

10 ways to play in February

1 Set-up a stuffed animal zoo or vet office. Make signs, tickets, prescriptions, and feeding schedules. Lead zoo tours or treat your patients with bandages, medicine (poms poms work great), and love!

2 Make structures with toothpicks and marshmallows.

Tell a story and have a grown-up write it down. Add some illustrations, too!

3

4 Paint some card stock or watercolor paper (with brushes or fingers). When dry, cut the paper into postcards and send notes to friends and family.

Do a sink and float experiment.

5

Have a living room picnic!

6

Paint with unusual tools.

Here are some ideas to get you started: tree branch, toy cars, toothbrush, kitchen sponge, bath scrubbie, or cookie cutters.

7

Make a single-color collage.

Gather yarn, paper, buttons, crayons, paint, and anything else you can find that is your special color. Grab some glue and start creating!

8

How tall of a block tower can you build? How many blocks can you stack in one minute?

10

Try batting balloons around the room using your head, elbows, knees, or nose. Can you bat a balloon back and forth with a fly-swatter?

9

happy playing!

Art Helps Children Grow

Here are seven good ideas from art educators and developmental specialists that briefly explain what it is about ART that helps children feel good about themselves, helps them grow intellectually, emotionally and socially... and helps them master the world around them.

And while you don't have to have an art background to help children feel creative, you DO need an open-minded attitude about the process of creativity and a willingness to explore, discover and learn new things.

Since the process of art-making is the process of discovery, let's begin by looking at these seven good things and finding something that might help you in your work-something that perhaps you never thought about before:

1. Know the difference between "arts" and "crafts."
2. Separate the art process from the art product.
3. Know how the arts teach developmental skills.
4. Know which skills are developed and how.
5. Know about the right side of the brain.
6. Know the theory of learning by doing.
7. Know how to define creativity.

1. Know the difference between "arts" and "crafts."

The process of making art and the process of making crafts are related but different activities. Many people think of "arts" and "crafts" as if they are the same thing. However, practice with making a painting and practice with

making a birdhouse show us that arts and crafts are really quite different activities.

While art is an open-ended, or "unstructured," activity, crafts are goal-oriented, or "structured."

In the above example, painting is an art activity, and the birdhouse is a craft activity.

A good arts and crafts program provides both art and craft activities and allows children to explore and learn from both.

Craft Activities:

- Are product-oriented
- Engage cognitive skills and problem solving
- Require specific materials and instructions

Art Activities:

- Are process-oriented
- Engage imagination and feelings
- Use basic supplies and open-ended instruction

2. Separate the process of art from the product of art.

Children enjoy both the process and the product of art. One of the main goals of your enrichment program should be to help children experience the joy of creativity and the satisfaction of mastery; both concepts relate to the process of art.

But while adults focus on the process of art, school-aged children are often concerned with the product. They want their projects to look good and be worthy of admiration. So it's important to keep both the process and the product in mind.

This can be done by providing a variety of art materials that are stimulating, age appropriate and easy to be successful with - and by providing just the right amount of instruction and inspiration.

3. Know how art and crafts help children reach developmental goals.

In *Childhood and Society*, Erik Erickson wrote that the developmental goals of school aged children fall into four main categories: cognitive, emotional, social and sensorimotor.

In order to become healthy, happy and productive teenagers (and later healthy, happy and productive adults), children from 5-12 years old must have lots of experience and repeated practice with tasks in each of these four areas.

Art and crafts help children experience and practice their skills in all four of these areas. How?

Arts and Craft Develop Thinking Skills (Cognitive Development)

Problem solving skills are exercised in experimenting with art supplies and observing cause and effect.

Decision making is constant and continuous in assembling and decorating art and craft projects.

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Spatial relationships and visual thinking skills are engaged and strengthened.

Arts and Crafts Develop Feeling Skills (Emotional Development)

Open-ended art helps children communicate their real feelings and potentially have others understand them better.

Art materials provide sensory stimulation that can be fun and provide pleasure and satisfaction.

In the event of a crisis in your community, open-ended art provides an outlet to reduce the stress of a trauma.

Arts and Crafts Develop Relating Skills (Social Development)

Art materials are shared in an environment that facilitates social interaction.

The non-competitive, cooperative environment of the artroom helps children practice social skills.

Shy or less verbal children often participate more comfortably with others in this cooperative arena.

Arts and Crafts Develop Coordinating Skills (Sensorimotor Development)

Fine motor skills are developed using a wide range of materials, craft accessories and artroom tools.

Eye hand coordination prepares children for real life tasks at school and home.

Self-esteem is enhanced when a child identifies himself as being "coordinated."

4. Know that crafts and art develop different skills

Arts and crafts develop different developmental skills. Art activities develop feeling skills and promote self expression.

Craft activities develop thinking, relating, coordinating skills. These skill arenas overlap, but it is valuable to separate them and understand the difference when you work with children in art groups. This way, as you look in your cabinet and wonder, "What art or craft activity will I provide today?" you can ask yourself what skill you need to focus on: Is it relationship building, self expression, cognitive skills, and/or coordination? Once you establish this, you can decide whether to select an art activity or a craft activity.

5. Know about the left and right sides of the brain.

Participating in arts and craft activities activates both the linear, left hemisphere of the brain and the creative, non-sequential right hemisphere of the brain, helping children develop their full potential. Generally here is how the two sides of our brain process information:

Left Hemisphere: Logical, Sequential

Activated by reading, math or linear problem solving

Right Hemisphere: Creative, Intuitive

Activated by art, music, dance, drama

6. Know the theory of learning by doing.

Arts and crafts offer

children endless opportunities to learn by doing. And they are likely to remember what they learn. Brain researchers tell us that children retain much better when hands-on activities go along with that learning. Children learn:

10% of what they READ

20% of what they HEAR

30% of what they SEE

50% of what they HEAR and READ

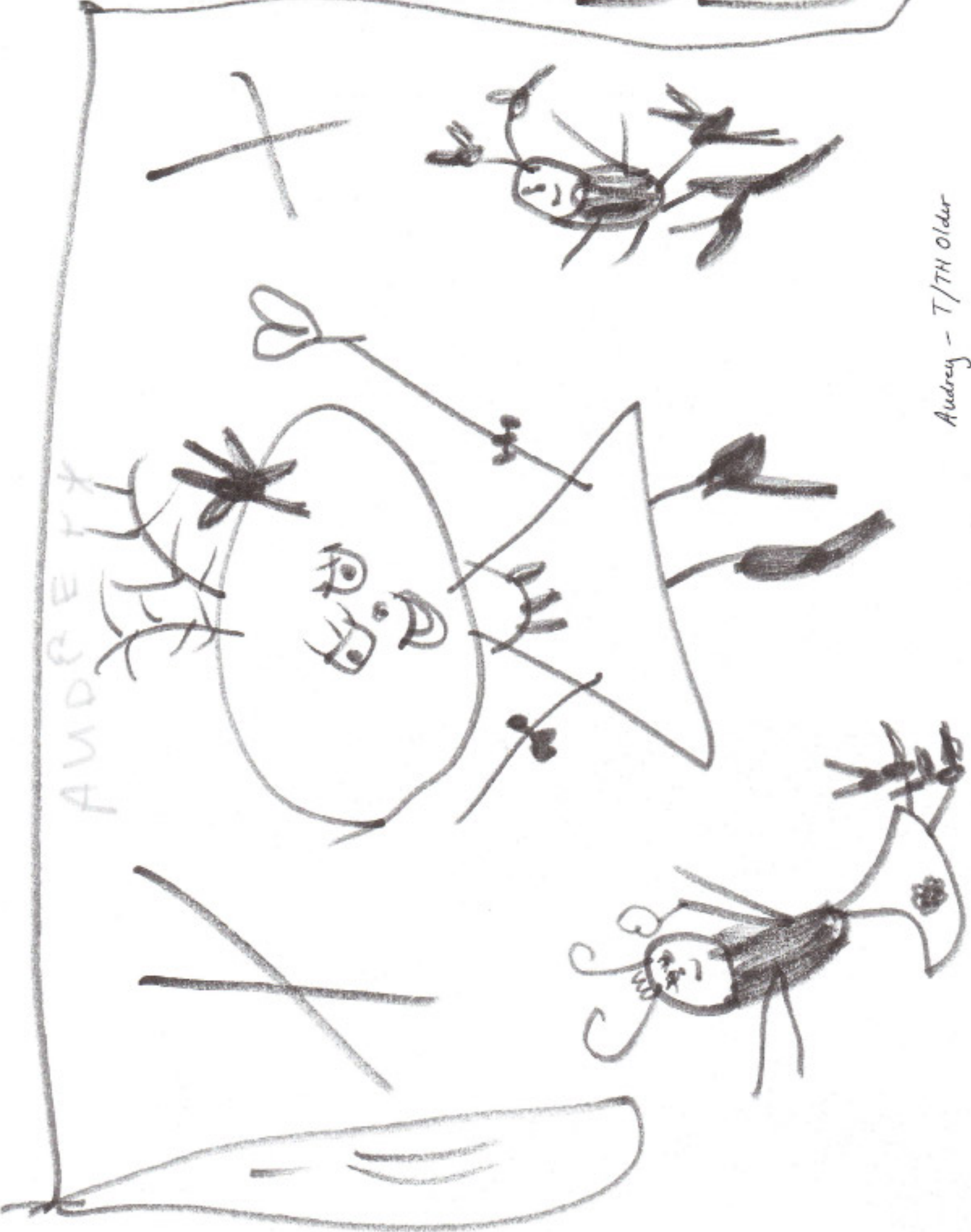
70% of what they SAY and

90% of what they DO!

Picasso wrote:

"Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up"

AUDREY



Audrey - 7/7H Older