

Process Art

Relevant Satellite Accreditation Standards

IV. Supporting Children's Development

I. Art and other self-expression activities are open-ended and child-directed.

1. The provider doesn't expect children's products to all look the same.



Let the Dragon's Fly Family Child Care



The Playhouse



Sarah's Littles Adventures in Playschool

The Basics

What is process art? Process art, also called open-ended art, is art that emphasizes the material, technique, and experience of art creation rather than the finished product. A provider who encourages this allows children to express their creativity through process art, acknowledging that the creative process of making the art is more valuable to children's development than the end product.

Why is it best? Process art builds the small muscles in a child's hand (also known as fine motor development). It strengthens independence, grows self-esteem, and builds foundational learning skills. The freedom of choice in creative expression builds brain development through problem solving, planning, and experimenting with color, texture, and shape. Open-ended art also prompts valuable conversations that contribute to language and social-emotional development. Asking questions like, "What did you draw?" or making objective observations like, "Look at all the colors you used," let children know that you are interested in them as individuals and learners.

I want to learn more!

- [Process or Product? The Argument for Aesthetic Exploration in the Early Years](#) (Research Article)
- [The Value of Documenting Process Art](#) (Article)
- [A Scribble is Never Just a Scribble: Art, Story, and Process](#) (Article)
- [How Process-Focused Art Experiences Support Preschoolers](#) (Article)