



SPARKING CURIOSITY

IGNITING IMAGINATION

CREATING JOY:

the PROCESS of ART
with YOUNG CHILDREN

WHAT IS PROCESS ART?

Process art is an artistic movement that emphasizes the process of making art rather than the final artistic product – how the art is being created rather than what the finished product is going to look like. The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles points out that “in process art, the means count for more than the ends.” In process art at Concord Children’s Center, the art experience is led by the child rather than proscribed by the teacher.

In process art:

- there are no step-by-step instructions,
- there is no sample for children to follow,
- there is no right or wrong way to explore and create,
- the art is focused on the experience and on exploring techniques, tools, and materials,
- the art is unique and original,
- the experience is relaxing or calming,
- the art is entirely the children’s own,
- the art experience is a child’s choice.

Process art is about the engagement, the curiosity, the experiment, the imagination, the joy. The moment at hand. The immediate feedback. Process art is not about teaching children how to do art. It’s about creating a space for them to discover it for themselves – it’s about freedom, not rules. By its very definition, process is an open-ended experience, and there are no right or wrong answers. It’s inherently personal and perfectly complements a child’s natural tendency for original and creative thought.

WHAT DO CHILDREN LEARN FROM PROCESS ART?

Children learn best through play and open-ended activities that give them the chance to explore the world around them, ask questions, take risks, and see how things work. Process art allows children the opportunity to be themselves, make their own decisions, and connect with others. As there is no right or wrong way to create in process art, children can create in a way that works for them.

The benefits of process-focused art are numerous, including:

- **Social and emotional:** children can relax, focus, feel successful and confident, and express their feelings. If children are working together as part of the artistic process, they learn to communicate, work together and cooperate.
- **Cognitive:** children plan, compare, predict and problem solve.
- **Scientific:** children are trying out materials, experiencing processes and discovering possibilities. What happens when I mix blue and yellow paint? What does tissue paper feel like? Does glitter stick to a pine cone?
- **Fine and gross motor skills and coordination:** children use their fine motor skills to paint, draw, glue, cut, make collages, etc. Children may also use their bodies to create their art, developing their gross motor skills.

PROCESS ART AT CONCORD CHILDREN’S CENTER

Art is an important part of early childhood education and an important part of the Concord Children’s Center (CCC) program. Process art particularly complements the emphasis at CCC on children’s social and emotional development – growing their hearts and souls as well as their minds. Because there is no set “right way” to do process art, children feel emboldened to go outside their comfort zone and enjoy the creative experience without worrying that their art piece doesn’t look the same as everyone else’s. This in turn builds a child’s capabilities and confidence. Additionally, working together with their peers on collaborative process art pieces encourages children’s social development.

A good amount of the art done at Concord Children’s Center is process art. For the infants and toddlers, the majority of the art activities is process art which complements the classroom curriculum – for example, letting children paint with their hands, brushes, or different materials, and seeing what happens. This allows these very young children to experience cause and effect and become familiar with the properties of different art materials so that, down the road, when they need materials for a specific task, they are already familiar with how they work and the results they produce.

When children move into first the preschool and then the school-age program, they become more product-focused in their art explorations; however, process art is still a large part of the program and still very important in the developmental process. A child creating a painting of their own design at the easel, for example, is a classic process art activity. From choosing which paint colors to use to deciding what to paint to figuring out how to reach a corner of the easel that might be just a bit too high, the child is making choices, solving problems, seeing cause and effect, and leading the process.

WHAT YOU’LL SEE IN THIS EXHIBIT

This exhibit features 16 pieces of process art, from each of the Concord Children’s Center’s classrooms, each as unique as the children who created it. Each teaching team developed the idea for their classroom’s piece on their own based on both the interests and the developmental level of the children in the classroom. The pieces contain a variety of both types of and approaches to art.

The artwork is grouped by age: Infants & Toddlers (10 weeks-2.9 years), Preschool (2.9-5 years), and Afterschool (5-8 years/ Kindergarten-Grade 2). As you move through the exhibit, you’ll see how both the types of art as well as the children’s concept of art progress with age.

Each piece of art is accompanied by a few photos of the children working on their piece and three descriptors: What Was the Project? Why Was This Project Chosen? Did You Know? This last descriptor features interesting information unique to that particular piece – a particular developmental benefit, comments made by the children while working on their piece, or the children’s favorite part of the experience.

CONCORD CHILDREN’S CENTER

Concord Children’s Center is an accredited, non-profit school committed to the development and early education of young children from the age of 10 weeks through second grade. Working together with families, CCC helps nurture engaged, life-long learners by creating an environment that celebrates a child’s inquisitive nature, encourages exploration and play, fosters confidence in each child’s individual gifts, and guides children in building strong, respectful relationships.

CCC is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC accreditation is a national, voluntary system that measures the quality of all types of preschools, kindergartens and child care centers. CCC was one of the first 19 programs in the country to receive NAEYC accreditation in 1986 and has continuously maintained accreditation since.

Located in three sites across Concord and West Concord, CCC has been serving children and families from Concord and the surrounding towns since 1975.