Creative Arts Expression

Domain Description

Refers to participation in a range of activities that allow for creative and imaginative expression, such as music, art, creative movement, and drama. The creative arts engage children’s minds, bodies, and senses. The arts invite children to listen, observe, discuss, move, solve problems, and imagine using multiple modes of thought and self-expression. The creative arts provide ways for young children to learn and use skills in other domains. In the domain of Creative Arts Expression, programs need to ensure that children who are dual language learners can demonstrate their abilities, skills, and knowledge in any language, including their home language.

PreschoolFirst Philosophy & Pedagogy

Young children approach creative arts as an active expression of their experiences. They engage in dance, song and art in response to the opportunities provided and their artistic expressions are attempts to create of meaning from these experiences (Narey, 2008). The PreschoolFirst system guides educators to help young children develop and refine physical motor and cognitive abilities. Through the early years young children naturally move from enjoying the multimodal sensory exploration of materials and movements—which create accidental results, into using artistic expression intentionally in all its forms as a “meaning making process.” The developing child begins to use this meaning making process to represent ideas, thoughts and feelings. With adult facilitation, preschool age children can use the properties of physical movements, creation of sounds, and elements of drawing and forms to symbolize ideas and represent what they know, feel and understand about their world.

Young children eagerly engage in most creative opportunities, will explore and use materials provided, and enjoy various forms of
dramatic play, dance and movement, and visual arts. They are curious and have an intrinsic motivation to “make” and when given a variety of supplies, children create their own activities and these open ended-experiences become part of a larger emergent curriculum. While adult guidance can be useful in helping young children to reflect, describe and compare what they experience artistically, it will still be some time before they can be expected to reflect on the creations of others in an intentional way. Young children do enjoy hearing stories, seeing others artwork and dance, and listening to music for short periods of time, but they crave the personal fulfillment they get from the action of creating over the act of talking about it. Inviting children to talk about their thoughts and ideas as they create can help them begin to think reflectively about the process of creation and increase their awareness of art in our society. Writing down children’s thoughts and ideas makes the learning transcend disciplinary boundaries and ties the art of language to the visual and expressive arts.

In classrooms where teachers provide artistic activities that encourage children to communicate and represent ideas through creative performances, musical and movement and the visual arts, they also contribute to the well rounded development of the whole child. Young children combine essential skills and actions from the physical, language and cognitive domains when they express themselves in the creative arts. In the visual arts, children may use design elements in both spontaneous and intentional ways during the creative process. For young children in the preschool years, art and memory are highly concrete and specific (Bruner, 1966). A child of this age is attracted to brightness, action and interesting materials. Teachers can point to the larger world to help build children’s observation skills and to inspire them to intentionally explore ways to integrate lines, color and shapes that are found in the environment. In this context, young children may enjoy looking at works by artists and describing, discussing and comparing what they see with their world.

Through the art of sound, young children connect actions to repeated patterns, changes heard in tempo, and melodies. Everyday songs and music can be an appropriate way to introduce young children to different cultural activities, holidays, and seasons in their own lives and throughout the world. Musical experiences that encourage children to explore a range of classroom instruments, experiment with their own voice, listen to and compare versions of the same song, and imitate rhythms add to emerging literacy skills guide them to recognize that using sounds intentionally creates music. Through intentional physical movement in dance, children learn to control motion and respond to music. These responses can express emotions or tell stories, imitate the actions of characters and objects, thoughts and feelings, and tempos.

References:


