

2

Fostering Creativity among Young Children

Padma Yadav*
Jyoti Kant Prasad**

Do You Know

- All children have potential for creativity although they may differ in the degree of creativity that they possess.
- Creativity is not synonymous with intelligence. A highly intelligent individual may not also be highly creative.
- Creativity does not take place in a vacuum. The more knowledge and experiences the children have the better are the foundations on which they will build their creative efforts.
- A stimulating and encouraging environment can, therefore, do a great deal to enhance the creativity in a child.
- Authoritarian and strict atmosphere in the home or school, which places too much value on conformity, can hinder the development of creativity in children.

INTRODUCTION

The nursery school located in IIT campus, Hauz Khas, New Delhi is an experimental model school of NCERT. It has two year's ECCE programme wherein children between 3-5 years are enrolled and have ample opportunities for play and learn. Activities are conducted in all the aspects of child development. Creative expression and aesthetic appreciation are given due importance.

Children's creative work is frequently misunderstood. At the

foundation stage where opportunities to draw freely is frequently available to children, more stress is given by the parents and the teachers on copying from the board or making of correct shape or writing work rather than communication and creativity. Drawings are one of the many languages children use to express themselves. Devi Prasad ji, a teacher of great eminence in his book "Art: The Basis of Education" had presented his experiences at *Sevagram*, where

*Assistant Professor, Department of Elementary Education, NCERT, New Delhi

**Head Mistress, IIT Nursery School, An experimental school of NCERT, Hauz Khas, New Delhi

he conceptualized and implemented art education in the *Nayee Talim* programme. Influenced both by Gandhiji and Rabindranath Tagore, he has elaborated the technique of art teaching in a natural and beautiful manner. The book talks about psychogenesis of children's drawing. He said, "children have many more ideas than we teach them."

Art is only one way children can express themselves. It develops before writing or abstract thinking, adults can see creativity expressed in art more easily with young children.

Between 3-4 years, children have maximum ability to draw and express. They spend more time practising motor skills by drawing circles first and then other geometrical shapes. They begin to draw their own world. They like to point to and name parts of their drawings.

Development of Creative Expression and Aesthetic Appreciation

Creative art activities help in development of fine motor coordination. It means developing control over the movement of finer muscles, particularly finger and eye-hand coordination. This prepares children for later activities that require detailed, skilled and precise artistic and professional work.

Provide children with crayons and paper. Let them use the crayons freely by drawing on the paper.

To encourage creativity do not impose your ideas on the children. Let them draw or paint what they like

and the way they like it. Appreciate but not criticize.

Try giving a familiar theme to the children and ask them to draw/paint, for example, "It is raining, you are going to school. Can you draw that?"

Give children crayons and colours and let them use these freely to create their own drawing and paintings.

Give the children themes and let them draw scenes accordingly with their own interpretation.

Encourage 3 to 4 year olds to participate in the celebration of festivals. They do enjoy taking part in the activities.

Children's Work

Some drawings made by children of age group 3+ from IIT Nursery School, an experimental school of NCERT, are presented. Analysing the pattern in these drawings shows how they grow with age.





Holding hands is the symbols of love, happiness and togetherness in the family perceived by child and expression of care the mother takes of the family.

As children grow (4-5 age group) they make attempts to represent people and objects. Efforts of children can be easily recognised by adults. Children are fascinated with the large variety of colours. They want to show their work to parents and teachers and they want appreciation. Remarks like “What is this you have drawn?”, “It doesn’t look like that,” “Grapes are not pink,” “Sun is not black” can easily demotivate children and ruin their creativity.

Drawings of Children between 4-5 Age Group

On Independence Day it rained. Children went inside the classroom. The programme was organised inside the classroom. Next day when the

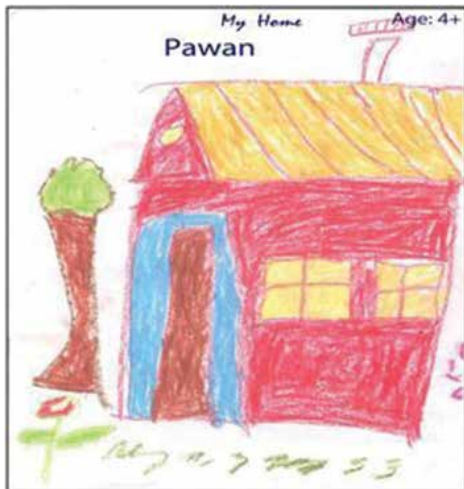


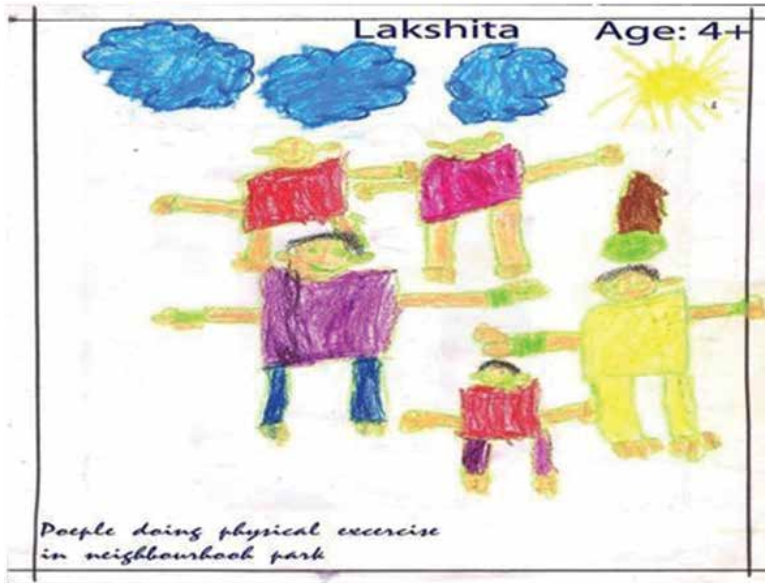
teacher asked to draw how they celebrated Independence Day, the above picture was drawn by the

child. How beautifully the child has drawn what happened!

Drawings of Children 4-5 age group

A child has drawn his family. The body parts especially eyes, ears, nose, teeth, hairs etc., are drawn so clearly.





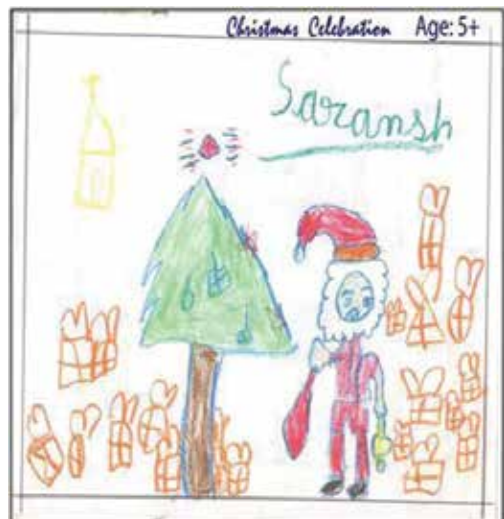
Lakshita enjoys watching people doing exercise in the neighbourhood park. She has drawn what she observes daily.

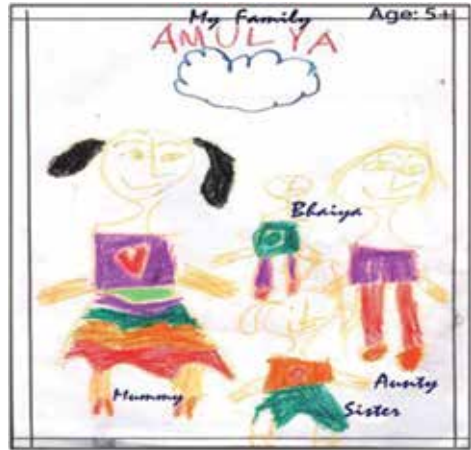
5-6 age group children can easily communicate their feelings and thoughts through drawing. Celebration of festivals, events liked

by them etc., can easily be drawn by them and expressed.

Role of the Teacher in Fostering Creativity

The teacher is the most important factor in promoting creativity in a





young child. She needs to be sensitive, a divergent thinker and a catalyst who ignites the spark of imagination, innovation and participation in the young child.

The teacher should provide opportunities for the on-going participation of all children in all activities. She needs to be aware that every child is creative, that no child is to be compared to other children and encouraged for their own sake.

The teacher's attitude to creativity should be supportive of spontaneity, variety and divergent thinking. Children are versatile in their imagination and they spend much time in imagining all kinds of things, especially from the stories they hear from their parents or other elders and the experience they gather in their lives.

Drawing made by children during early years look like scribbling to adults, but for them they can be people, the sun, the moon, houses or anything that they have in their

mind at a given time. Self-expression is a human necessity. It is natural and goes on all the time.

Art activities are the most effective medium, which allow creative expression for children to express themselves and experience joy in doing so.

"As a pre-school teacher it is always a great satisfaction having children of age group 3 to 5 years coming and describing the contents of their drawing in detail," says a teacher of a nursery school.

Children should be able to develop sensitivity towards colour and beauty in the environment around them. During creative activities, children can be asked to draw a picture of themselves and their family members. A classroom full of samples of individual creativeness (as opposed to 30-35 identical pieces hanging in a row) indicates that the teacher has given children choices and has focused on the process rather than the product.

The Role of the Teacher

<i>Do's</i>	<i>Don'ts</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept and appreciate individual differences in children. • Encourage children to be spontaneous in their expression of feelings and ideas. • Appreciate every child's effort, even if it requires lot of improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid providing readymade patterns, cut-outs, etc. for the child to copy. This will block the development of the child's creative potential. • Don't correct, redraw or remake a child's creative product. Remember, it is his way of representing his experiences. • Don't discourage fantasy.

Tips for parents and teachers to help children develop creativity

- Art activities should be well thoughtout and planned.
- Make a wide variety of materials available to children.
- Suggest but let children take final decision and draw. Don't expect them to copy what you have drawn on the board or notebook.
- Ask children about their art work while they are creating it, not just at the end.
- Praise the effort, use of colour and uniqueness rather than just the final product — the trip is more important than the destination.
- Display children's work at a child's eye level.
- Encourage individual expression.
- Avoid the regimented use of materials and adult-directed projects or themes. Let them draw and express whatever they like.

Acknowledgements : Sincere thanks to children and teachers of IIT Nursery School, an experimental school of NCERT, Hauz Khas, New Delhi-110016

REFERENCES

- AUROBINDO, SRI. 1947. "The Significance of Indian Art", Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry.
- Kaul, Venita. 2009. "Early Childhood Education Programme", NCERT, New Delhi.
- Prasad, Devi. 1998. "Art: The Basis of Education", National Book Trust, India.
- Swaminathan, M. 1989. 'The First Three Years: A Source Book on Early Childhood Care and Education'. UNESCO, Bangkok, Paris.
- Swaminathan, M. and DANIEL, P. 2004. "Play Activities for Child Development: A Guide to Pre-school Teachers". National Book Trust, New Delhi.
- Thakkar, Aruna. 1987. "Significance of Early Childhood Education", NCERT, New Delhi.