

# Helping Your Child Enjoy The Arts

**“When adults act as partners with children in making art, it sustains children’s interests and involvement. When accompanied by adult-child conversation, shared art experiences help children become more aware of artistic characteristics and enhance their art vocabulary.”**

*Ann S. Epstein, Director, Early Childhood, and Beth Marshall, Senior Consultant,  
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Enjoying the arts is an excellent way for parents and children to spend time together. As an added benefit, many studies have shown that participation in arts improves a child’s academic performance.

**“Data from the College Entrance Examination Board show that students who take four years or more of arts and music classes while in high school score better on the SAT than students who take only one-half year or less.”**

*Source: College Board 2002, Americans for the Arts 2003*

You can help your child develop appreciation for and enjoyment of the arts. Here are some suggestions for how parents and children can enjoy the arts together:

## TEN WAYS TO ENJOY THE ARTS WITH YOUR CHILD

1. Set aside a half-hour in the evenings, or one-hour on the weekends, as “creative time.” Sit down with your child to paint, draw, write, listen to music or engage in another creative pursuit.
2. Take your child and a friend to your local library’s story time.
3. Make holiday cookies with your child. Remind your child that cooking also is a creative art.
4. Collect pine cones, seashells or other items and use them to make holiday decorations. Pipe cleaners, yarn, cotton balls and other household items can be used to make pine cone snow men, Thanksgiving turkeys, Easter bunnies, etc.
5. Take your child to a local museum or art gallery. Choose one particular painting and talk with your child about the feelings that painting evokes.
6. Choose a piece of music that you particularly like, play it for your child and tell them how you came to hear it, why you like it, etc. Use the Internet to get information on the composer or singer—connect that piece of music to a real person for your child.
7. If there is a local dance troupe in your area, ask permission to attend a rehearsal. Talk with your child afterward about practicing a craft, developing a skill and the dedication it takes to be a professional artist.
8. Suggest to your child that instead of buying birthday cards for friends or relatives, you make them together.
9. Find a children’s play that is being performed in your area and attend with your child.

*Continued on next page*



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10. If your child is currently studying history in school, have them draw a picture of the historical event or civilization they are studying. If your child is studying a particular historical figure, have them make a paper doll of that figure.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The federal Web site [kids.gov](http://kids.gov) has a variety of materials regarding children and the arts, [www.kids.gov/k\\_arts.htm](http://www.kids.gov/k_arts.htm). It includes interactive arts activities, and links to information and other sites to explore.

The National Endowment for the Arts has pamphlets for introducing your child to the arts, available online at [www.arts.gov/pub/artslearning.php](http://www.arts.gov/pub/artslearning.php).