

A Parents Guide to Drawing and Painting

What are the benefits of children creating visual works? And how can you encourage them to do so? Penny Tassoni offers advice (3 of 3)

For children to make progress and remain interested, activities need to be 'pressure-free'. It is not a good idea to ask children to do a drawing or painting 'for you' or to seem disappointed if your child ends a session without having produced anything.



4. Have realistic expectations

It is important in the early stages to have realistic expectations of what your child is likely to produce. It is normal, for example, for young children not to put eyes or mouths in drawings of people.

Asking your child 'what about mummy's hair?' or 'Does daddy really look like that?' can make some children feel that their

representations are not good enough for adults and can mean some children choose not to draw or paint.

5. Avoid too much colouring in

It is thought that providing young children with too many printed images can reduce their confidence in producing their own drawings. This means that while the odd colouring activity will not harm your child, it is better to encourage your child to draw for themselves.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Q. We haven't the space to keep all my son's paintings. Does this matter?

A. This is a classic dilemma, but most parents will quietly 'lose' excess artwork when their child no longer seems interested. However, it is important to value your child's work. Talk at the time about what your child has done and perhaps put up one or two pictures (if necessary, take photos of the others).

You could also make a scrapbook of examples of artwork at different ages and stages. Your child will enjoy looking at this and you could also encourage him to select 'special' pictures to add to his portfolio.

Q. My daughter's drawings are behind of those of her friends of the same age. What I can do to help?

A. Children's drawing is partly linked to their development, but also to how often they practise. Firstly, don't worry. Provided your child is happy, talking well and has typical physical skills, her drawing will come on little by little. You could think about making drawing and painting more fun by putting out some interesting resources such as sponges or glitter pens and join in with fun.

ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT PAINTING AND DRAWING

1. Take a pen for a walk

This is a lovely activity that you can use to kindle children's interest in drawing and painting. Put out a large sheet of paper or use the back of some wallpaper on a table.

Look out for a variety of different pens, crayons and markers. Sit with your child and tell them that you are going to take a pen for a walk. Start drawing a wiggly line

on the paper. See if your child wants to join in!

2. Paint with rags, sponges and brushes

Try putting out a large sheet of paper on a table or the floor. Pour two or three colours of paint onto a wipeable kitchen tray. Put out some rags as well as a kitchen sponge and one or two paintbrushes. See what lovely marks you can make together!



3.

Mess-free painting

If you are not up for using paints, use bath time for some 'clean' painting. Put water in a plastic bowl and add a few drops of food colouring. Provide a brush and encourage your child to make marks on the side of the bath (or shower curtain). Afterwards, rinse with water and detergent if necessary.