



Encouraging Creativity

Creativity is the ability to think in unusual ways. Creative thinkers are able to come up with multiple answers to a problem.

Four components of creative thinking

- **Fluency** the ability to produce many ideas, solutions, and answers.
- **Originality** the ability to come up with unique or original ideas, solutions, and answers.
- **Flexibility** the ability to come up with ideas, solutions, and answers from different categories.
- **Elaboration** enthusiasm for exploring a particular topic fully and from all angles.

Two levels of creativity: little-c and big-C

- **Little-c** everyday creativity (for example solving a puzzle or drawing a picture).
- **Big-C** creativity involves the development of ideas that lead to major change (for example Thomas Edison or Bill Gates).

Why is creativity important in children?

- Inspires the ability to problem solve, try new things, and explore the unfamiliar
- Leads to new contributions, advancements, ideas (for example, in science and technology)
- Children who are encouraged to think creatively have higher self-esteem and motivation.

Developmental aspect of creativity

- Creative thinking decreases as children get older (most significantly from kindergarten to 3rd grade).
- Schools have lower tolerance for creative thinking in the classroom as they become more focused on outcomes (for example, test scores).

Suggestions for nurturing creativity

- *Value creativity at home.* Appreciate self-expression. Hang art on the walls, go to free concerts, read different types of books, and demonstrate the love of discovery by exploring together (for example, nature walks). Children pick up on the values of the family.

- *Make creativity accessible.* Provide materials for creating (for example, paper, pens, glue sticks, child scissors) and make them easily accessible and visible.
- *Encourage self-expression.* Let your child come up with his or her own ideas and explanations for things. Listen to their opinions and help your child expand on his or her ideas. Expression is critical to support
- *Promote unstructured playtime.* [Exposing children to nature boosts creativity and exploration.](#)
- *Reward creative behavior and original self-expression* by giving it your time and attention.