



# Encouraging Creative Expression

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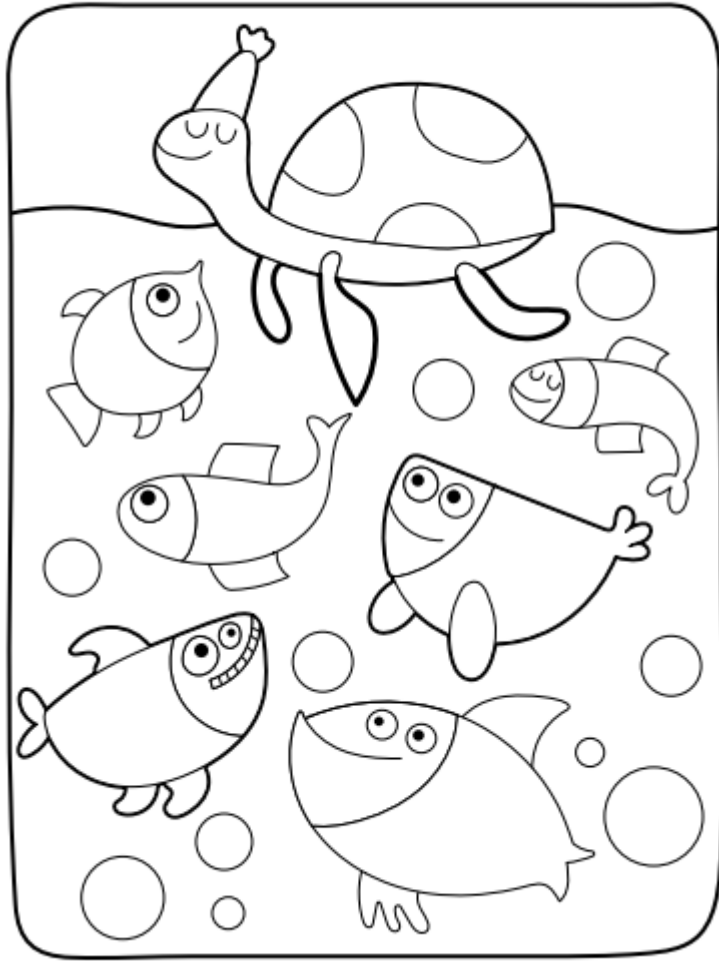
A study called '[Arts-based educational research in the early years](#)' conducted by Georgina Barton at Griffith University, Australia, found that creative activities and artistic development are the precursors to literacy and are often the way in which younger children make sense of themselves and the world around them.

Barton says that there is an unfortunate tendency scientifically to 'downplay' the importance of artistic activities in relation to children's development. She goes on to explain that in the past 10 years more research has been released to reinforce the benefits of creative and artistic tasks, specifically "for early learners which stretch beyond the mere practice of art-making for art's sake – a 'fun thing to do'."

With the importance of artistic activities scientifically proven, as well as being a learning process that is extremely fun for young learners, it is useful to explore the ways in which you can incorporate more artsy activities into your child's education.

## Get Creative With Kid's Academy Resources

Fortunately, there is a whole host of resources on the Kid's Academy website to aid your child in their creative exploration. The selection of [colouring worksheets](#) on the site range in themes, topics and locations from landscapes of the Statue of Liberty to playful seascapes that will activate your child's imagination and interest.



# The Statue of Liberty





These [kids colouring worksheets](#) are downloadable and linked above, so you can easily print them and incorporate them into a learning activity. The different themes provide the opportunity for homeschooling parents out there, or even those looking to fill a rainy weekend with a themed learning session. You could explore the worksheets available and print out a selection of animals living in the deep blue sea, then get your child to colour them in. Whilst they are busy colouring and decorating you can introduce interesting facts about the animals.

Put some large sheets of paper down on the floor and encourage your child to create an under the sea collage using the worksheets as a centerpiece. Surrounding the seahorses, octopuses and turtle images you can provide a range of materials that replicate seaweed, flora and fauna, coral reefs and the sparkling ocean and allow your child to make something beautiful. When they have finished you can stick their masterpiece up in their bedroom or playroom so it can take pride of place in the house.

# Interactive App for Your Child's Creative Exploration

Another Kid's Academy resource which aids creative exploration is the 'Dress Up Eddie' virtual game within the [learning app](#). The Eddie the Elephant character has been designed as an interactive tool to allow children to have fun during their learning process, as well as gain valuable new skills whilst doing so.



The interactive tool allows children to dress the cute character in whichever outfits they like, utilising their creativity and imagination as they go. As the Eddie design process is integrated into the child's own learning process and objectives, it not only offers them a chance to be creative, but also provides them with valuable life skills by incorporating a token rewards scheme.

When learners have successfully finished different activities within the app they are rewarded with tokens (stars), which in turn provides them with another opportunity to get creative with Eddie's outfits. When they gain stars/tokens they can spend them in the virtual store and buy new clothes for their elephant pal. From here they can see the results of their hard earned work and have a creative outlet for their rewards scheme. By being able to choose whichever outfits they like to dress the virtual character they can also express their own design and fashion choices. Eddie can therefore also be a



valuable tool for self expression and exploration, as it helps children try out new things within a safe space.



This endearing tool teaches children crucial real-life skills and introduces the idea of earning and spending money, as well as budgeting. It also helps with motivation within the learning journey and aids the engagement of learners, not to mention letting them flex their creativity. Understanding that when they complete specific activities they receive 'money' (rewards) allows young learners to get an idea of the 'real' world a little better. They can see through the [kids learning app](#) that it is important to work hard and receive rewards based on the effort they put into their work.

## What Are the Benefits of Arts Education?

Artistic activities improve physical development and enable children to enhance their hand-eye coordination and to both acquire and refine their fine motor skills. It's a great way for children of all ages to express themselves and form perceptions of the world around them. Art provides a space for children to express themselves in a way they may struggle to do otherwise, if they were using language and written or verbal communication.

They can also gain added benefits when being creative within a group setting — here they can assume a variety of roles in the art making process, help others and differentiate their work from their peers.

Team art work is a way for children to question, explore, express and learn from their personal experience and from others. Creative expression also aids cognitive development by supporting children to practice exploring different concepts and objects and to link those with different symbols and materials through the artistic process.

Creative activities are also the perfect opportunity for young learners to activate their imagination and experiment through different techniques, methods and materials. They are able to link their own and others' behavior to the creative results they see come to life through the artistic process.

Art education also helps children to develop and utilise problem solving skills through experimenting with colours, patterns, undertaking teamwork and deciding on specific mediums that work.

Barton states that children “without access to arts-based learning are at risk of receiving an education that is not holistic in learning, that is cognisant of diverse learning styles and approaches; what some call a deficit education.”



## Activating the Right Side of the Brain

Art activates the right side of a brain which, as American psychobiologist and Nobel Prize winner Roger W. Sperry found, is the visual and intuitive side of our cerebral

processing. The right side of the brain processes information differently to the left one. Sperry's brain theory showed that the right hemisphere, when activated, processes things intuitively and simultaneously, by first looking at the whole picture before zooming in on the details. This contrasts to left brain thinking which, when activated, sees the individual process information analytically and sequentially, in a detailed way. This hemisphere focuses on the minutiae before zooming out to the wider picture.

For children that may be very logical and analytical (which are both valuable skills) artwork and creative exercises can be a great way to activate the right hemisphere to ensure cognitive balance and well-rounded thinking skills which will aid them in life.

Artistic activities that are specifically useful for right brain hemisphere activation are colour mixing [learning games](#). This allows students to use familiar materials, such as paint, in unfamiliar ways. Whether at home or in the classroom, you can set out a variety of paints and allow students to mix the different colours they feel drawn to, in order to create a brand new shade. They can then paint the [colour worksheets](#) you printed off, or the seascape collage they have created using the new hues of colour they have created.

## A Tool for Self Expression

Encouraging your child to be creative, using the activities and materials provided, you'll help them learn new and beneficial ways to express themselves. All valuable learning should centre around students being equipped with useful tools and techniques that will add to their thriving as they grow up. By introducing artistic activities that foster creativity, you are giving your young learner ways to express themselves intuitively, whilst they are learning about themselves, their culture and the world around them.





Artistic learning is fun, and there are a whole host of ways to do this with your child through the app and resources on the [kids website](#). Happy creating and thanks for reading!

Want to draw on your tablet with Kids Academy? Grab a [50% off](#) for the quarterly subscription to the [Talented and Gifted](#) app!



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Provide your little learners with ample opportunities both to play and learn! Study Math, English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies and more with fun and clever Eddie the Elephant that will guide your child through the learning process!

## About the author

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## Links and references:

1. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1150970.pdf>
2. <https://www.kidsacademy.mobi/printable-worksheets/coloring-pages/?page=3>

