



Introduction

Who is this book for?

Art Experiences for Little Fingers is a wonderful resource for anyone who lives, works, or plays with young children. Whether you are a parent, an early childhood educator, a child care provider, or even a grandparent, the art experiences found in this easy-to-use book will provide hours of meaningful fun for you and the little ones in your life!

The activities presented in *Art Experiences for Little Fingers* use inexpensive and readily available materials. Most of the items used in these art experiences can be found in your kitchen or school cupboards. On page 6, you will find a list of suggested “readily available materials” that may assist you in stocking your cupboards.

Why is art important in early childhood?

All young children need a variety of experiences to help them explore and learn about their world. Art is an essential part of a child’s development because it nurtures the child’s natural curiosity and imagination. Art allows the child to experiment with textures, colors, shapes, movement, and space, as well as offering experiences that help increase a child’s observation skills, fine motor strength, and eye-hand coordination.

Art experiences also promote increased expressive and receptive language skills. Sitting with your own child or with a group of children in an early childhood setting provides perfect opportunities for talking about all of the basic concepts that they are experiencing. For example, ask “How does the playdough feel?” “Are the bubbles big or small?” “Is the finger paint smooth or rough?” “Tell me about your picture.” These activities are also powerful tools for increasing a child’s vocabulary.

It is important to praise a child’s efforts and accomplishments. Self-esteem and self-confidence are bolstered as you comment on the beauty of a finger painting, the clever shape of a playdough sculpture, or how bright the colors are in that scribble picture. Problem-solving skills are also enhanced when a child is allowed to creatively explore art materials. Children will begin asking questions such as; “What will happen if I mix two different colors of paint together?” “How long will it take for this clay to dry?” “What will happen if I add too much water?”

It’s the process. Not the product!

Children are busy learning through the process and exploration of art! The final product is not what is important. So, let the imagination of your children run wild as they explore, create, and discover more about the world around them with *Art Experiences for Little Fingers*.

