

## Encouraging Creativity

Contributed by Fiona H Lohrenz  
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The safety and well being of the kids at our day care is our primary responsibility as providers. Although we may often feel as though we are merely umpiring bedlam we are not simply caretakers but facilitators, charged with the important task of developing every aspect of these growing individuals. Encouraging creativity and imagination is a vital aspect of this facilitation role. Children are guaranteed a richer and more complete life if we have opened the door to multiple creative outlets. Here are some pointers on opening those doors.

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The safety and well being of the kids at our day care is our primary responsibility as providers. We are not however merely babysitters, nor referees at some chaotic miniature wrestling event (though often times it feels that way) but facilitators, entrusted with the important task of nurturing and developing the whole child. Encouraging creativity and imagination is a vital aspect of this facilitation role. Opening the door to various creative outlets will ensure that children will lead a richer more complete life. Here are some pointers on opening those doors.

{bot\_wrgoogle}Expose kids to the arts, culture and beauty whenever possible will help them to grow to appreciate and recognize same. When possible arrange brief visits to the art gallery, museum or craft fair so that kids get an overview of different forms of art. Try to arrange trips to see plays or musical performances, simply play different types of music at the day care and get the kids moving and dancing. Get out on nature walks to show the kids first hand the natural beauty surrounding them, introduce sand and water for experimental play and discover the multitude of creative activities available in the kitchen. Read and encourage reading. Stories at story time can become rambling yarns that become plays that take on a life of their own. Anything goes.

A love of music is naturally inbuilt into kids. Get the musical instruments out (improvise with household items if necessary), let them rock out (suffer the headache&hellip;it&rsquo;s a good cause!). Begin having theatrical, singing workshops that breathe life and vibrancy into songs. The subsequent endeavors may well be dubious (songs that are vaguely punk rockish rather than melodious, artistic attempts that resemble puke) but all expression should be praised and discussed.

Creativity demands that there be mess so allow it. Order is not a concept that sits well with creative spirits so, difficult though it may be to see your impeccable playroom descend into chaos, try to rise above it. Laying newspapers, spreading a tarp and using art aprons can help minimize some of the damage. Let them off with their creative processes and don&rsquo;t try to direct their efforts. Freedom of expression leads to personal works of art no matter what age the artist. . Ask questions, encourage discussion, help with a particular process should they ask and never criticize.

Many and wondrous are the benefits of imaginative and creative play. Children feel nonthreatened in imaginary situations and are more likely to experiment with their verbal skills. Active problem solving and expression of fears or concerns are also encouraged via role play. Creativity can help unlock hitherto untapped talents leading to increased confidence in a child. Welcome to the magical land of the imagination where boredom is no more!

Fiona Lohrenz drew on her 10 years experience of running a day care to found <http://www.ChildCareOnly.com> and produce a 'How to Start a Day Care Business' DVD guide: [www.startchildcare.com](http://www.startchildcare.com) Fiona can be reached at her website: <http://www.childcareonly.com>