

## Creativity

There is an overwhelming amount of evidence that young children learn and develop best through play. Through play children develop their confidence, self-esteem, communication, and core dispositions - building upon their natural curiosity and their desire to explore and make sense of the world around them. Dispositions are attitudes and behaviours such as persistence, collaboration, resilience, and risk taking. These provide the foundations for learning.

Through play and our support children will naturally develop the skills to cultivate their creativity. Children need to be nourished to flourish and reach their potential. There are many areas that nourish a child;

- A balanced healthy diet
- physical exercise
- rest and sleep
- social and emotional interaction
- the freedom to play and develop their creativity.

### **Why is creativity important?**

There are two main reasons here.

- The thinking skills around creativity are widely accepted as now being key 21st century skills. In our rapidly changing world, the skills to be able to adapt and innovate are increasing important.
- The process of being creative nourishes the human spirit. Being creative is so beneficial for our sense of well-being and mental health. This is true for everyone, children, and adults. We need this now more than ever!

### **How can I encourage and nurture creativity?**

Creativity is quite complex! There are so many contributing factors – but that complexity is also part of its beauty!

- Let your child take the lead - let them be in charge of their play and explorations, give them the space to make their own decisions and choices. They need the freedom to take risks and make mistakes.
- It is the process that is important not the end product.

When we are thinking about encouraging creativity, we are really talking about encouraging the thinking skills that lead us in the direction of creativity. These skills are creative thinking skills (essentially generating ideas) and critical thinking skills (thinking as children analyse and reflect upon what they are experiencing). Talking together is important for developing these - and it is often about saying the right thing at the right time, so children keep their flow and enthusiasm. Try not to place emphasis on the final product but celebrate your child's ideas and engage them with 'open' questions as they explore - questions that open up possibilities – 'what are you noticing...?' 'I wonder if there any other ways to do this....', etc. to help develop their thinking.

Below are 10 ideas to help nurture and cultivate creativity, to play around with and to explore the limitless possibilities. They do not contain specific instructions or predetermined outcomes so are all very open-ended. Have fun! Do please share your experiences with us on Tapestry!

***“The truly great advances of this generation will be made by those who can make outrageous connections, and only a mind which knows how to play can do that”***

*-Nagle Jackson*

## **Shake things up!**



A great way to provoke creativity is to shake up the environment by introducing something fresh and interesting - that draws in children's curiosity. Try moving furniture around or setting up things to create new play spaces indoors or outdoors. Once set up try and leave the options and possibilities open and follow your child's lead. Examples could be pulling out the sofa to create a tunnel space behind, dens made with sheets or putting a tent up in the garden. Fresh environments spark new ideas as children express themselves through play.

***“THE IMPORTANT THING IS NOT TO STOP QUESTIONING”***

*-Albert Einstein*

## **Photography**



Photography is a wonderful way to engage young children. It works well if you have an old digital camera. Show them how to use it and then let them explore. It is great if you can then make time to look at their images together on a TV or laptop, giving them opportunity to talk about their images and then this will stimulate further interest in taking more images. It provides a great insight into what interests them.

Additional resources: <https://irresistible-learning.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Childrens-Photography-capture-the-moment.pdf>

***“The visionary starts with a clean sheet of paper, and re-imagines the world”***

*-Malcolm Gladwell*

## **Paper**



Paper has endless possibilities. It can be manipulated in so many ways, fold, crumple, curl, roll, tear, cut, slit, hole punch, etc. We can join with tape, glue, paperclips, staples, rubber bands, string, split pins, clips, clothes pegs. So many types of paper: plain, coloured, newspaper, wallpaper, tracing paper, tissue paper etc. We can think about where paper comes from, think about recycling. We can mark-make on paper: draw, paint, charcoal, print etc. Children can make all sorts of things with paper, watches, fans, envelopes etc and use it in different ways, weaving, folding, stencils, papier Mache, collage, sculpture, emboss, prick holes.

***“Anything’s possible if you’ve got enough nerve”***

*-J.K. Rowling*

## **Mark-making**



Paint, charcoal, pencil, crayon, felt-tips, chalk, water, brushes, sticks, rollers, hands, feet, etc... Making marks with a variety of different media can be a great way for children to express themselves. Children will naturally investigate and experiment – exploring line, patterns, texture, and shape. Children enjoy the sensory and physical experience of mark-making. It gives children the opportunity to express themselves and explore new beyond pen and paper. Mark making can represent a child’s thoughts, ideas, and feelings.

Make mark making fun and open ended rather than placing focus on trying to get children to make letters.

***“Imagination is more important than knowledge”***

*-Albert Einstein*

## Drawing ideas



Getting ideas down on paper is a great way for children to be creative and express their ideas. This can really incorporate anything. They could draw what they would like to do today, they could draw what they would like to make from cardboard, they could draw a map of the village or house, or how they get to preschool, they could draw their friends, they could draw their ideas about questions they have such as how they think trees get turned into paper or why the rain falls from the sky, or how bees make honey... putting pen to paper makes children's thinking visible – and provides a wonderful way for us to observe and engage with their thinking skills.

***“Exploration is curiosity put into action”***

*-Don Walsh*

## Mud, sand, and water



Mud is another great resource. The children at preschool spend hours at the mud kitchen and you can easily create an area at home. Earth and water are two wonderful materials that capture children's interest, especially when they interact. Mixing soil, water, and other materials such as bark, leaves, grass, etc. provide many options. A mud kitchen draws upon children's love of the role play around cooking and their natural desire to be outdoors and connect with nature. Mud kitchens do not need a lot of resources, a couple of bowls or pans, a spoon or ladle, you could make the area together. A whole range of new recipes and concoctions will emerge! Sand play and water play are also two timeless activities both being so open ended and full of possibilities.

***“You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have”***

*-Maya Angelou*

## Loose parts



Loose parts refer to objects and materials that can be combined without being permanently joined. The great thing about loose part play is that the outcome is not predetermined - their explorations can become anything. So many things can become resources for loose parts – a bag of buttons, bottle tops, CDs, leaves etc... A bonus is that all the materials can be reused time and time again. A great way to record the results is for your child to take a photo of the work before it has to be cleared away.

Loose part play develops children creative and critical thinking skills. It is great to notice and talk about what your child is creating.

***“Think low and think high, oh, the thinks you can think up, if only you try”***

*-Dr. Seuss*

## Malleable materials



Malleable materials are materials that children can shape, push, pull, roll, squeeze, poke, scratch, pinch.

Clay is great for this or try making your own playdough - recipe below. Other options include kitchen foil, wire, pipe cleaners, papier mache etc. You can also introduce tools with malleable materials to develop children’s coordination and agility. Tools such as a knife, garlic press, rollers, cutting wheels etc. Let the children take the lead deciding how they would like to explore or what they would like to create.

***“Art is born of the observation and investigation of nature”***

*- Marcus Tullius Cicero*

## Nature



Children need to get out and experience nature. Being in the fresh air, being physical, connecting with natural elements are so good for health and well-being. Nature also provides wonderful inspiration for our creative explorations. We can also be creative as we play outdoors, creating our own obstacle courses, playing with shadows, creating with loose parts outdoors, or sand, water, and mud. Make some time to notice and connect with nature, the clouds, bugs, new shoots.

Children could take photographs of things they see – this focuses their attention, and further inspires other explorations.

Further resources: <https://cdn.communityplaythings.co.uk/-/media/files/cpuk/library/training-resource/outdoor-environments.pdf?d=20210813T093826Z>

***“If baking is any labour at all, it is a labour of love. A love that gets passed from generation to generation”***

*-Regina Brett*

## Cooking/baking



Cooking encourages children’s thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. It also allows children the opportunity to use the knowledge they have and apply it by counting, measuring, following a sequence, following directions, and cause and effect.

There are many things that you can do while cooking with children.

- First and foremost, your job is to make sure there are safety protocols in place to protect the children from harm.
- Make sure the food is handled in a sanitary way, and that proper hand washing procedures are in place.
- Engage children in conversation.
- Describe what children are doing.

- Ask questions about where food comes from.
- Pose questions to encourage children to talk about what they are doing.
- Model positive behaviours.
- Ask probing questions to encourage children to think logically and problem solve.
- Prepare a recipe chart with photos describing each step.
- Have ingredients in their raw form for children to smell, taste, and feel.
- Include children in the clean-up process.

The most important thing to remember is to have fun with your children as they have those learning experiences and learn about the joy of cooking.

Remember, just as with other areas of development different children will develop different skills at different stages but if you are worried about your child's creative development then do talk to us.

Further resources:

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/kids-cooking-recipes>

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/playdough-recipe>

[https://www.muddyfaces.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Making\\_a\\_mud\\_kitchen\\_english.pdf](https://www.muddyfaces.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Making_a_mud_kitchen_english.pdf)