Early Childhood Art: Process not product!

Children’s art is developmental. When children first experiment with art it is usually a sensory motor process. The first art projects might include working with crayons, chalk and markers, finger-painting, easel painting and using water colors. The child is usually so engrossed expressing self and experimenting with tools, color and motor control they are not thinking about making an image or representing a picture.

We avoid using models in nursery school and encourage children to use their curiosity, inventive ideas and imagination while they work. We also avoid pre-cut craft projects or preschool work sheets where everyone is expected to follow a formula with a specific outcome. We encourage children to take risks. They can choose their colors and decide where to put them on the page. There is no right or wrong process. We give children quality art materials and help them develop confidence in using their fingers and hands and tools. When you ask your child to tell you about his art project – keep your questions open-ended. Ask your child to tell you about his painting. Show an honest appreciation for the effort involved in the process.

- Tell me about it! Which part do you like?
- Look at those colors! I see lots of green and blue.
- I wonder how you made these curvy lines and dots?

Asking a close ended question like, “What is it?” may not make sense to the child since he is in the moment and learning to coordinate hands and eyes and experiment with tools. The children learn shapes, textures, colors and many other preschool concepts through art. They also gain important motor control and visual spatial skills by using their fingers and the tools provided. Just as crawling is an important developmental skill for babies before they walk and babbling is expressed before talking, so scribbling and experimenting with marks is an important stage for preschoolers to celebrate before they draw or write.

We will save many samples of your child’s work with the date it was created. Celebrating each stage of art is a great way to see how the child’s art changes and evolves throughout the preschool years.