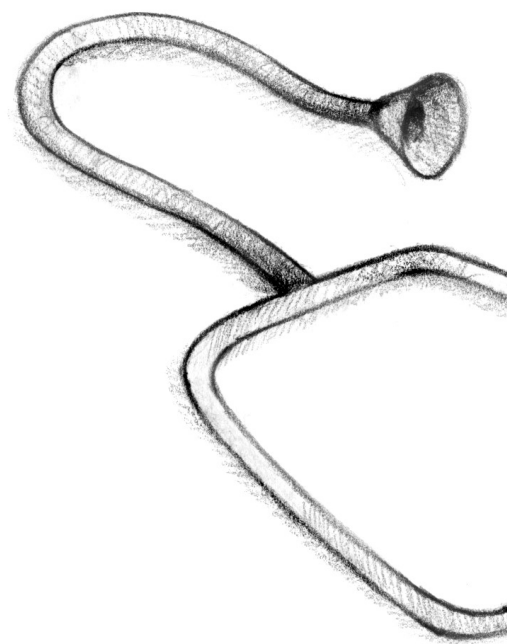
Busy, Busy Town or *What Do People Do All Day?*

by Richard Scarry

Both these books are brimming with illustrations of so many things that go on in the world. There are endless ways to read and talk about all the things to notice. Using your “what do you see” questions will give your child a chance to pick out the jobs and activities most interesting to him before you start to actually read. Linking the jobs and activities to family members, neighbors, and friends will make the book particularly meaningful.

Materials

Costumes and props can be gathered but they can be imaginary as well. Letting the child be the “director” of the action and encouraging him to decide what tools, outfits, and vehicles you will need will encourage creative thinking and generate lots of conversation and dialogue. This activity is a great vocabulary builder.



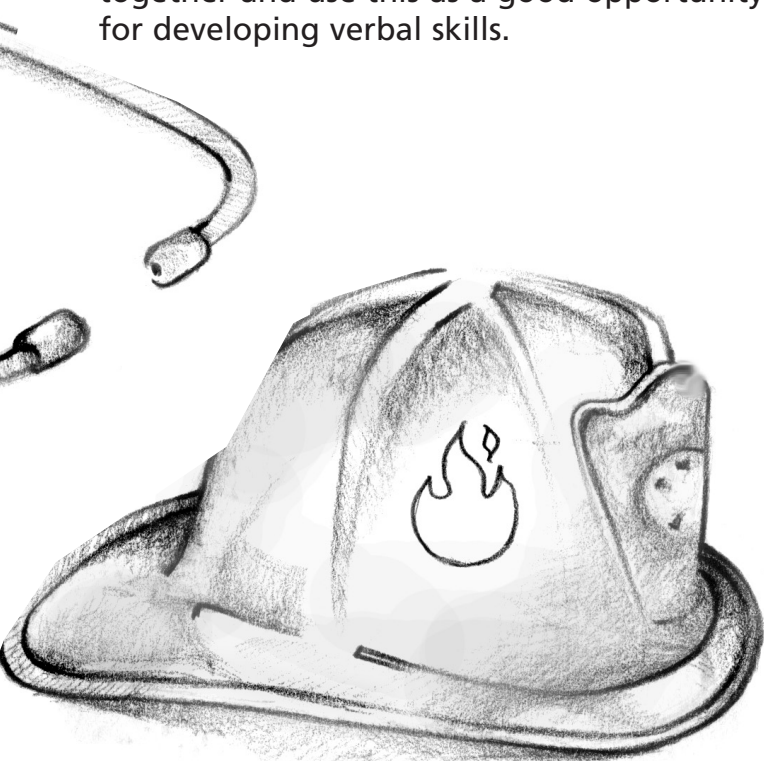
Getting Started

Talk together about the jobs you see in the books. Spend lots of time imagining what it would be like to have jobs that the animals in *Busy, Busy Town* have. What would they need for tools? What would they wear? How would they get to work? Use your “what do you see” questions as you look through the book.

Dress up in ways that make you feel like the kind of worker you’ve chosen. Sometimes it only takes one piece of clothing or a single prop – the rest can be imagined. “This is my necktie. Pretend I have on a brown suit like daddy’s and my fancy shoes.” Or “This is my beautiful dancing skirt (a scarf around the waist). I have pointy shoes and sparkly things in my hair and lots of ribbons.”

Adapting the Experience

If your child is still developing expressive language and has limited vocabulary, encourage single words which tell about what he is seeing in the books’ illustrations. You can talk together and use this as a good opportunity for developing verbal skills.



P: “Which bear has the most exciting job in this picture.”

C; (pointing) “Fireman.”

P: “Oh, you think the fireman has an exciting job. Can tell me what he wears?”

C: “Big hat.”

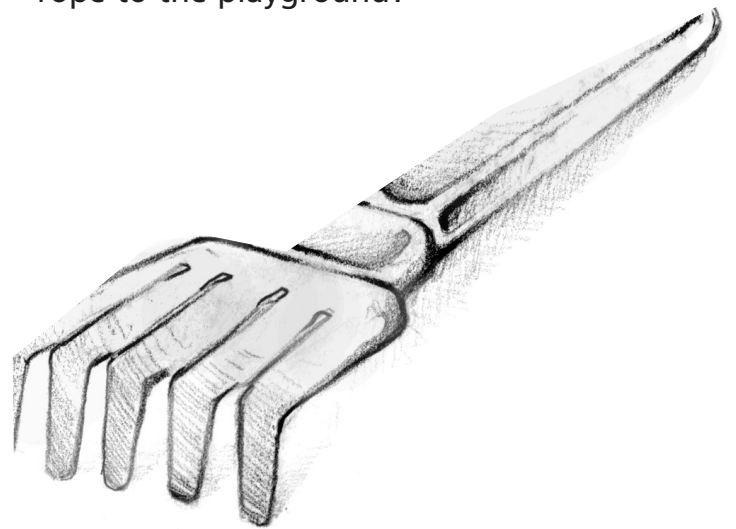
P: “Right, his hat is big, isn’t it? Why do you think he needs such a big hat?”

C: “Head.”

P: “Yes, we wear hats on our head, don’t we. And the big hat might keep his head safe.”

Creating Art

Use boxes, furniture or anything else that works to “set the stage” for the workplace. Or, go to a part of your home where the work might happen. Decide beforehand a simple scene or action – or else make it up as you go along. Keep the scene active and creative – if your child is the teacher you can be the pupil, following directions, “learning” from the lessons, asking questions of the teacher. Encourage moving from one spot to another – “Is it time for recess yet? Can I bring my jump rope to the playground?”



Other “When I Grow Up” Role Play Activities

If the choice of profession is pretty broad – like “a star on TV” – you can suggest a specific character that you have both seen and move into an activity that you can actually do together. You could decide to be the chef on Mr. Rogers and work together in the kitchen making a favorite food or baking cookies for the family dinner.

Enjoying Your Creative Drama

Talk together about all the things you could do if you had the job you chose to act out. What would be the most fun part of the job? What would be hard to do? Would you need special tools or vehicles? How would your job help people most?

You and your child might look through old magazines and make a little scrapbook or collage with pictures of people at work. You might find some unusual jobs!

Read and Listen

Among other books about jobs which you can find in your local library might be:

Mommies at Work by Eve Merriman; ***Pig Pig Gets a Job*** by David McPhail; ***Our Teacher’s in a Wheelchair*** by Mary Ellen Powers; ***Uncle Jed’s Barbershop*** by Margaree Kin Mitchell; ***Hi, Pizza Man*** by Virginia Walter; ***I Want to be an Astronaut*** by Bryon Barton.

You can listen to “What Does Your Man Do?” by Cathy Winter from the recording ***As Strong As Anyone Can Be*** or “I’d Love to Be” by Nancy Tucker from ***Glad That You Asked***. Kathy Lowe has a recording called ***When I Grow Up***.

Wind Effects

Moving with and like the wind— dancing with color

Moving to music and to the sound and feel of a windy day will give you and your child opportunities to use some of the colors you explored in collage in a new and exciting way. It can also be a way to explore all the things the wind does and how it works – kites, windmills, flags, and even airplanes!

Read with Me

Color Dance by Ann Jonas; *Like a Windy Day*
by Frank and Devin Ashe

The first book is a charming story of children dancing with colorful floating scarves. The second book is about playing as if you are a windy day and all the many, many things you could do and be. Each book gives a different way to explore creative movement inspired by the wind.

Materials to Use

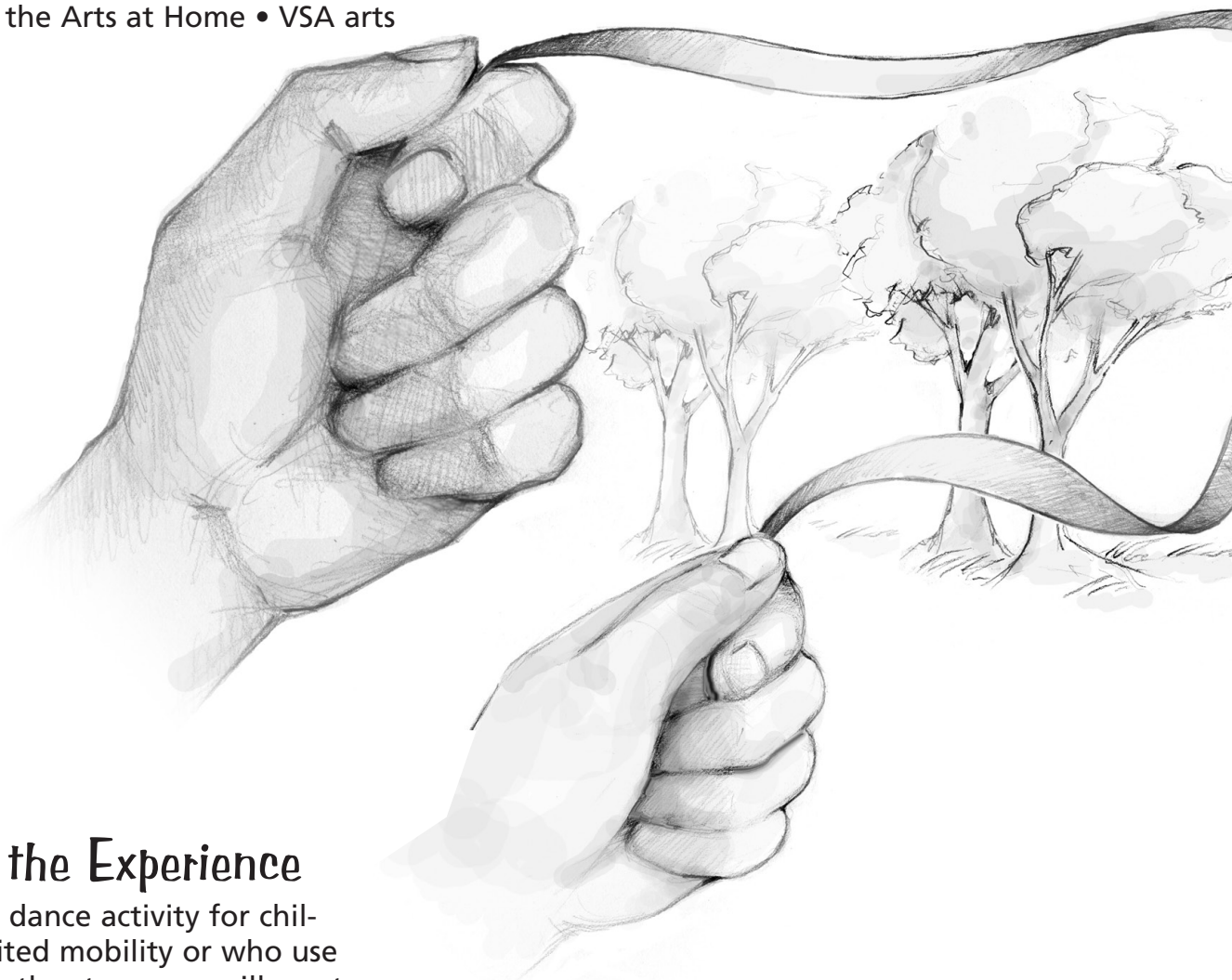
You'll need any kind of material or crepe paper streamer that is light and will float in the air as you move. You can also use lengths of sheer fabric or scarves in nice colors. Colored ribbons or neon shade of surveyors tape will even work. You might want to try this activity in front of a fan if it's not going-out-of-doors weather.

Getting Started

Talk together about what it's like to be out on a windy day. Going outside and experiencing the feel of the wind would be a good way to start. Look for pictures of kites and flags and banners flying in the wind in books and magazines. See if you can find anything about windmills and explore what they do.

Choose two or more colors of crepe paper streamers (or other floating material). You and your child can both measure the length of your arms then cut the crepe paper into streamers which are twice as long.





Adapting the Experience

This is a great dance activity for children with limited mobility or who use wheelchairs as the streamers will react wonderfully to small motions and are moved in part by the wind or the air around them.

Creating Art

Finding a spot with plenty of space around each of you, explore the different ways you can move to imitate the wind. You can move like a gentle wind, like a strong and gusty wind, move your arms around and around like a windmill or a weathervane. Use the low space around your legs and then reach as high into the air as you can to move your streamers. For your first movements stand in one place and make the movements with your arms and upper body.

Next you can both dance together in a free form creation by moving to music which suggests floating or drifting. Try using several streamers at once. Move independently of one another and then interact with your streamers. Have the wind “die down” and let yourselves drift gently to the ground and come to rest. Then let the wind come up again and lift you into the air once more.

Other Wind Movement Activities

Experiment with the effects of wind on different objects. Use small pieces of tissue paper, gauze fabric, a feather, a balloon or soap bubbles to watch the way the wind makes these move. You can blow on them to make your own wind if you're indoors, or you can make this an outside activity on a breezy day.

Enjoying Your Dancing

Talk together about what it felt like to be moved by the wind. Ask your child how the wind feels and changes. Talk about what you both noticed about movements that are made by wind. A list of words which describe this can be written and decorated and put up for display.

Your child might like to draw a picture of the two of you dancing to record and remember the experience.

Other Read and Listen Ideas

Other books which you both can enjoy might be *Kite Flyer* by Denis Hasley; *Gilberto and the Wind* by Marie Hall Ets; *The North Wind and the Sun* by Brian Wildsmith; *The Wind Blew* by Pat Hutchins; *Anatole Over Paris* by Eve Titus; *Dragon Kite of the Autumn Moon* by Valerie Reddix; *Dancing the Breeze* by George Shannon.

You can listen to "The Wind is Telling Secrets" from the recording of the same name by Sarah Pirtle.

Collage Comes Home

Looking at and making art from varied papers and found materials

Lots of wonderful books use this art form for their illustrations. We've suggested books where you and your child can see how artists have used collage. The activity will give you and your child a chance to create a free-form piece of art using paper and things with texture which you can find around your home and yard. Its great advantage is that so many different kinds of materials will work!

Read with Me

Pat the Bunny and other books by Dorothy Kunhardt ; *The Grouchy Ladybug* by Eric Carle

These much loved books use two different approaches to illustration. Eric Carle's books are illustrated with paper collage – cut or torn paper used as color. *Pat the Bunny*, a classic which has been around forever, has lots of subsequent offshoots which all include texture in their pictures. Both books can offer an introduction to the very satisfying art form of collage. While enjoying the stories for their language narrative, using “what do you see” questions about the pictures will lead wonderfully to making your own collage art.

Materials

You can explore together to collect bits of colorful paper (tissue, magazine pages, colored paper, wallpaper samples, old greeting or holiday cards, candy wrapper foil, etc.) for flat collage. For textured collage, scraps of cloth, buttons and ribbons, leaves and other outdoor materials (not too chunky!) will do.

Take time to enjoy and explore the materials you've assembled. Talk about the different feel of the textures using words like “rough, smooth, silky, crinkly, scratchy, bumpy.”



Before You Start

Introduce your child to the word “collage.” It’s a French word that means “to cut and paste” which is exactly what you’re going to do! You may be cutting your materials or you may be tearing them. Let them know that ripping the paper or fabric is fine in this kind of art – that lots of times that what artists do, because it makes the edges more interesting!

Remind your child that the materials they add won’t stay put until the glue dries. Let them know that overlapping materials works well and that they can build up layers if they want to. If you’re using tissue paper, notice the way two colors overlapping make a whole new color.

Adapting the Experience

For children whose small motor development makes handling materials more challenging, the whole project can be done on a larger scale. You and your child can work together to spread the glue and the child can choose and place the papers, fabric scraps and objects. Glue sticks are more manageable for many children if the collage is not too textured, although using white glue and a brush permits more moving around of objects before the glue dries.

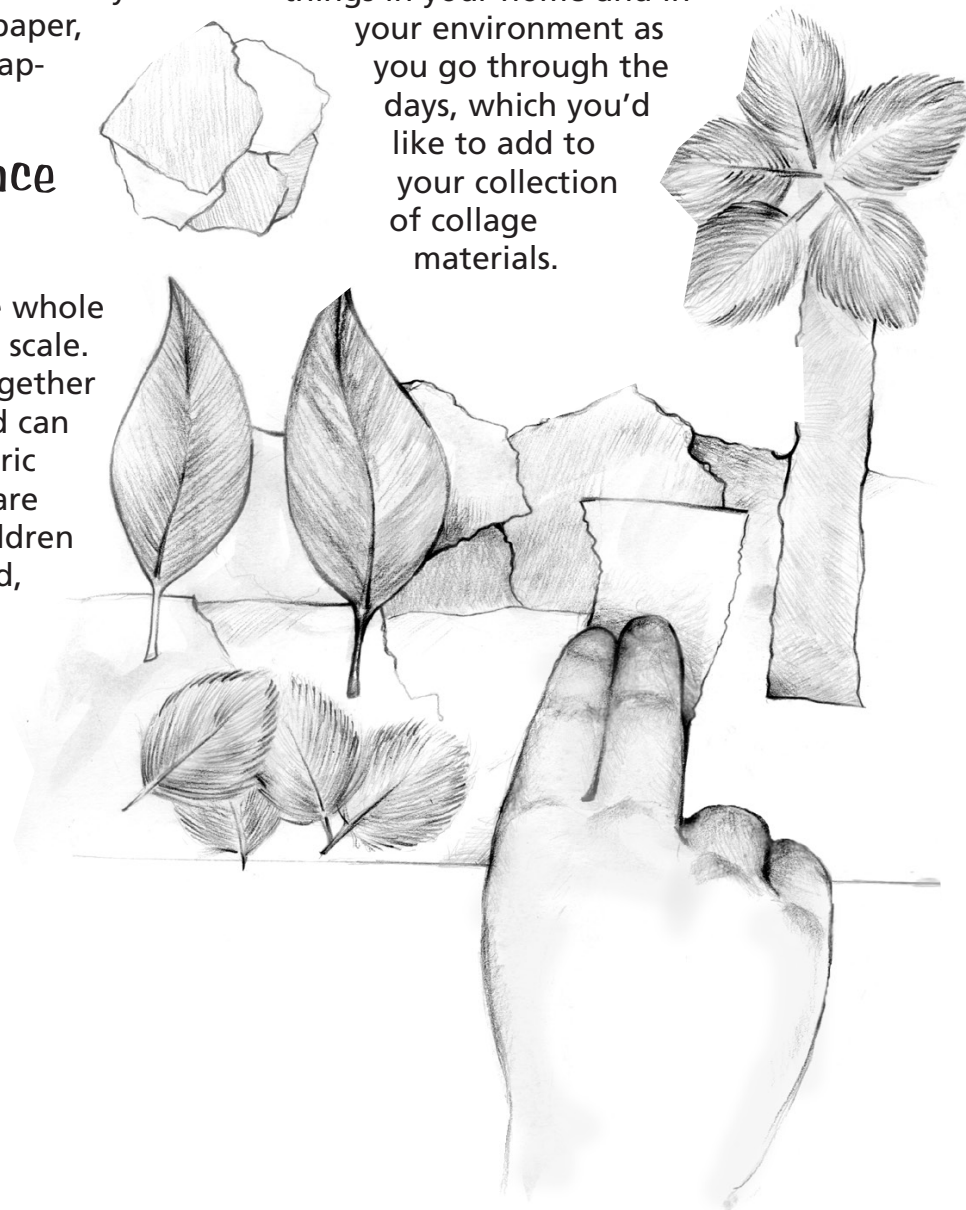
For a child with low vision, collage done with textured materials is an excellent visual arts medium.

Creating Art

Working side by side, each of you can begin your first collage. Some children (and parents!) will want to make a collage, which shows an actual person, object or scene. Others may just want to explore creating forms and playing with colors. Either is fine!

After you have finished, be sure and sign your collage just like artists do.

Your collage experience can be ongoing. As you do your first works you’ll begin to see things in your home and in your environment as you go through the days, which you’d like to add to your collection of collage materials.



Other Collage Activities

Cutting letters and numbers out of magazines and newspapers will give you materials for making a word collage. If your child is just learning letters, this can be a wonderful reinforcement. If you have an emerging reader, making words out of colorful cut-out letters would be fun.

Enjoying Your Art

Be sure and take time to enjoy each other's collage. Use your "talking about art" skills to tell your child what you enjoy about their work, what you see, and what you most enjoy about what's happening in the collage.

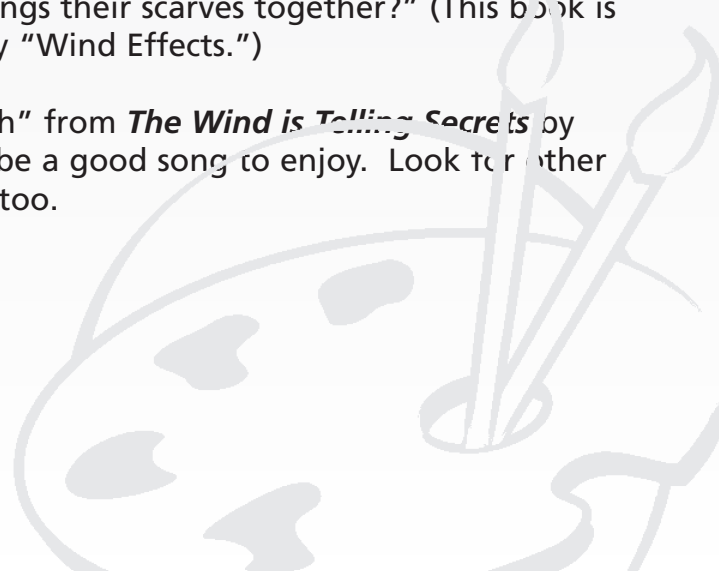
Decide how you'll exhibit your picture or if you'll add them to your "portfolio." If possible, have somebody take a picture of you holding your collage. You might each write (or the child dictate) a few words or sentences telling about the experience, what you found as you assembled the materials, and what you liked most about doing this kind of art.

Other Read and Listen Ideas

Books and illustrators which use collage include: *Waiting for Wings* and other books by Louis Ehlert; *Barnyard Banter* and other books by Denise Fleming; *Swimmy* and other books by Leo Lionni; all books by Eric Carle.

If you are making your collage with tissue paper and layering one color over another, *Color Dance* by Ann Jonas is a wonderful book to read together. Ask your child, "What do you see going on in these pictures? What happens when the children's dance brings their scarves together?" (This book is used for the activity "Wind Effects.")

"The Colors of Earth" from *The Wind is Telling Secrets* by Sarah Pirtle would be a good song to enjoy. Look for other songs about colors too.



Sing a Song of Boats

Making up your own songs to familiar tunes

If playing with water is a favorite pastime for young children, boats and books are a wonderful link. There are many ways that you can use music to act out your own boats, and of course the easiest song in the world to sing is available – “Row, row, row your boat.”

We'll look at ways to make imaginary boats as well as real ones. This activity can be done with lots of movement and activity, or it can focus on building and floating very small boats intended for the kitchen sink.

Read with Me

Sail Away by Donald Crews; *The Adventures of Louey and Frank* by Carolyn White

Both these books tell of journeys in boats; the first is a real-life kind of boat trip and the second completely whimsical and imaginary. But, there are adventures and exciting events in both. In reading other books about rivers, ponds, oceans, and boats you and your child can notice and count all the many kinds of craft that sail, motor, are paddled, and moved in all sorts of ways.

Getting Started

Talk about all the many kinds of boats you have seen in your books. What makes them go? Which ones have motors and which ones depend on the wind and which ones need to be moved or paddled by people? Which boats are fast and which are slow? How tiny a boat did you see? How large?



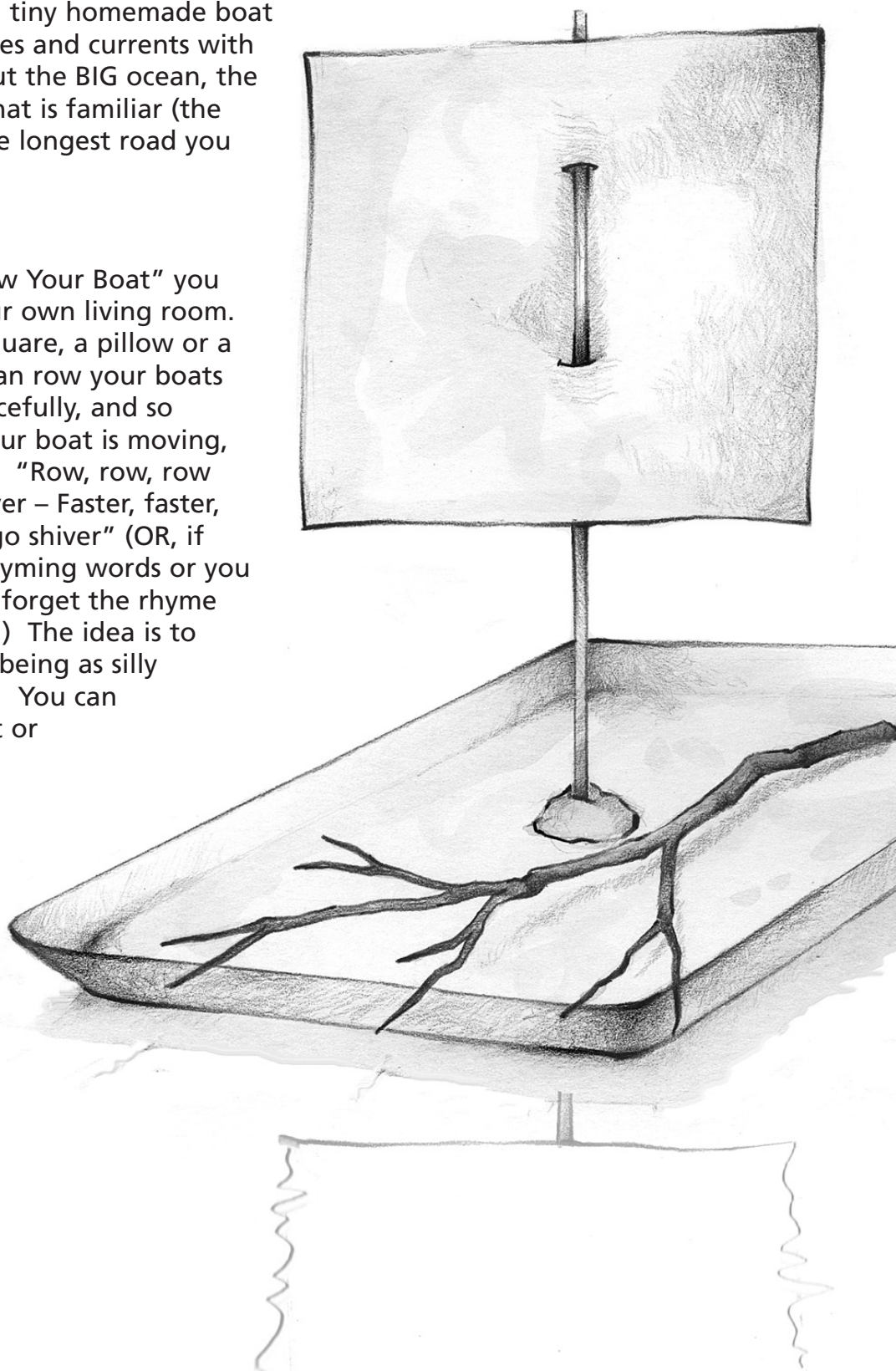
Adapting the Experience

If your child has had little or no experience around ponds, rivers and oceans imagining the size of this kind of water will be challenging. Playing with a tiny homemade boat in the sink or tub, making waves and currents with your hands, talk together about the BIG ocean, the LONG river, comparing it to what is familiar (the biggest field or parking lot, the longest road you travel in your town).

Creating Art

Using the song "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" you can take a journey right in your own living room. If each of you chooses a rug square, a pillow or a special spot on the floor you can row your boats and sing fast, slow, wildly, peacefully, and so on. As you change the way your boat is moving, change the words of the song. "Row, row, row your boat quickly down the river – Faster, faster, faster, faster, make the ducks go shiver" (OR, if your child is not tuned in to rhyming words or you want to be more spontaneous forget the rhyme as in "we're the very best" etc.) The idea is to sing whatever comes to mind, being as silly or as imaginative as you'd like. You can row your boat down the street or past the stars; you can make it travel as if it's sneaking, bumping, turning round and round.

Think about what your boats would do if it was very windy, if the river current was very fast, if there were big waves.



Other Boat and Song Activities

For a very different way to make your own boats, take Styrofoam pieces or meat trays and bits of wood, small pieces of Play Doh, paper, toothpicks, twigs – anything you can easily gather and build a little boat to sail in the sink. Notice how much you can put on your boat and have it still float. What makes it balance? What makes it tippy? How gently can you push it to make it go on its own?

You can make up a song about your boat to the tune of “Frere Jacques” (a tune which is invaluable for virtually any occasion as every line repeats and there are no rhymes!)
 “Here’re our boats, here’re our boats; they can float, they can float; mommy and I made them, mommy and I made them; it was fun, it was fun.”

Enjoying Your Boating and Songwriting

Talk about your favorite ways that your boats traveled. With the imaginary boats, which actions were the most fun and exciting? Print out one or two verses using the words which you made up and let your child illustrate them. Display the pictures for family members or neighbors. This would be a nice “show and tell” for your child to take to play group or school to share with friends.

Read and Listen

Among other books about boats which you can find in your local library might be:

Sailing with the Wind by Thomas Locker; *River Parade* by Alexandra Day; *Little Toot* by Hardie Gramatky; *One Wide River to Cross* by Barbara Emberley; *One Dog Canoe* by Mary Casanova; *Bill and Pete Go Down the Nile* by Tommie dePaola.

You might want to listen to “Down by the Bay” by Raffi from *Singable Songs for the Very Young* or “Sailing to the Sea” by Tom Chapin from *Mother Earth*.

Trucks at Work

Making imaginary trucks and acting out what we can do with them

What's more exciting than all the big trucks on a construction site, than big rigs zooming down the highway, than the steam shovel that came to work on the school addition. This activity offers a way to act out your very own choice of trucks right at home.

Read with Me

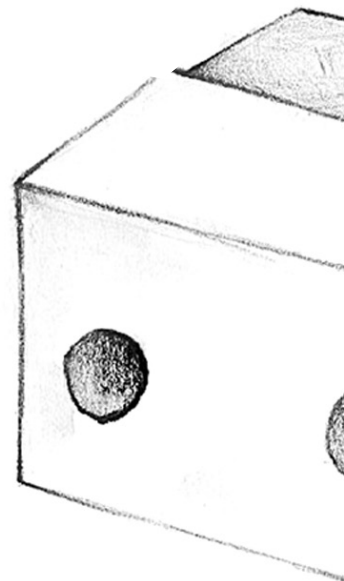
Cars and Trucks and Things That Go by Richard Scarry

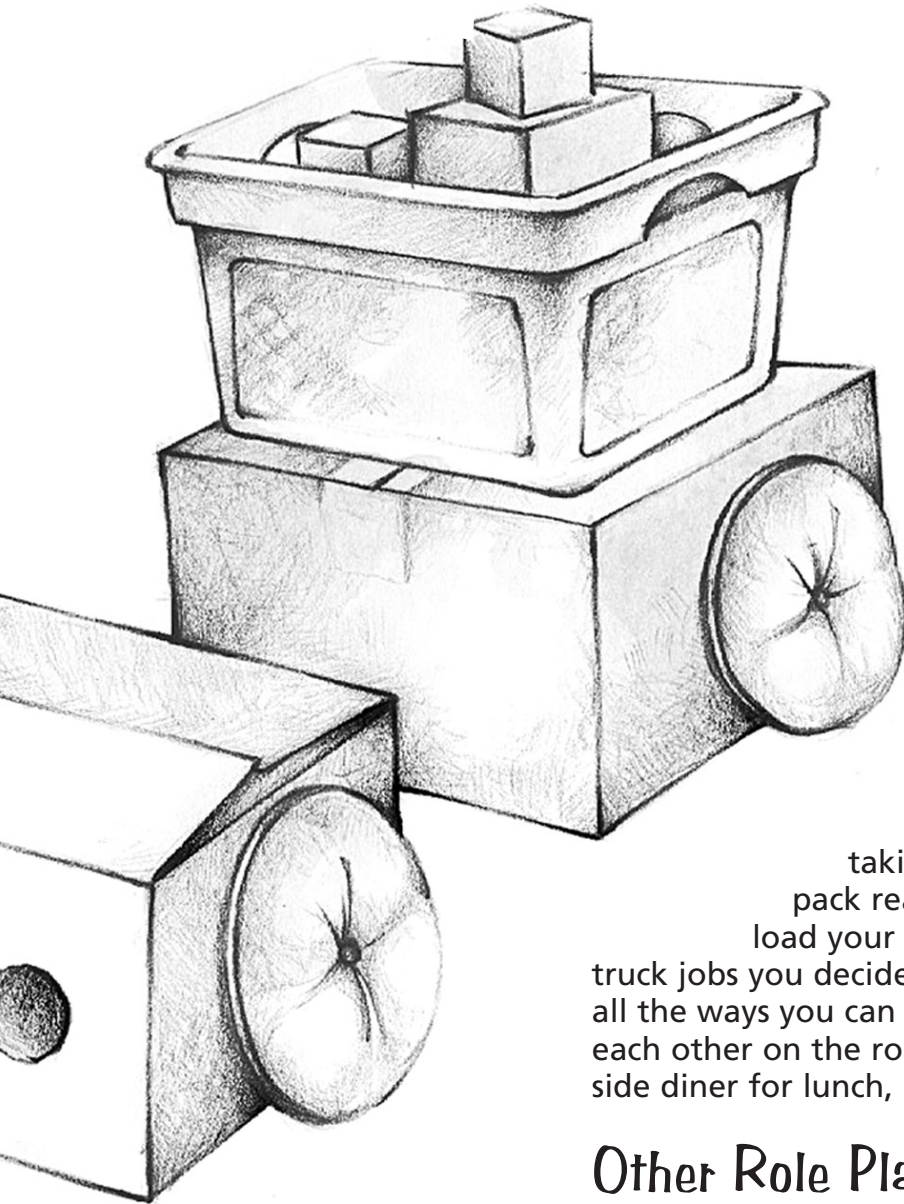
There are lots of great books on trucks and construction equipment, but this book has trucks that you never dreamed of! This classic of all preschool vehicle books will provide lots of ideas for acting out scenarios. Of course, you may pick other "things that go" and make them work as well for this activity.

Getting Started

Talk together about the trucks and construction vehicles which you see in the books. Look at all the different jobs which trucks do. Spend lots of time imagining what it would be like to drive a truck or a big machine. How would you take care of your truck? What do you need to do to keep it working? Where does the truck go when it's not at work? Use your "what do you see" questions as you look through the book.

You can dress up like a truck driver, either by adding a work hat (baseball cap!) or you can outfit yourselves in an entirely imaginary way. "Now I'm putting on my overalls and my big, fat work boots and I'm packing my tools to take on my truck."





Adapting the Experience

For a child who is Deaf or hard of hearing and who is learning sign language, this is an opportunity to learn some new words about trucks and cars and driving. Also, you can both use hand signs that real workers might use – signaling to turn right or left, motioning to each other on a noisy construction site, giving directions with motions.

Creating Art

Use boxes, chairs, sofa cushions or laundry baskets to construct a truck for the work or job you are going to do. If you are going to work on a construction site, gather blocks or boxes to deliver. If you are taking food from a farm to a grocery store, pack real or imaginary fruit and vegetables and load your truck or trucks. Or, you may have other truck jobs you decide to do. If you are both driving, think of all the ways you can act out the experience. You can pass each other on the road, talk on walkie-talkies, stop at a roadside diner for lunch, meet at the construction site.

Other Role Playing about Driving Vehicles

You could make the body of your trucks out of large cardboard boxes and use magic markers to decorate them, or you could make large signs with the name of your trucking or construction company to put on the sides.

You might decide you want to be a garage which works on trucks and equipment instead of being the driver. Or one of you can run the garage and gas station!

All of this action can be done with little trucks and cars on a small scale. It's what children themselves do all the time. It might be fun to play with little trucks first and then suggest that you act out the same kinds of things by making your large imaginary trucks.

Enjoying Your Creative Drama

Talk together about all the things you could do if you had the truck you chose to act out. What part of the job would be the most fun? What would be hard to do? What kind of truck or construction rig would be the most exciting to operate?

Looking out the window or taking a walk or a ride, watch for all the trucks you can see and make a list as your child calls them out. When you get home you could write a short story called “Trucks in the Street” and illustrate it.

Read and Listen

Among other books about vehicles which you can find in your local library might be:

Construction Trucks by Betsy Imershein; ***Machines at Work*** by Byron Barton; ***Seymour Simon’s Book of Trucks*** by Seymour Simon; ***Truck Jam*** by Paul Strickland; ***Mike Mulligan and his Steam Shovel*** by Virginia Lee Burton; ***Trucks*** by Donald Crews.

You can listen to “Truck Driving Woman” or “Ballet Dancing Truck Driver” by Cathy Winter and Betsy Rose from the recording ***As Strong As Anyone Can Be*** or “Eighteen Wheels on a Big Rig” by Raffi from ***Rise and Shine***.





Making Music for Many Moods

Making and playing homemade instruments

Music is a great way to express the whole range of feeling. The books suggested will generate lots of discussion about all kinds of feelings and moods. Making musical instruments from “found stuff” will give you and your child the fun of composing music which reflects all different kinds of feelings.

Read with Me

Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendek; *My Many Colored Days* by Dr. Seuss

It’s a familiar scenario to all children to feel like a “wild thing” and Sendek’s book captures this perfectly. Beloved author Dr. Seuss assigns colors to moods and gives lots of chances to have fun talking about the many ways we feel and how that happens.

Materials

You and your child will be going on a real scavenger hunt to get ready for this activity. Look for anything which makes an interesting or dramatic or sweet sound. This can include a couple of blocks to bang together, pot lids for cymbals, a plastic bucket for a drum, shakers made of an empty bottle with beans or pebbles inside, any wind chimes or bells that might be in your home, paper that crinkles and crackles. Let your discoveries be your guide.

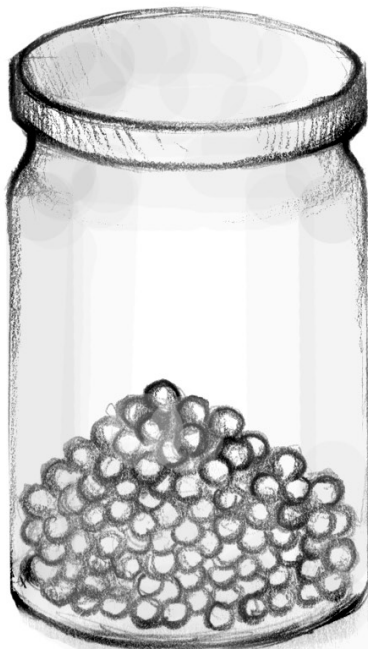


Before You Start

Talk with your child about where music comes from and who makes it up. Children tend to think that music comes from something – the TV, the tape or CD player. This activity gives them a chance to become a composer and write their own music.

Adapting the Experience

If your child is very young or if impulse control is something on which you're working, you may want to do this activity one step at a time. You could look for just one or two things which make the kind of noise you're particularly looking for – a little bell to show "happy" or two blocks to clap together to show "jumpy." Offering choice between two things and gradually introducing new instruments at subsequent times will provide a structure which may work better for your child. Too much choice can be overstimulating and con-



fusing.

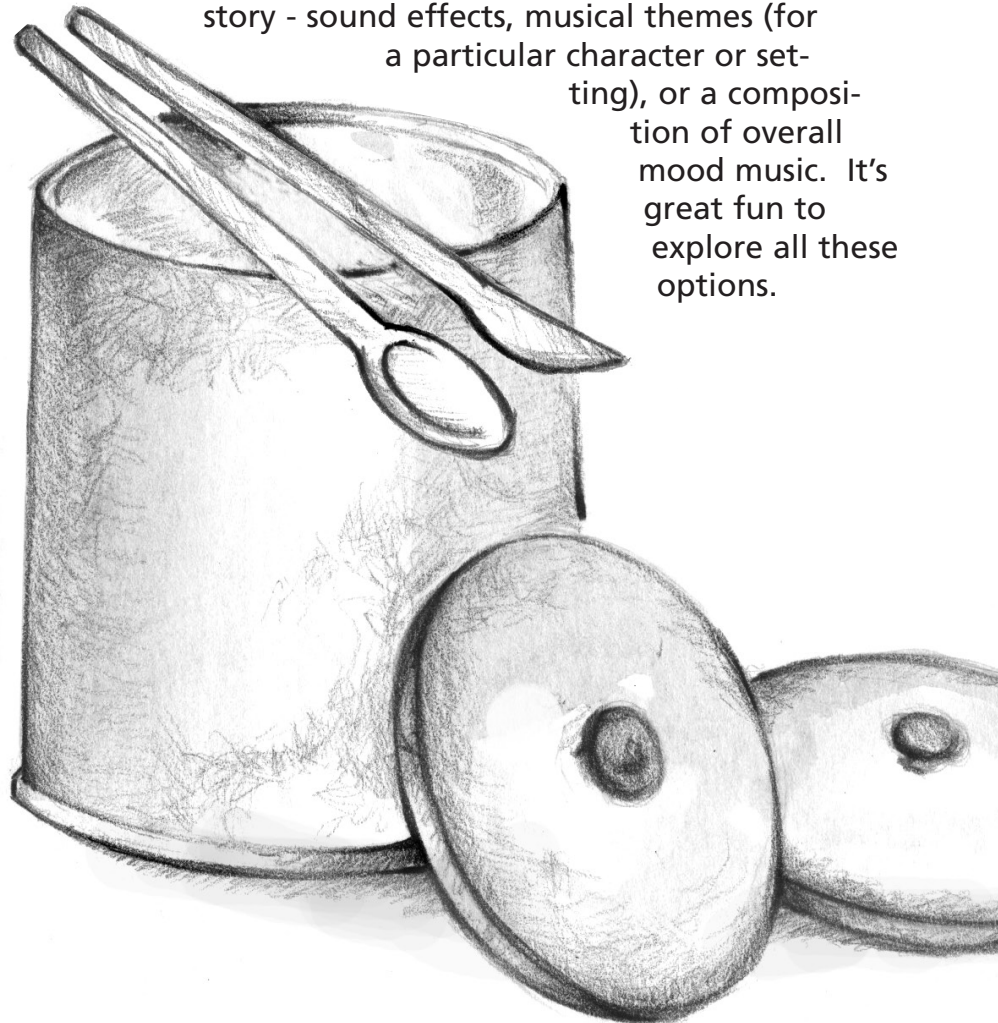
Creating Art

There are two ways to approach your musical composition. One is to tie it directly to the book you've been reading. You could compose a little piece of very quiet music for the vines growing in Max's room, and then a loud and raucous piece for the wild rumpus.

A second way to compose music about feelings is simply to choose a mood (either from the book or on your own) and then use several instruments to create music which expresses those feelings. You can use words or not – whichever you and your child decide.

a As you do this activity, you'll find there are generally three ways that music works in a story - sound effects, musical themes (for a particular character or set-

ting), or a composition of overall mood music. It's great fun to explore all these options.



Taking the Music a Step Further

You might like to tape record a piece of music and listen to what you've created. You can talk about what you're hearing and think about ways you might like to change or add to your composition.

If your child likes to be a storyteller, she can make up a tale and you can add sounds as she tells it. Or, you can make up a story and your child add the sounds. Adding silly faces and vocal sounds can be lots of fun too.

Talking about Art

It will be very easy to have conversations about the feelings and moods in the books you read. You and your child can share times and places when you've had those kinds of feelings! Relating them to a book might make difficult situations easier to talk about – and help to understand that everybody feels this way sometimes.

You can ask your child, "What did you hear in that last composition we played?" and if your child says, "It sounded scary!" you can then ask, "What did you hear that made it sound that way to you?" – and you'll be amazed at the descriptive language this can develop! It's great with composing to take lots of time to talk about what you're hearing and what you notice in the different sounds.

Other Read and Listen Ideas

Some books which explore a range of feelings include: *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst; *Scared Silly – A Book for the Brave* by Marc Tolon Brown; *Sad Day, Glad Day* by Vivian L. Thmpson; *Today I Feel Silly and Other Moods* by Jamie Lee Curtis; *Cordoroy* by Don Freeman.

Music which talks about feelings includes "Shake My Sillies Out" by Raffi from *Singable Songs for the Very Young*; "I'm in the Mood" by Raffi from *Rise and Shine*; "Sing a Happy Day" by Rosenshontz from *Tickles You*.

Thanks a Lot

Plaques, medals and sculptures which show appreciation for those special to us

Friends, family, and community members are a very important part of every child's life. This lesson gives you a chance to read about people who are special – either because of our relationship with them or because they have done things that are really worth recognizing and celebrating. The art form is three-dimensional and allows lots of ways for children to create their own awards.

Read with Me

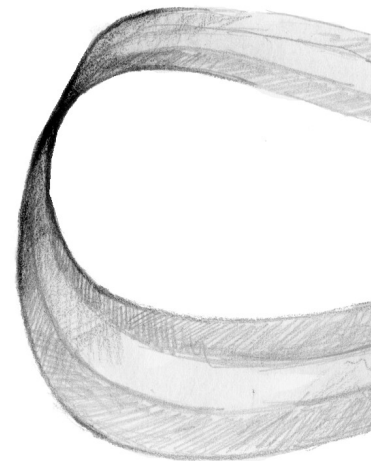
My Grandma is Wonderful; My Grandpa is Amazing; My Mom is Excellent; My Dad is Awesome; all by Nick Butterworth

The books suggested are about family and the wonderful things we love about them. Books which tell the story of heroes and important historical figures will work well also – particularly if they have a direct connection to your family's interests or to the community in which you live.

Materials

Plaques and medals can be easily made of any modeling material. Play Doh, Crayola Model Magic, or simple self-drying clay from the local craft store, are all great for modeling objects that will then dry and be permanent. Oil-based plasticene comes in wonderful colors and is very satisfying to manipulate for children who are beyond the stage of putting things in their mouths, but you have to be aware that it never dries and so has to be given and displayed in a different way.

You can also make awards from virtually any material which can be glued or nailed. As in the collage activity, look for what's around that appeals to you and your child.





Before You Start

Talk with your child about how people who are special are recognized. If anybody in your family has ever received a trophy, look at it and talk about why it was given. The same goes for medals or recognition plaques. You can also talk about any large statues you have seen – perhaps in the neighborhood park or in a public space in your community.

Decide who you are going to celebrate and what kind of award you'd like to make to do this. Or, if you have materials on hand which will work best for one of these things, you can simply suggest that you make a plaque (or medal or trophy – depending on what you have available) and leave the other kinds of awards for future projects. You can decide together what colors will be best for this person, what shapes will work well.

Adapting the Experience

You can gather materials and choose the nature of the award based on the developmental level and the abilities of your child. For very young children or those with small motor delays, using a nice big piece of modeling material will be both successful and satisfying. An award can be as big as you'd like!

Creating Art

Here are three examples of art which make a good award:

- **Plaques:** Flatten your modeling material with a rolling pin or simply by pressing it out with your hands so that you have the base shape. Decorate it by making impressions in the clay with various textured tools such as forks and other kitchen implements, sticks, small pieces of toys which would leave an imprint – or any other found tools. You can keep it simple with one color, blend the modeling materials in two or more colors before flattening, or add more color by putting rolled or shaped modeling clay on top of the base.

- **Trophies:** There are many ways to create a trophy. Choose a base – a flat stone from the yard, a small piece of wood, a plastic picnic plate, a box or a plastic container lid will all work well. Using any modeling material, build a small figure, object – or simply a piece of free-form art. You can use only clay, or you can add other materials such as twigs, toothpicks, and any of the kinds of things you gathered for your collage.

- **Medals:** Although medals are usually worn by the recipient, they can still be good sized. To make a clay medal, press the material flat and cut your circle with a glass or small bowl.

Punch a hole with a pencil in the top so that you can thread a ribbon through after the medal is dried so it can be hung around the neck. You can also make a medal if you don't have clay. Cut a round piece of cardboard for a base and paint it or color it well with markers. Your child can choose words for you to write on it in addition to decorating it with buttons, beads, glitter, etc.

Punch a hole and hang it from a ribbon, like the clay medal, or glue a large safety pin on the back so that it can be worn in that way.

Other Ways to Make Awards

You can decide to create a really good sized statue or trophy out of virtually any material. A construction of scrap wood or varied small boxes could be a fine base. You can keep it as simple as you'd like – or you could go wild with decorations or curled paper, ribbons, feathers, homemade flags, and banners.

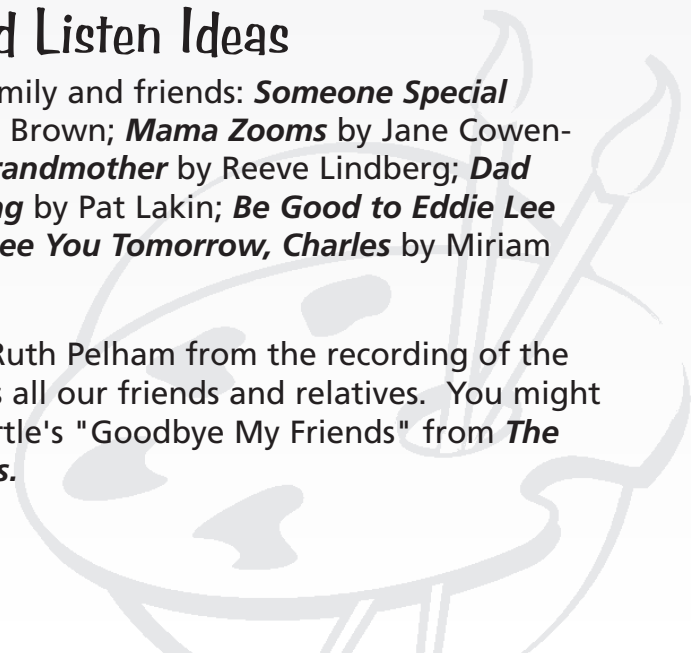
Enjoying Your Art

After your award is made, take some time to decide how you will bestow it on the person being celebrated. Do you want to make a special time with other people there? Perhaps you could have a ceremony to go along with the event (even if it's just a few words or a blast on a kazoo!). It's often a good idea to have a written appreciation as well. Your child could dictate a sentence or a little paragraph to tell why you want to thank and recognize the awardee. If possible, take a picture of the child making the award and put it up on the family bulletin board or other space.

Other Read and Listen Ideas

Other books about family and friends: *Someone Special Just Like You* by Tricia Brown; *Mama Zooms* by Jane Cowen-Fletcher; *My Hippy Grandmother* by Reeve Lindberg; *Dad and Me in the Morning* by Pat Lakin; *Be Good to Eddie Lee* by Virginia Fleming; *See You Tomorrow, Charles* by Miriam Cohen.

"Under One Sky" by Ruth Pelham from the recording of the same name celebrates all our friends and relatives. You might also listen to Sarah Pirtle's "Goodbye My Friends" from *The Wind Is Telling Secrets*.





Amazing Animals

Exploring how animals move and act

This activity can spring from books about virtually any kinds of animals or living creature. Your child might be most interested in pets, in bugs, in underwater animals or in wild creatures. Choose a book which reflects his interest, or a favorite book about animals which you've both enjoyed before. You'll be using creative movement to experience and become the animals.

Read with Me

Barnyard Chatter by Denise Fleming; *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See* by Eric Carle; *The Rainbow Fish* by Marcus Pfeifer.

You'll find lots of farm animals (and the noises they make!) in the first book. The second is a favorite animal book and the third is a lovely story about an amazing little fish for children who like the ocean world.

Materials

You don't need anything to explore movement, but if you'd like you can gather props such as a blanket for a doggie bed, a cave made of sofa cushions for a bear cave, or a few house plants to create the greenery of the rain forest.





Getting Started

If your child seems most interested in domestic animals, talk about the pets in your home and/or the neighborhood. You can also imagine having a fantastic animal for a pet – a dragon, or a dinosaur. How would you take care of this pet and what would its space be like?

If you decide to read about and explore movement of a wild animal, introduce your child to the word “habitat” as you think about where your animals will live.

In both cases, you can talk about the movements of your animals. Do they make small or large motions – or perhaps both? Are they shy animals or are they bold? Are their movements slow and smooth (like a snake) or are they jumpy and sharp (like a new puppy)?

Adapting the Experience

For a child with limited mobility or with high or low tone, you can gently partner her so that she can experience a wide range of actions. Partnering is best done with the lowest level of intervention possible. For instance, if you are going to be butterflies together, put your arms under hers (rather than holding her arms) and move with swooping movements, but at a speed and in way that allow your child to be relaxed and as independent as possible. Offer lots of verbal choices. “Do you want to go faster? Shall we do high flying or low flying? Is our butterfly getting sleepy or is it excited?” Follow verbal or facial cues to let your child take the lead as much as possible.

Creating Art

It's often easiest to initiate creative movement when you have a particular scene in mind. If you are both going to be little kittens, you might pretend that you are leaving your box for the first time. How would you move to explore the room, to play with a piece of string, or to pounce on a piece of fluff? What would it be like when you drink from a bowl for the first time?

If you are wild animals you can move in ways that your animal would – stalking, climbing, galloping, swimming, slithering. Remember that in addition to the basic ways your animals move they also get tired, get excited, can be nervous or sneaky!

Other Animal Movement Activities

You might look for music which suits your animals and make your creative movement into a dance. It might be fun to make stuffed animals move and dance in little scenes. You can even add words or music for this too.

Enjoying Your Art

Looking through magazines (particularly ones about wildlife, fishing, the environment and so on) you could find pictures of animals and their activities. They could be cut out and pasted in a simple homemade book. You and your child could choose words to describe the movements you see in these pictures and you could print these words in your book.

Other Read and Listen Ideas

Among the many books about animals are *Pet Show* and *Hi, Cat* by Ezra Jack Keats; *Rabbits and Raindrops* by Joy Peskin; *Cats Do, Dogs Don't* by Norma Simon; *Handtalk Zoo* by George Ancona; *Mrs. Katz and Tush* by Patricia Polacco; *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed* by Eileen Cristelow.

Wonderful songs can be found on *Animal Folk Songs for Children* by Pete Seeger. You can also listen to "Doggie" by Red Grammer on *Can You Sound Just Like Me* and "Did You Feed My Cow" by Ella Jenkins on *You Sing a Song and I'll Sing a Song* or *African Folk Rhythms for Children*.

The Artful Alphabet

Using alphabet books for activities in all art forms

There are so many ways that you can build art activities from your favorite alphabet books. There are alphabet books which are old favorites and splendid new ones coming out all the time.

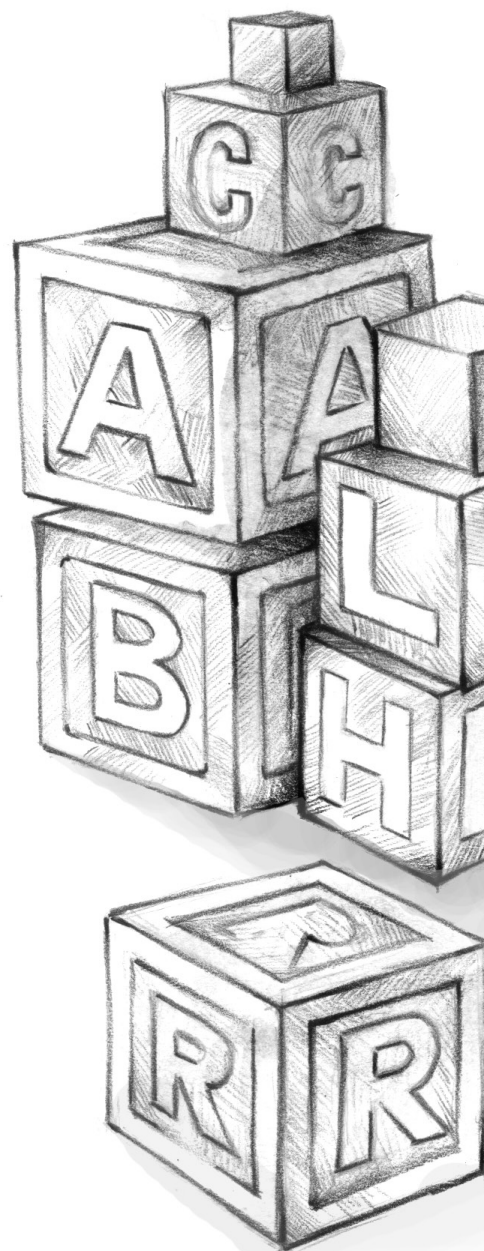
This final book-art link is organized to suggest one short experience in each arts area. We've picked four very different alphabet books and linked them to activities in music, creative movement, visual arts and creative drama to expand your read-aloud experiences with the letter books you choose.

M is For Music by Kathleen Krull

There isn't really any kind of music which *isn't* included in this visually stunning book. You'll find musical links as varied as the Beatles, Klezmer bands, jazz and Old MacDonald. If you're fond of particular kinds of music, you'll surely find them in this book!

Browsing the book and enjoying the pictures and the sounds of the letters in relation to their musical link will get you started. Then you and your child can take off from your favorite page or pages.

You might start with a familiar musical link such as the "O" page for "Old MacDonald." There are so many things which you can do with this song that are fun and creative. Simply singing the verses with your own animals is great for creating your own version of the song. Another way to use this song is to sing about the "band" which Old MacDonald has. (The farm is his day job and his real love is music!) Assemble some of your homemade instruments and household objects which make interesting sounds and sing verses for each one.



"Old MacDonald had a band...and in that band there were some shakers/drums/cymbals (pot lids)." Your music box will come into its own as you make up verses for this alternate version. The great thing about a song like this is that you can adapt the ways that you use it to the developmental level and interest of your child.

On Your Toes – A Ballet ABC

by Rachel Isadora

The letters in this book are all in capitals and each page has a colorful picture of a dance position or character which reflects the letter itself. There are a wide variety of ways to move

based on each picture, so you and your child can choose what appeals to you.

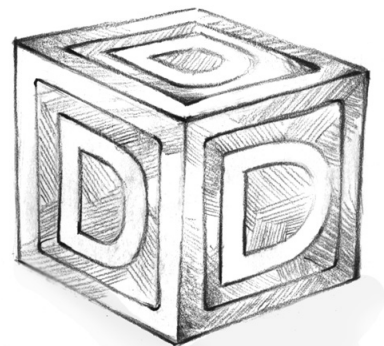
With your child you can move and dance the shapes of the letters. It's so much fun to make your body into a T or an S. For some letters it may take two of you to make the letter. This experience of using the whole body to experience the letters is invaluable in making letters more meaningful to a young child just learning to recognize them. For children with limited motor ability or for quieter moments, you can shape the letter with your fingers, making your hands do the dancing.

Other pages suggest characters which can be expressed by movement. Looking at Q for Queen you can ask, "What is the queen wearing? How does she move with such a fancy long dress? If she goes to a big party, what kind of dancing do you think she does? Shall we dance like the queen at a ball?"

Eating the Alphabet – Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z by Lois Ehlert

This delicious and brightly colored book has upper and lower case letters and lots of familiar foods as well as a few which may be new to you. Lois Ehlert has used a bright collage technique for large appealing pictures.

You can use the collage papers you collected for your art box to make your own favorite foods pictures. You might want to do fruits and vegetables as in this book, or you might pick a different kind of food. Choose the first letter of your child's name and of your own and each make a collage of all the favorite foods which start with this letter. Or, browse through magazines and find food pictures which interest you, putting them together in a large "favorite foods" poster. (Remember to use these pictures in creative ways, layering them and tearing or cutting them with interesting shapes and edges so that it's a real arts activity and not just cut and paste.) Write



You can also use food as a printing tool to make interesting art. Cut an orange or an apple in half, dip it in a small amount of paint from a plate, and you'll get a wonderful unique print. Take lots of time to experiment with this and decide how you want to make a picture using your fruits and vegetables. You can also use carrots, turnips or any fruit or vegetable firm enough to hold up to the process! A variation is to take a potato and cut it into a few simple shapes – a triangle, a square, or simply odd shapes – and make prints by repeating the pattern. Link the alphabet to your prints by using your shape to print a huge letter. In other words, on a large piece of paper lightly draw a letter, perhaps your child's initial, and then print lots of shapes following the letter's lines.

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom

by John Archambault

This book uses irresistible rhymes to lead you through the alphabet. It's so much fun to read and say the verses that it will really help children just learning the alphabet to relate to and retain the letters. It is a "most asked for" book according to librarians and because it is predictable, even very young children will quickly be able to chant the lines.

You can act this book out just following the chanted text. "A meets B and B meets C/ Meet you at the top of the coconut tree. 'Whee', say D to E,F,G. I'll beat you to the top of the coconut tree." At the end when all the letters make it to the top, they all fall down! Join hands and march around the living room, pretending you're the letters and then tumble in a heap on well-placed sofa cushions. Bring stuffed animals along on the parade or make this an activity when there are several

children to be part of the action. You can use lots of different voices for the compelling rhymes.

Just as you danced the letters with the Ballet ABC, you can act out your letters as well. There are lots of ways to do this. It can be as simple as asking, "What mood is the letter S in today? Silly? Let's make a really silly face!" "Sad? How would we walk to the park if we were very sad?" Or, "What's our favorite animal whose name begins with the "ssss" sound? A snake? OK, let's see if we can pretend to be slithery, slippery snakes by sliding across the floor?"

Other Alphabet Books

Here are a few other alphabet books which range from very simple for the youngest children to rich and more complex for older children. Look for these and others among the wonderful selection at your neighborhood library. You'll find alphabet books for any interest and age. Happy exploration!

Tomorrow's Alphabet by George Shannon, pictures by Donald Crews

Z is for Zamboni: A Hockey Alphabet by Matt Napier, illustrated by Melanie Roise

From Acorn to Zoo by Satoshi Kitamura

Alphabatics by Sure MacDonald

Potluck by George Shannon

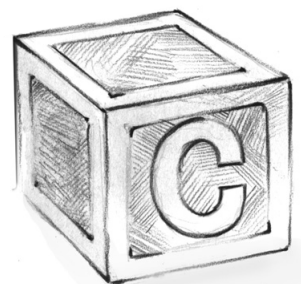
The Handmade Alphabet by Laura Rankin

Anno's Alphabet by Mitsumasa Anno

Ocean ABC and *many more* alphabet nature books by Jerry Pallotta

Toot and Puddle's ABC by Hollie Hobbie

Alphabet Under Construction by Denise Fleming



Resources

The following are just a few suggestions of the many possibilities for exploring reading and literacy skills with your child. Your local librarian and child's teachers will have lots more ideas for you.

Children's Magazines

Babybug and Lady Bug
PO Box 9304
LaSalle, IL 61301

The first is a board-book magazine for very young children, and the second is a literary magazine for 4-7 year olds – both with stories and rhymes to read aloud

Sesame Street Magazine
Children's Television Network
One Lincoln Plaza
New York, NY 10023

Stories, poems, puzzles and more featuring the much-loved Sesame Street characters

Your Big Back Yard
National Wildlife Federation
8925 Leesburg Pike
Vienna, VA 22184

Stories, poems, riddles and games, color pictures of animals with simple text for beginning readers

Computer Programs

Living Books: Interactive Animated Stories

Children can listen to a story, read along or narrate by themselves. They can interact with objects and characters and play games with the alphabet, simple words, rhyming. Each program comes with a matching book. Many include Spanish, French, and German along with the English text.

Bailey's Book House

This program builds literacy skills and develops a love for reading. All directions are spoken so no reading skills are required. It includes letters, words, sentences, rhyming and stories with Bailey and his friends.

Let's Go Read! An Island Adventure

The character of Robby Raccoon and his friends take children on adventures on their island which is inhabited by the alphabet. Activities teach children letter sounds and how to sound out and build simple words.

Internet Sites

Arthur: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/Arthur>

Barney: <http://www.barneyonline.com>

Disney: <http://Disney.go.com/park/bases/familybase/today/>

Dr. Seuss's Seussville: <http://www.random-house.com/seussville/university>

PBS Homepage: <http://www.pbs.org/>

Children's Television Network:

<http://www.ctn.org>

Information about Reading to Children and Laying the Foundation for Literacy

Helping Your Child Become a Reader

Helping Your Preschool Child

ED Pubs

Education Publications Center

US Department of Education

PO Box 1398

Jessup, MD 20794

Dickinson, David K and Tabors (2001)

Beginning Literacy with Language: Young

Children Learning at Home and at School

Paul H Brookes Publishing Co., Baltimore MD

Bibliography

- Aesop's Fables and Brian Wildsmith (Illus.), *The North Wind and the Sun*
 Archambault, John, *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*
 Ashe, Frank and Devin, *Like a Windy Day*
 Barton, Byron, *I Want to be an Astronaut* and *Machines at Work*
 Brown, Marc Tolon, *Scared Silly – A Book for the Brave*
 Burton, Virginia Lee, *Mike Mulligan and his Steam Shovel*
 Butterworth, Nick, *My Grandpa is Amazing*
 Carle, Eric, *The Grouchy Ladybug*
 Crews, Donald, *Sail Away*
 Day, Alexander and Alexandra, *River Parade*
 Dussling, Jennifer and Courtney (Illus.), *Construction Trucks*
 Ehlert, Lois, *Waiting for Wings* and *Eating the Alphabet – Fruits & Vegetables from A-Z*
 Emberley, Barbara and Ed Emberley (Illus.), *One Wide River to Cross*
 Ets, Marie Hall, *Gilberto and the Wind*
 Fleming, Denise, *Barnyard Banter*
 Gramatky, Hardie, *Little Toot*
 Hutchins, Pat, *The Wind Blew*
 Isadora, Rachel, *On Your Toes – A Ballet ABC*
 Jonas, Ana, *Color Dance*
 Keats, Ezra Jack, *Pet Show* and *Hi, Cat*
 Krull, Kathleen and Stacy Innerst (Illus.), *M is for Music*
 Kunhardt, Dorothy, *Pat the Bunny*
 Lionni, Leo, *Swimmy*
 Locker, Thomas, *Sailing With the Wind*
 Martin, Bill Jr. and Eric Carle (Illus.), *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do you See?*
 Merriam, Eve, *Mommies at Work*
 Mitchell, Margaree King and James E. Ransome (Illus.), *Uncle Jed's Barbershop*
 Peskin, Joy (Ed.) and Jim Arnosky (Illus.), *Rabbits and Raindrops*
 Powers, Mary Ellen and Kathleen Tucker (Ed.), *Our Teacher's in a Wheelchair*
 Scarry, Richard, *Busy, Busy Town, What do People do all Day?, Cars and Trucks and Things that Go*
 Sendak, Maurice, *Where the Wild Things Are*
 Seuss, Dr., *My Many Colored Days*
 Simon, Seymour, *Seymour Simon's Book of Trucks*
 Stickland, Paul, *Truck Jam*
 Thompson, Vivian L., *Sad Day, Glad Day*
 Viorst, Judith and Ray Cruz (Illus.), *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*
 Walter, Virginia and Ponder Goembel (Illus.), *Hi, Pizza Man*
 White, Carolyn and Laura Dronzek (Illus.), *The Adventures of Louey and Frank*

Selected Children's Recording Artists and Audio Resources

Each reading-art activity mentions songs by children's recording artists which fit the topic and are a great addition to the experience. While you might not find the particular tape, CD or song listed, your local library children's collection often will have lots of fine music for you to borrow and enjoy. Here are the recordings mentioned which are all by excellent artists who specialize in children's music. Each children's musician mentioned here has many other wonderful recordings as well.

Cathy Winter: ***As Strong As Anyone Can Be***

Nancy Tucker: ***Glad That You Asked***

Kathy Lowe: ***When I Grow Up.***

Raffi: ***Singable Songs for the Very Young; Rise and Shine***

Tom Chapin: ***Mother Earth***

Cathy Winter and Betsy Rose: ***As Strong As Anyone Can Be***

Cathy Fink and Marcy Mercer: ***Changing Channels***

Rosenshontz: ***Tickles You***

Pete Seeger: ***Animal Folk Songs for Children***

Red Grammer: ***Can You Sound Just Like Me***

Ella Jenkins: ***You Sing a Song and I'll Sing a Song; African Folk Rhythms for Children***

Sweet Honey in the Rock: ***All For Freedom***

Sarah Pirtle: ***The Wind is Telling Secrets***

Ruth Pelham: ***Under One Sky***

All these recordings can be obtained from New Sound Music and Gentle Wind. They are two marvelous resources for obtaining the best in children's music discs, tapes, videos and DVDs. You can find them easily on the Web.

About VSA arts

VSA arts is an international nonprofit organization founded in 1974 by Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith. **VSA arts** is creating a society where people with disabilities can learn through, participate in, and enjoy the arts. Each year millions of people participate in **VSA arts** programs through a network of affiliates and in more than 60 countries around the world.

Programming and initiatives of **VSA arts** are guided by four essential principles:

- Every young person with a disability deserves access to high-quality arts learning experiences.
- All artists in schools and art educators should be prepared to include students with disabilities in their instruction.
- All children, youth, and adults with disabilities should have complete access to community cultural facilities and activities.
- All individuals with disabilities who aspire to careers in the arts should have the opportunity to develop appropriate skills.

VSA arts offers diverse programs and events at the international, national, and local levels ranging from training institutes and artist-in-residence projects to arts camps and emerging artist award programs. For more information, please visit www.vsarts.org.

About Start with the Arts®

Educational programming is the fundamental core of **VSA arts'** work. Current research indicates that early education has lifelong benefits for children, particularly for children with disabilities, limited English proficiency, or who come from economically disadvantaged situations. Early intervention offers the potential for reducing the amount of special services required later.

Start with the Arts® is an educational resource for early childhood teachers created in 1994 that promotes the development of basic literacy skills and offers engaging arts activities teachers can apply in all curricular areas. Resources are included for parents to continue the learning and discovery at home. **VSA arts** has also translated this resource into Spanish, making it one of the rare arts-based literacy supports for multilingual communities.

For more information on *Start with the Arts®* for your child's educator or preschool, please call 1.800.933.8721 or visit www.vsarts.org.



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www.kennedy-center.org/education/vsa

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