



# PARENT EXPRESS

## Connecting Reading with Art

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Why should art be connected to reading?

One of the best reasons is that creating art is fun! Reading with children helps a child learn, and creating art based on the story enhances the child's experience. Creating helps a child make connections between the story and life.

### Expressive Art

Expressive art provides freedom of choices and expression. Meaningful art experiences provide children with freedom of choice, thought and feeling. Children need this freedom. Expressive art is not a worksheet, a coloring sheet or a craft project that must be done a certain way. It is not a copy of a pre-created art project.

A child has a richer and more meaningful reading experience when the book has been connected with an art activity. When children create art based on the story they read, it supports their reading comprehension. Expressive art is an original creation by the child. Art is an expression of the child's

interpretation of a story, character or scene, or an expansion of what the child has read.

Expressive art connects reading to other forms of expression. Art activities help children connect their reading experiences to another form of expression. Simply provide the materials and allow the child to create. Sometimes a child will begin to fully comprehend a story when they create art based on a book. The story suddenly makes sense to the child.

Notice how all of these elephants in the above left photograph are different. To help build a child's literacy, plan meaningful art activities that are connected to reading and writing.

### Activity:

#### ***There's a Monster in My Closet***

Provide supplies for participants to create an art activity based on *There's a Monster in My Closet*. For example, use a paper bag to create a monster puppet or a paper plate to create a monster mask. Remember to be positive about what the child creates and ask him or her to describe what was created.



### Art Activities

There are endless possibilities for art. The piece can be flat or three-dimensional. A wide variety of mediums can be used. Encourage children to experiment with a variety mediums.

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*Ideas for art activities:*

- Sculptures
- Puppets
- Collages
- Paintings
- Drawings

## Basic Art Supplies

Basic art supplies are all that is needed for a child to create. Variety in supplies is good and enables creativity and freedom of choice. Have a variety of paper but also save small and large cardboard boxes. Some children especially like creating three-dimensional art.

*Use simple home materials:*

- Paper, boxes, cardboard
- Scissors, glue
- Washable paint
- Magazines
- Play-Doh (see link to recipe under Sources)
- Pencils, crayons, markers

## Make Art Simple

If supplies and preparation time are limited, keep it simple by just drawing a picture. Simply drawing a picture after reading a story together can serve as a great way to support a child's understanding of what was read.

*Encourage the child to draw:*

- A favorite character
- A favorite part of the story
- A scene from the story
- The setting of the story in different weather
- The main character

Books are a wonderful source of ideas for many simple art projects. Follow the child's ideas for the art project and encourage them to be creative.



## Sources

Miltenberger, M., Phillips, R., Harper, S., Gamble, S., McNeil, K., Cottrill, S., & Wilkins, S. (March 2011) *Reading Partner Guide*, WVU Extension Service, Program Center for 4-H Youth, Literacy Team.

Ranson, A. (2012) Best Ever No-Cook Play Dough Recipe, The Imagination Tree. Retrieved on November 22, 2016 from <http://theimaginationtree.com/2012/04/best-ever-no-cook-play-dough-recipe.html>.

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