National Endowment for the Arts

imagine!

Introducing Your Child to the Arts

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Introducing Your Child to the Arts

Second Edition
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A MESSAGE TO PARENTS

"The arts are, above all, the special language of children, who, even before they learn to speak, respond intuitively to dance, music, and color," Dr. Ernest Boyer, former U.S. Commissioner of Education and president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching once stated. The magic of finding a new way of communicating, a new way of envisioning the world, is one of the most exciting discoveries that children make. Children need encouragement and guidance, though, in making these discoveries. The National Endowment for the Arts created this publication, *Imagine*!, to offer parents practical ways to introduce their children to the arts.

This book revises and updates two earlier publications, its namesake of 1997, and *Three R's for the '90s*. What started as a collection of essays by national associations in the arts and education has been enhanced and expanded—enhanced by perspectives on the arts and children informed by recent research on children's learning and development; expanded by the addition of an easy-to-use chart that relates the stages of child development to sample arts experiences you and your child can participate in together. The activities and suggestions in *Imagine*! are aimed specifically at children ages 3-8 years old.

Also updated are resources in each of the arts discipline chapters to help you learn more about the arts and to introduce your child to the creativity and joy of making art. Many of these resources have been made possible by grants and national leadership initiatives from the National Endowment for the Arts. Since 1965, the Endowment has supported programs for children and youth. National leadership in arts education continues to be part of our agency's mission. To find out more about our Learning in the Arts grants and initiatives, visit our Web site at *www.arts.gov*.

Photo by Marlin Wagner / Courtesy of Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble

INTRODUCTION BY CHAIRMAN DANA GIOIA

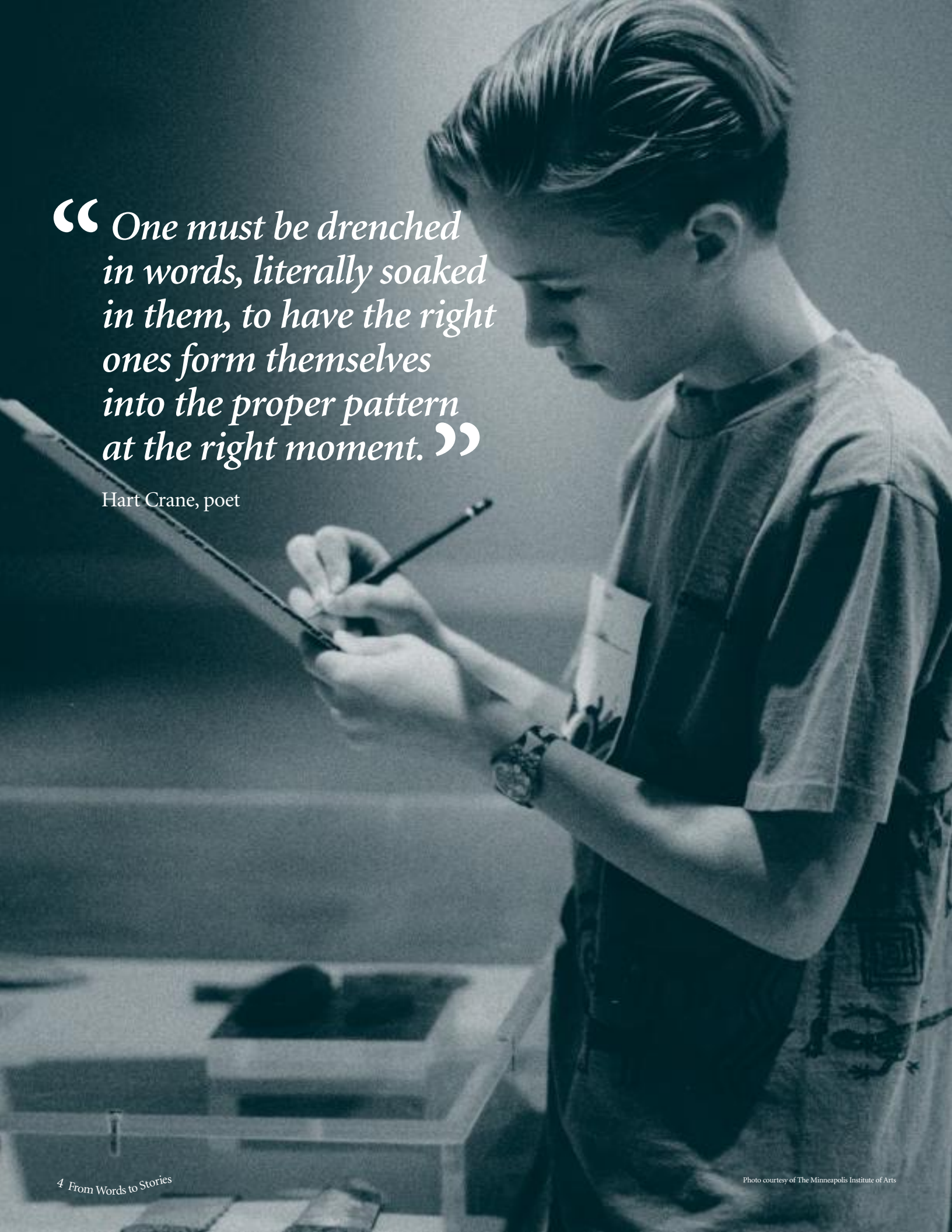
Photo by Vance Jacobs

A number of research studies over the past several decades have drawn a clear correlation between early exposure of children to the arts and increased long-term critical reasoning, communication, and social skills. Since its inception in 1965, the National Endowment for the Arts has devoted its resources to the arts and arts education, including studies on their tangible, positive impact upon the nature and quality of our communities and citizenry. What we have learned about arts education can be stated simply: the arts matter profoundly and should be introduced into the lives of children at the earliest possible age.

The Arts Endowment has revised and reissued *Imagine*! to help parents and teachers share the arts effectively with children. This essential publication is divided into seven focused areas of learning: reading and writing, dance, music, dramatic play, visual arts, folk arts, and media arts. Easily adapted to the home or classroom setting, *Imagine*! explains how to share the joy of learning and artistic creation with children during their most critical developmental years.

As a parent, I want my children to live complete and fulfilling lives. For many people, true fulfillment is closely linked with finding an early path toward excellence. It does not matter whether one's early interest develops into an adult career. What matters is that every child finds a positive, meaningful activity that instills self-confidence and self-worth. For some children, excellence will come on the athletic fields. For others, it will come in the class spelling bee. But for many children, fulfillment will arrive on the stage, at the piano, or with a paint brush in hand.

As parents and teachers, our responsibility is not to dictate rigidly which path ultimately is the right one, but rather to expose our children to constructive educational opportunities, especially those grounded in the arts and humanities. With our hectic modern lives, it can be a struggle to make time for our children's proper education, but we must not shirk this fundamental responsibility. To do less is to impoverish our children. Impoverished minds do not lead to enlightened lives. And it is enlightenment our children deserve.



“One must be drenched in words, literally soaked in them, to have the right ones form themselves into the proper pattern at the right moment.”

Hart Crane, poet

Photo courtesy of The Minneapolis Institute of Arts

CHAPTER ONE

From Words to Stories

All young children love to play with words. They love to make jokes and puns, sing silly songs, make up rhymes, invent names, and tell stories. This same joyful and creative spirit can help children develop as readers and writers. Learning to write can be as natural for a child as learning to sing, run, and play games. It begins even before a child has the ability to represent ideas with standard symbols of writing. In the initial stages of writing awareness, young children understand that written symbols represent ideas and are a means of communication. It is common that first attempts at writing are frequently categorized as scribbles with little or no meaning. It is at this early stage, however, that adults can nurture a young child's interest in the written word, inspiring a deep and fulfilling relationship with this creative endeavor that will last a lifetime.

A child who becomes a confident and creative writer will reap the benefits in countless ways. In school, children who write well find that they excel in almost every subject. Becoming a better writer means becoming a better reader; it gives children the skills to evaluate and appreciate the work of others. In addition, a child who likes to write is a child who usually has something important to say. As they get older, children find that learning to express themselves on the page, and to revise and refine this expression, are talents valued in many endeavors. Becoming confident writers makes it possible for children to grow into active, critical participants in our culture and society.

ENGAGING CHILDREN IN READING AND WRITING

With a little support, children can move from the crude play of early childhood to a full engagement with writing. From your children's earliest days, you should read them stories, demonstrate that reading and writing are meaningful aspects of your own life, and encourage your children to explore the wonders of the written word.

Telling a story can take a variety of forms. Preschoolers and kindergartners can be active in the process. They love to create storylines and develop characters or ideas. Stories take on new meaning when children dictate their tales to older siblings, teachers, and parents. Seeing their words in print has a powerful impact. An active approach to story writing also provides the opportunity to add illustrations, another form of early representation.

Children learn the nuances of narrative simply by listening to stories. Before children learn actual words, they grasp the tone and intonation proper to different stories and imitate that speech pattern in babbling or nonsense syllables. Preschoolers acquire a sense of story sequence, recognizing the importance of beginning a tale with the familiar words of "once upon a time" and bringing closure to a narrative with the words "the end."

Reading and listening to stories make writing easier. Children develop a natural understanding of how sentences, ideas, and narratives work, and have an easier time later when these elements are taught to them in school. Reading also can make your child more eager to write. Just as young sports fans long to play the games they watch, children who love reading want to create their own stories and poems.

YOUNG CHILDREN AS READERS

A strong foundation for writing begins with an interest in books and a love of reading. Here are a few ways to include reading in your child's life:

- Read aloud to your child, even to infants and toddlers. As you read aloud, children get not only a good story, but also a chance to be close to you. Continue to read to your children even after they have developed independent skills. You can read more advanced books than your child is capable of reading, or enjoy old favorites together. Build a reading time into your daily routine so that it is a natural part of everyday life.
- Play with words through rhyming or alliteration. Read examples from children's books and then let your child make up rhyming words or think of sentences in which each word begins with the same sound. Children enjoy Dr. Seuss's unique style of storytelling with silly, made-up words with lots of rhyme and rhythm.
- Visit the library with your child. Take advantage of programs offered by the library and local bookstores where your child can enjoy stories read by seasoned storytellers or meet an author or illustrator of a favorite book.
- Give books and subscriptions to children's magazines as gifts. The most successful book gifts are those that reflect a child's personal interests. If your child loves nature and animals, then books on those subjects or a subscription to a nature magazine may be a perfect choice.
- Engage your child in the reading process by asking questions about ideas in the book. Young children often surprise adults by recounting a favorite story

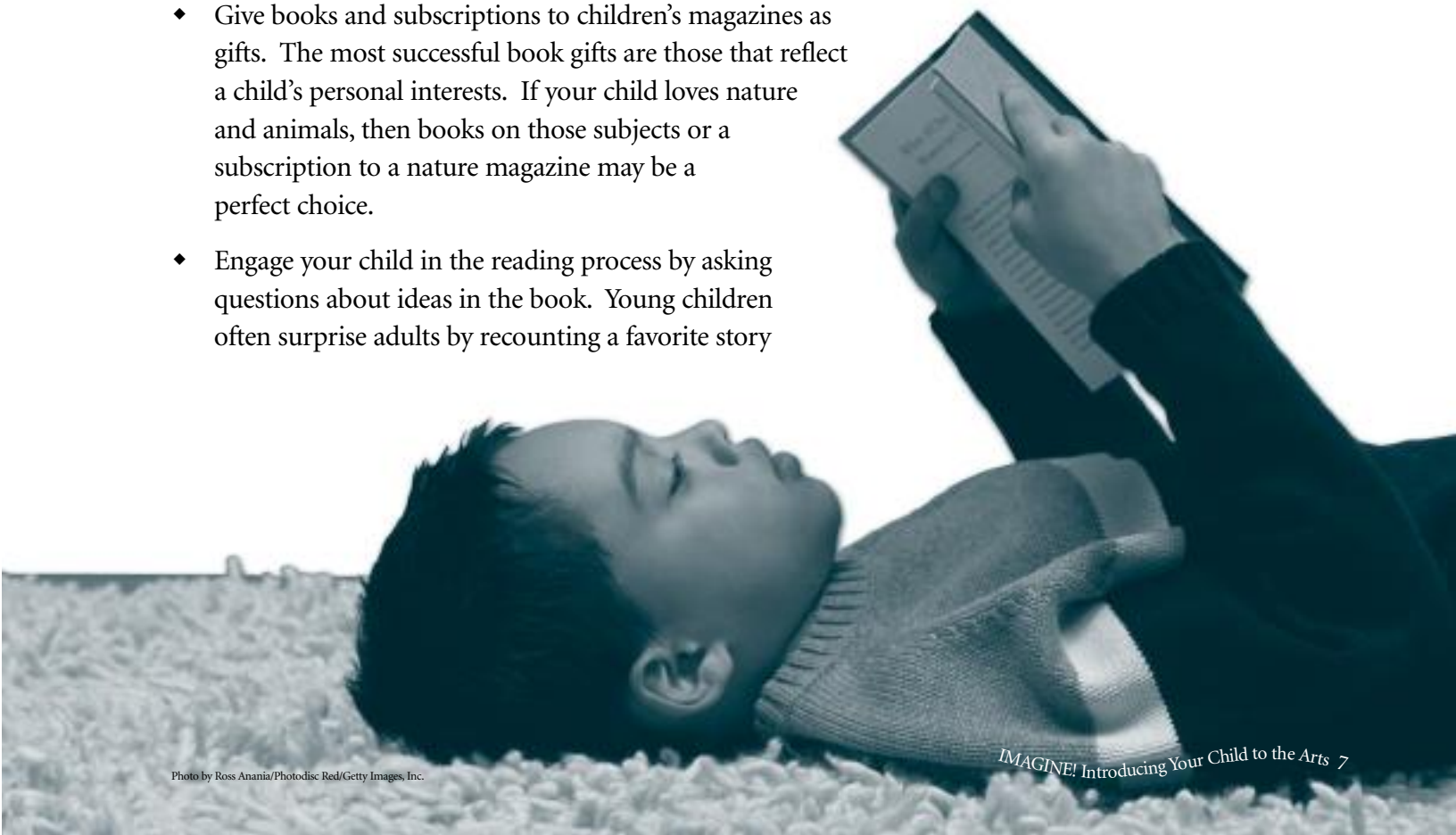


Photo by Ross Anania/Photodisc Red/Getty Images, Inc.

word for word or correcting the reader when a word in the text is skipped. Allowing your child to "read along" with a familiar text gives him or her a sense of confidence and excitement about being a reader.

- Acknowledge print in the environment. Engage your child in conversation about signs and symbols that you encounter in everyday life. Respond to your child's curiosity about what signs say and what words mean. This simple task helps young children realize the importance of the written word and also builds a framework for reading and writing.

YOUNG CHILDREN AS WRITERS

Photo by Ryan McVay/Photodisc Green/Getty Images, Inc.

Children are eager to imitate those around them. They learn about the world and make sense of it by mirroring the actions of others. Writing is something that is a natural part of the child's environment and typically approached by children with curiosity. For some, exploring writing will be a natural outgrowth of that curiosity. Others may need encouragement.

Nurture your child's interest in writing by providing appropriate writing materials. Make sure that your child has access to the tools of the trade: paper, pencils, and pens. As their skills develop, computers or typewriters become increasingly useful. It is also helpful to designate a special place for writing that has adequate space and is comfortable and quiet. You can make writing special by allowing your child to use your desk, your typewriter or computer, or just your favorite pen.

It's essential that children learn that it takes time to develop ideas and compose sentences. Let them enjoy the process and play with different versions. Remember that your child's daydreaming, make-believe adventures, and imaginary journeys could be the basis for future writing and storytelling.

Encourage and support your child's efforts in writing:

- Writing can begin with storytelling and the understanding of the concepts of beginning, middle, and end. Use sequencing cards to

encourage order and plot. Have your child make up a story with a beginning, middle, and end. Record your child's thoughts in his or her own words. Then re-read the story and make changes suggested by your child—an introduction to the process of editing. Have your child add illustrations to the text to help tell the story, creating a simple picture book.

- Build on your child's interests. Select a favorite book and then borrow or purchase other books by the same author. Help your child explore the idea of being an author or illustrator. If Eric Carle is a favorite, ask your child, "What can we learn about Eric Carle by reading his books?" "Why do you think he chose to write about animals, bugs, and butterflies?" Encourage your child to think as an author and ponder what it would be like to be a writer.
- Journal writing is a wonderful early step. Buy a journal with plain pages and encourage your child to fill it with words and pictures. Have your child "read" his or her stories after writing. Even though a very young child may not be able to write a single recognizable word, it is important that he or she begins to associate written marks with the spoken word as a means of communicating ideas to other people.

Encouraging your child to write is a delicate matter. Many children react to pressure by withdrawing, in this instance, avoiding writing because they are afraid of making mistakes such as spelling errors. Adults can reassure children by relaxing rules of grammar and spelling and stressing plot, characters, and settings. Children will write a lot only if they enjoy it!

Some children in elementary school eagerly pick up pencil and paper to create stories and poems. For these children, it is probably best not to meddle. Children will spend more time writing if they feel that it is really their own. If they do ask for help, or you see that they are running out of inspiration, here are a few ideas you could try:

- *Riddles.* Ask your child to describe something without revealing what the thing is. For example: "I have four legs but I don't walk. What am I?" (A chair.) Writing riddles improves children's ability to describe accurately.

INVENTIVE SPELLING

As young children begin to experiment with writing, there is little resemblance between their work and the basic standards that frame formal writing—spelling, grammar, and punctuation. While there are different perspectives about the use of these standards, there is general consensus that early writing should be about the process of expressing ideas rather than an emphasis on the rules associated with these standards. Inventive spelling is the term used for early writing where children apply basic knowledge of letter sounds and words from memory to represent their ideas through symbols. This approach gives children the freedom to concentrate on the ideas, an important aspect of writing. As children mature and writing is acknowledged as a means of communication, it is important to help your child explore and understand the associated standards. It is helpful to emphasize that rules or standards increase everyone's ability to be able to read the same written words.

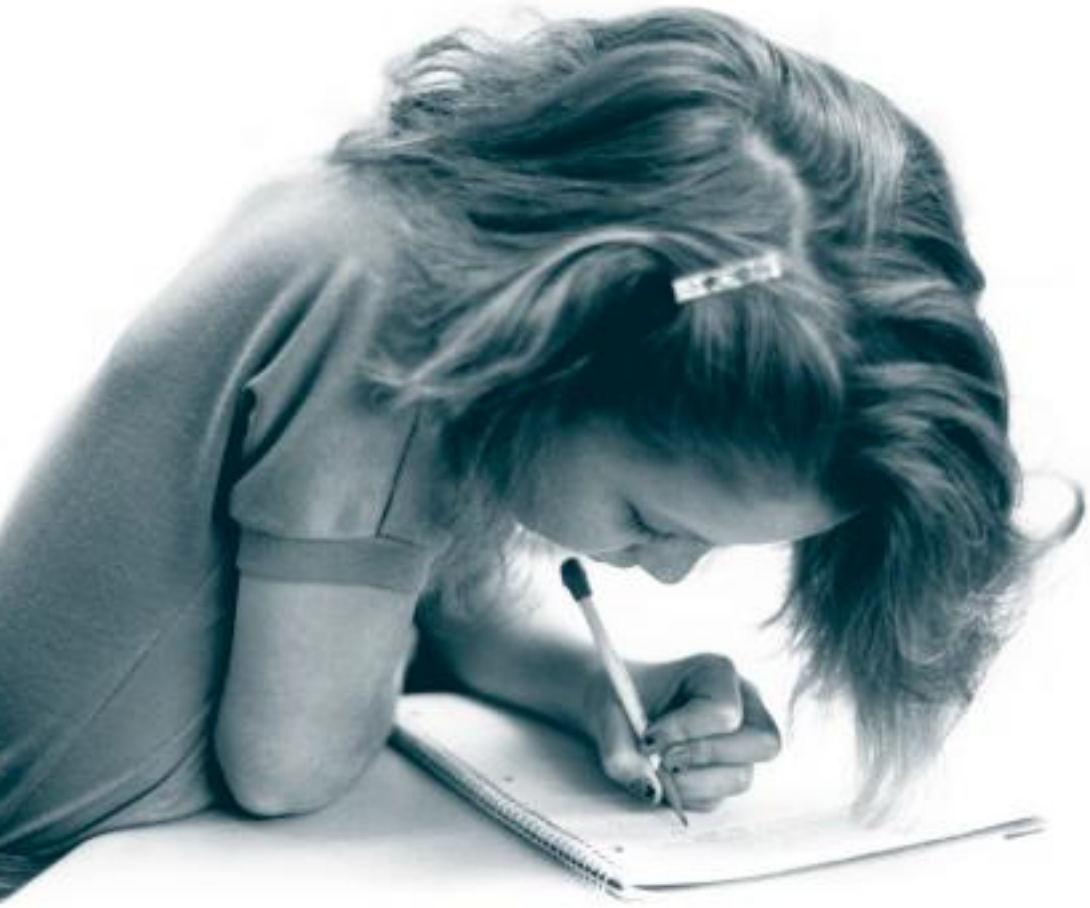


Photo courtesy of Teachers & Writers Collaborative

- *First sentences.* Help your child start a story by providing a first sentence that sets up a strange or intriguing situation. For example: "When we reached the mountaintop, we found a rope hanging from the sky."
- *Photostories.* Suggest that children flip through a magazine until they find an interesting photograph. Then, have them write a story that describes what happened before, during, and after the photograph was taken. This idea also works well with paintings and family photographs, particularly if they are about unfamiliar people or places.
- *Poetry.* Poetry has many of the verbal elements children love—rhyme, rhythm, alliteration. Pick a subject—a person, an animal—and compose a poem together, letting your child make the rhymes, similes, and verse length.

SUPPORTING YOUNG WRITERS

Your response to your child's writing is crucial. When you take pride in your child's efforts and accomplishments as a writer, your child will also do the same. A positive experience sets the tone for future efforts and often leads to a desire to continue writing.

For the beginning writer, early attempts should be acknowledged simply for the effort. Showing genuine interest in a child's writing is one of the most productive ways of encouraging young writers. As children develop more sophisticated skills, ask them to talk about their writing and consider alternatives within their storyline. Encourage the child to rethink ideas and descriptions. "What other words can you use to describe the game that the boys are playing in your story?" "Do you think that adding interesting words will help me to imagine what's happening?"

For six- to eight-year-olds, editing and revising should be taught not as criticism but as additions to the writing process. Children's initial efforts as writers focus primarily on expressing ideas on paper. As children begin to think about their work in terms of communicating with others, new skills such as editing and revising should be introduced. A good writer ultimately has to be able to express ideas in thoughtful and creative ways, and meet the standards of writing so that others can enjoy the work.

Photo by Digital Vision/Getty Images, Inc.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR NURTURING YOUNG WRITERS

Preschoolers and kindergartners can gain valuable experience from programs that emphasize the world of writing. When preschools and libraries invite professional writers and poets to share their love of writing, young children learn about the process of writing that ultimately contributes to the necessary skills of the trade. This personal interaction often encourages inquiry about the author's approach to telling a story or about the selection of topics. Look for such encounters for your child that will build a strong foundation for more formal writing of the future.

For elementary students, writing instruction should be lively, engaging, and supportive. It is important to recognize the different talents and styles of children and to provide a mix of approaches and forms of writing. Every child should be given an opportunity to write poetry as well as stories or book reports. Exercises in grammar should be complemented by imaginative assignments. Topics should range from nature to history to personal experience.

Writing programs outside of school should be reserved for older children. Some schools offer writing as part of after-school programs. These can be a wonderful opportunity for your child to hone his or her writing skills, but make sure the program sparks your child's natural interests and abilities and makes the process engaging!

RESOURCES

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

On the Wing: Bird Poems and Paintings by Douglas Florian

The Cat in the Hat by Dr. Seuss

Nathaniel Talking by Eloise Greenfield

WEB SITES

TEACHERS & WRITERS COLLABORATIVE

www.twc.org

Teachers and Writers Collaborative was founded by a group of writers and educators in 1967 to send writers into schools and to publish and distribute materials about teaching writing. T&W writers work with children and teachers, giving them an understanding and appreciation of literary traditions and a sense of the methods and motives of writers. T&W houses the Center for Imaginative Writing, a resource library and meeting place.

THE HORN BOOK PARENTS' PAGE

www.hbook.com/parents

This Web site provides lists of recommended books for children of all ages. Parents can print out a comprehensive list of classic and recent books to take with them to the library or bookstore.

CHILDREN'S BOOK COUNCIL

www.cbcbooks.org

The Children's Book Council (CBC) is a nonprofit trade organization dedicated to encouraging literacy and the use and enjoyment of children's books. The Web site provides information on children's books authors and illustrators categorized by age groups and other resources.

Photo courtesy of Teachers & Writers Collaborative

"Dance is the hidden language of the soul."

Martha Graham, dancer and choreographer

Photo by Lois Greenfield / Courtesy of Ballet Tech

CHAPTER TWO

Making Art Through Movement

Children love to move and dance. The love of dance does not depend on capability or even mobility. There is a style or form of dance to fit every body. The first hint of a child's interest in and connection with movement can be seen before a child walks. The urge to move in relationship to sound is natural for young children. When these movements are performed with artistic intent, for purposes of communication, or are organized into a structure, they become dance.

People dance for joy, they dance in sorrow. They dance in prayer, for courtship, or in friendship at social gatherings. Learning "steps" is only a small part of the dance experience. In dance, the body becomes an instrument for creative expression.

ENGAGING CHILDREN IN DANCE

There are many opportunities to introduce young children to the art of dance and movement.

- Encourage your child to be aware of his or her motor experiences. Ask questions such as: "How many different ways can you move your head (arms, legs, shoulders, hips, etc)?" "How many ways can you balance yourself besides standing?" Questions like these will help your child become aware of his or her body and its relationship to other people and the environment.

Photo by Sonya Wolff / Courtesy of Primary Movers

THE BENEFITS OF DANCE

Physical
Dance increases flexibility, improves circulation, tones the body, and develops muscles. It also improves body alignment, balance, and coordination.

Intellectual
Through dance, children learn spatial concepts, sequencing, patterning, and an awareness of their own body.

Emotional
Dance is expressive and helps children explore their feelings. Greater physical ability builds self-confidence.

Social
Dance is a communal experience and engenders sensitivity, understanding, appreciation, and consideration for others.

Cultural
Dance fosters an interest in other cultures. Studying dance forms that originate in other worlds, students gain historical understanding of other peoples.

Aesthetic
Dance awakens a sense of beauty, lending new meaning to movement and form.

- Provide a place and time for your child to explore movement. Do this together. Make up stories by acting them out with body movement. Move with different types of imagined walks (downhill, in thick mud, on hot coals) or pretend to use roller skates, ice skates, a skate board, a bicycle, or a horse.
- Practice movement as it relates to music or rhythm: clapping, marching, rocking, or hopping to music or a rhythmic beat. Move rhythmically holding your child or holding hands for an enjoyable experience together.
- Experiment with basic movements, such as walking, running, jumping, and skipping. By varying the size, tempo, level, and direction of these basics, you teach how to sequence and pattern movements into dances.
- Create a movement "box" containing objects that inspire movement possibilities. For instance: elastics that the child can stretch and move by holding the ends; scarves for swinging and floating; crepe paper streamers for swirling; balls for bouncing and rolling; bells on a wrist or ankle band for rhythms.
- Take your children to see all styles and forms of dance. Young children are often entranced by dance performances. Be aware, however, that very young children have short attention spans and will lose focus if sitting too far away. Remember, too, to pick a performance that is appropriate for the age and interest of your child.
- Read children's books that introduce dance in meaningful contexts. For example, *Degas and the Little Dancer* by Laurence Anholt tells the story of the young ballerina who posed for Degas as he sculpted.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN DANCE

There are many styles and types of dance classes. No matter what the style, it is important that children have a stirring experience. Classes should explore individual abilities through learning experiences. The aspects of dance that are explored in a well-rounded class for children include:

- *The elements of dance movement.* Dance, like physics, involves the motion and energy of bodies in time and space. Bodies move in rhythms and through space in a variety of directions. They make shapes and designs. Children learn to use these elements of dance with intent and purposeful communication.
- *Learning about the body, anatomy, and alignment.* The body is the instrument of dance and must be kept in tune. Knowing how the body is organized and aligned is important so that the body can move healthfully and efficiently.
- *Creative movement.* Much can be learned through a process of creative problem solving in movement. In this approach, children use the higher-level thought processes of analysis, synthesis, comparison, and evaluation. Children learn to make aesthetic movement choices and to choreograph dances with form, structure, and meaning.
- *Dance technique.* Physical exercises are essential in dance. Each dance style has its unique techniques and skills. Acquiring a high level of dance technique can take many years, depending on the dance form. Care must be taken that it is taught in a graduated sequence that is age- and ability-appropriate.

Dance class for the young child should focus on creativity, problem solving, and movement possibilities. Children will discover a personal preference for movement patterns and styles as well as an appreciation for their personal space.

Educator and teacher organizations increasingly recognize creative movement as integral to children's development, and there are a number of exemplary dance education programs in elementary schools. Parents and teachers should evaluate dance programs to be assured that they address children's physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development, and that they are age-appropriate, artistic programs. The following information will help you review the dance instruction in your local school, private studio, or other setting.

Photo by Sonya Wolff / Courtesy of Primary Movers

LEARN ABOUT A PROGRAM AND ITS INSTRUCTORS BEFORE ENROLLING YOUR CHILD

Ask the following questions about teachers and classes before enrolling your child:

- Can I observe the first class?
- Is the school/studio giving the young children's classes to the inexperienced teachers, or do they understand the expertise and knowledge necessary for teaching young children well? Is the teacher trained and qualified?
- Does the teacher seem aware of the physical, emotional, and social developmental needs of the students? Are each student's abilities and goals being supported?
- Does the teacher seem enthusiastic about the class? Is the class imaginative and varied in its approach to the material?
- Does the teacher have a good understanding of human anatomy and proper alignment and use of the body? Does the teacher effectively communicate his or her knowledge?
- Are the students grouped according to age, ability, and social development? Are class size and duration appropriate for the age group?
- Does the class provide satisfaction and enjoyment? Does the teacher give time for movement exploration? Is required attire appropriate and comfortable?

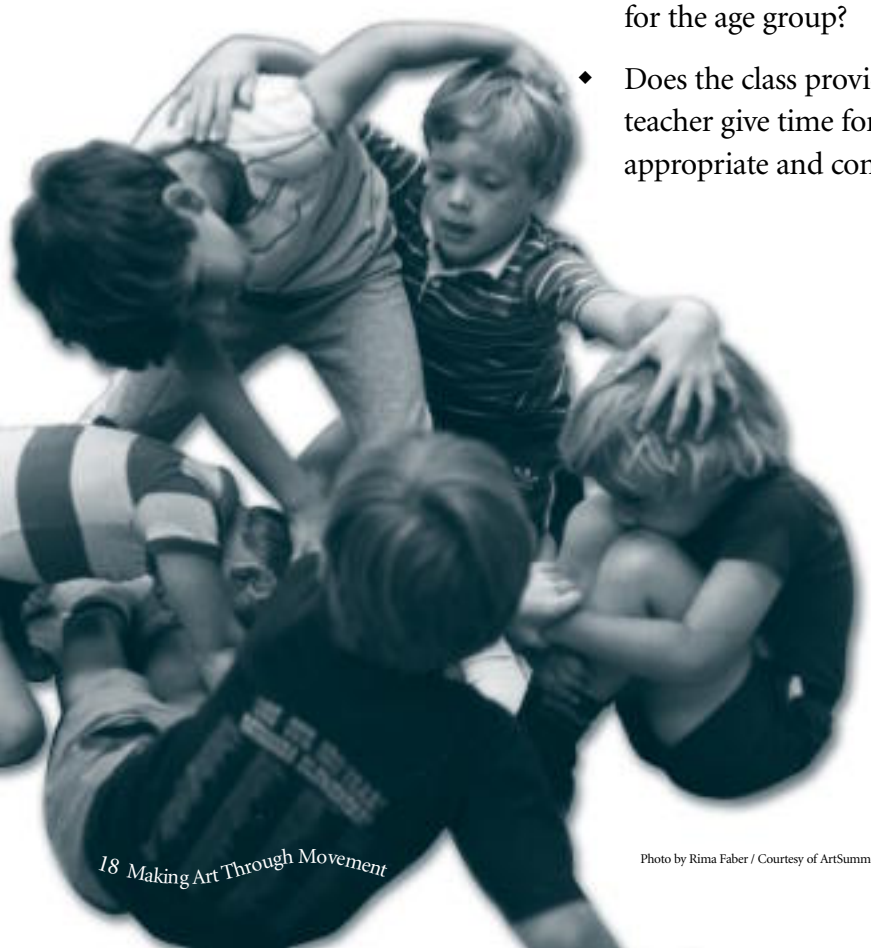


Photo by Rima Faber / Courtesy of ArtSummer

VISIT FACILITIES AS PART OF YOUR EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS

A good studio environment for classes offers the following:

- Space that is clean, ventilated, well-lit, and free of obstructions.
- A floor that is resilient and well maintained. A suspended wood floor is best to avoid physical stress, but certain treatments over cement and tile can accommodate dance that does not include a great deal of landing from jumps. Floor space should be adequate for the class size and the age of the participants (ideally, 100 square feet per student).
- Adequate space for changing clothes.
- Access to drinking water and restrooms.

Formal instruction in specific dance forms is rarely appropriate before age seven or eight. Pointe work (ballet dance on "toe") should not begin before there is well-developed body coordination, adequate strength, proper skeletal alignment, and working body placement. Special attention must be given to the development of the feet, legs, and back. Few children should start pointe work before age 12, following a year-long preparation-for-pointe class.

THE FOLLOWING CLASS SIZE AND DURATION ARE SUGGESTED

AGE	CLASS SIZE	DURATION
2–5	7–12	30–45 minutes
6–8	15	45–60 minutes
9–12	15-20	60–90 minutes

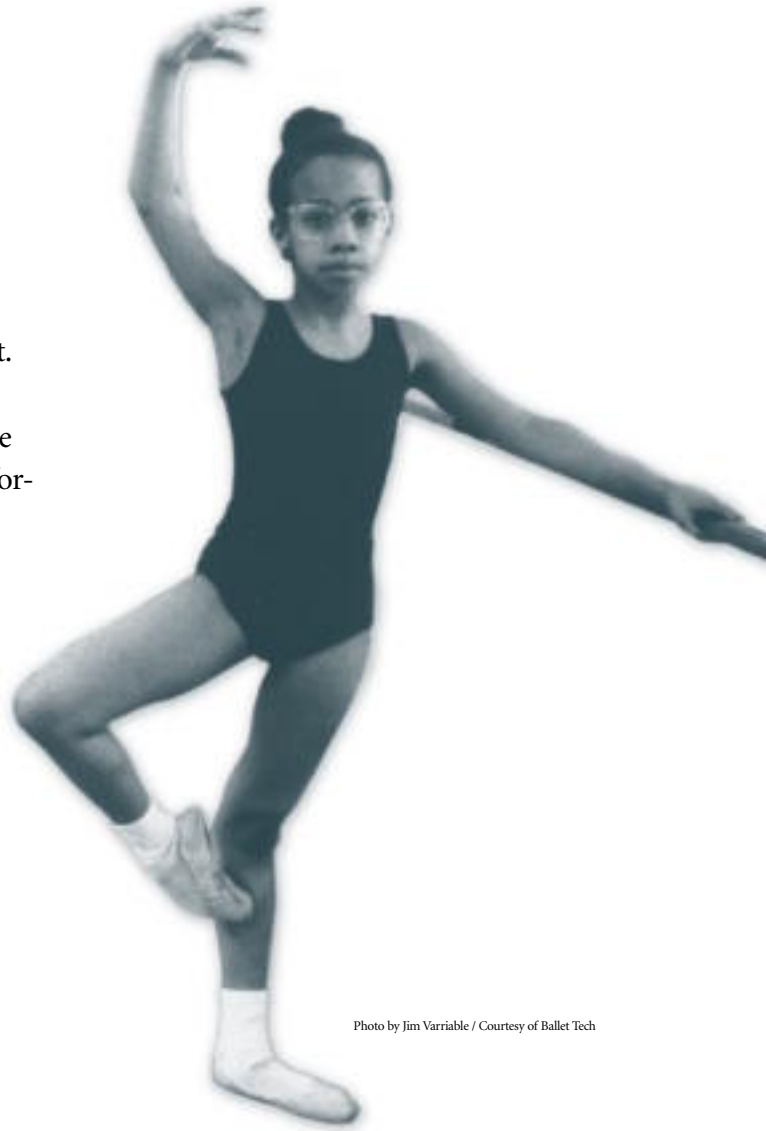


Photo by Jim Varriable / Courtesy of Ballet Tech

RESOURCES

BOOKS THAT ENCOURAGE DANCE

Sleepytime Rhyme, by Remy Charlip (ages 2-4)

The Adventures of Klig and Gop, by Ann Hutchinson Guest (ages 5-8)
(Series of 8 books teaching Dance Motif Writing)

Where the Wild Things Are, by Maurice Sendak (ages 3-7)

BOOKS THAT TEACH CHILDREN ABOUT DANCE OR THE BODY

Let's Dance by George Ancona (ages 2-8)

dance! By Elisha Cooper (ages 4-10)

A Moving Experience by Teresa Benzwie (ages 2-12)

VIDEOS

Sing, Dance and Sign by Gaia (ages 4-8)

The Primary Movers Move Russia by Primary Movers (ages 5-adult)

Dance for our Children by University of Calgary (ages 5-adult)

MUSIC

Contrast and Continuum: Music for Creative Dance by Eric Chappelle, 4 Volumes (ages 2-10)

Primary Movers by Primary Movers (ages 3-8)

WEB SITES

NATIONAL DANCE ASSOCIATION (NDA)

(included on American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance Web site)

www.aahperd.org/nda/

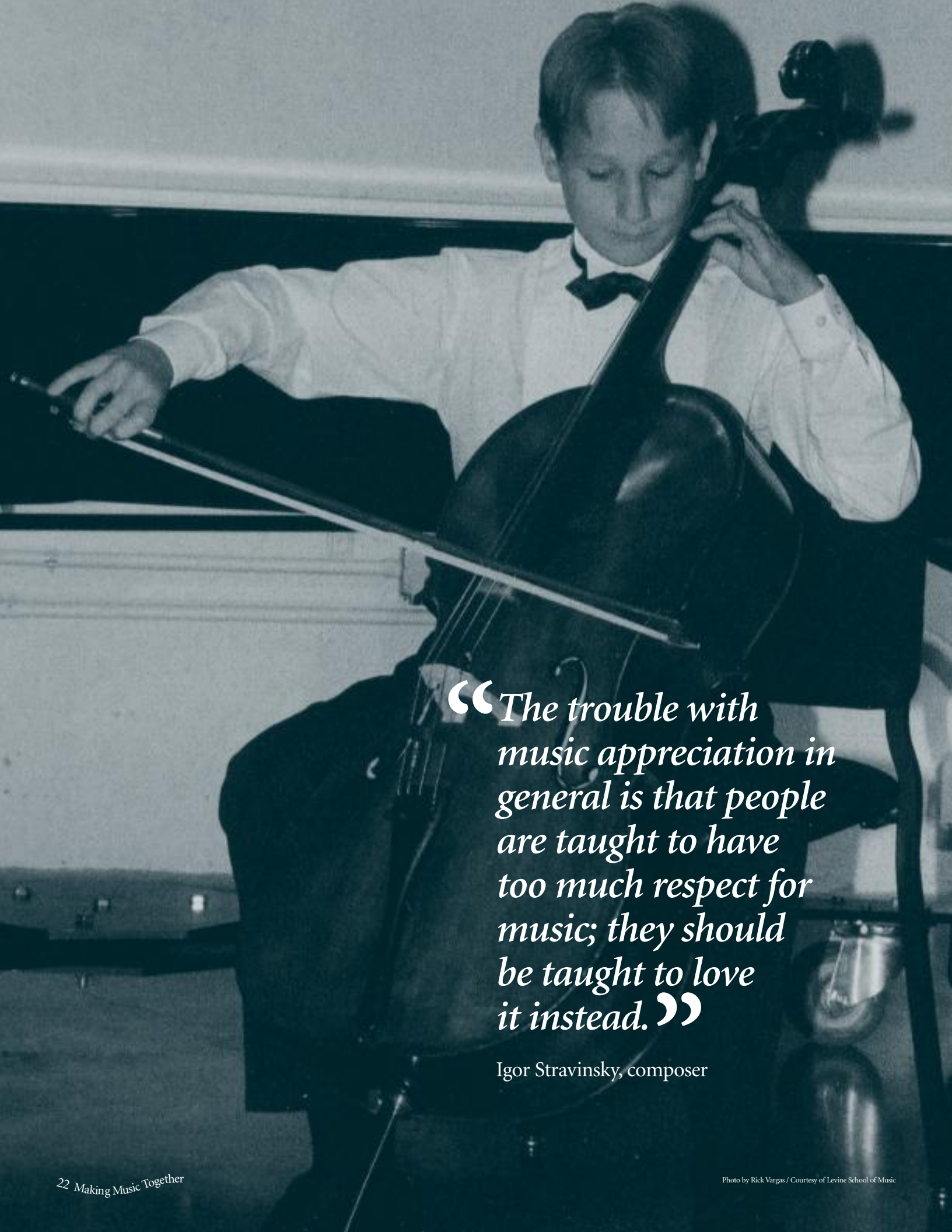
The goal of the National Dance Association is to promote quality dance programs in the areas of health, physical education, and recreation by increasing knowledge, improving skills, and encouraging sound professional practices in dance education.

NATIONAL DANCE EDUCATION ORGANIZATION (NDEO)

www.ndeo.org

The National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) advances dance education centered in the arts. NDEO is dedicated to promoting standards of excellence in dance education through the development of quality education in the art of dance through professional development, service, and leadership.

Photo by Rima Faber / Courtesy of ArtSummer



"The trouble with music appreciation in general is that people are taught to have too much respect for music; they should be taught to love it instead."

Igor Stravinsky, composer

Photo by Rick Vargas / Courtesy of Levine School of Music

CHAPTER THREE

Making Music Together

Musical sounds permeate our environment, shaping the way we experience different aspects of life. We wake up to music on the radio, identify our cell phones by personalized musical tones, wait patiently in offices surrounded by soothing melodies, and select favorite CDs for pleasure and inspiration. A child's world is equally inundated with musical moments. From the sounds of a parent's lullaby before bedtime to the colorful tunes accompanying favorite television shows such as *Sesame Street*, children experience and respond to music with joy.

Beyond the simple pleasures associated with music, it is important to think about the other benefits music provides. Research tells us that music plays a vital role in the learning process and strengthens skills in other areas. Educators believe that engagement in music supports academic achievement. As early as preschool, playing music helps children acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes that influence them throughout their lives. All those involved in watching a child develop musical skills and knowledge have long known that, in the midst of learning music for its own sake, children also learn coordination, goal-setting, concentration, and cooperation. In addition, a growing body of research shows that music study can lead to real and measurable benefits in mathematics and reading. Most of all, children who make music gain the self-esteem that comes with personal achievement.

Outside of the academic reasons, however, there is the simple fact that making music is fun. Children intuitively start making musical sounds

from an early age, banging on the table rhythmically or attempting to coo or call out in a sustained musical way. They listen to favorite songs on CDs and tapes and begin to sing independently as they mimic familiar tunes. As they grow older, children enjoy the act of sharing and playing music with others.

ENGAGING YOUNG CHILDREN IN THE WORLD OF MUSIC

There are many ways to nurture your child's love of music and encourage his or her musical talents. Listen to musical programs and recordings together. Attend musical events and make music as a family. Acknowledge your child's efforts and achievements in musical activities. It is as a result of these active listening and music-making experiences that children develop musically, advance in other skills areas, and acquire a sense of accomplishment as musicians.

Listening to music, moving to rhythms, singing, and playing musical games are best for small children and good for elementary students as well. Have your child participate in musical activities by:

- *Listening.* Sing to your child, even when the child is an infant. Let your child listen to short, recorded selections that offer diverse styles. Whenever possible, give your child a wide variety of listening experiences by including music of all genres—and be certain to encourage him or her to talk about the music. Young children show preferences for specific types of music through their responses. Acknowledge your child's musical interests, but continue to expand his or her repertoire of listening as well.

- *Singing.* Invite your child to sing along with you. Sing favorite songs with your child while you're getting ready for school, cleaning up toys, or riding in the car. From about three years of age, singing with children builds on their natural ability for spontaneous, free-rhythm singing, encouraging them to sing more structured songs. Additionally, you can turn reading with your child into a musical game. Many books are written to be read with a hint of rhythm and rhyme, and some are meant to be sung.
  Sing them!

- *Moving.* Notice the way your child responds physically to music. Even young toddlers can be caught swaying to the music from a CD or moving rhythmically to

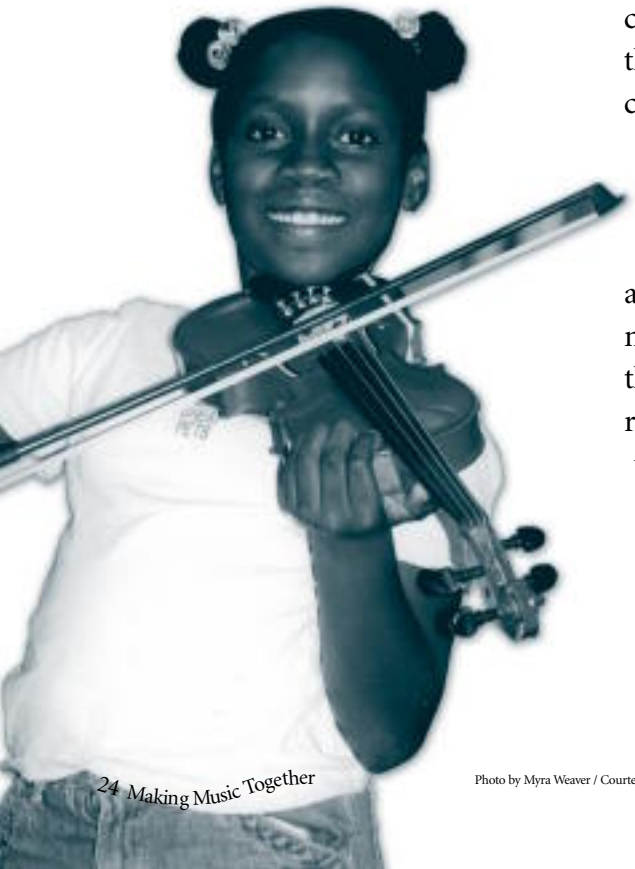


Photo by Myra Weaver / Courtesy of Florida Youth Orchestra

the background music of advertisements and television programs. It is often the musical melody or rhythm that is most appealing to a young child. Encourage your child to develop his or her spontaneous desire to move to music by being a model. Move your body, clap to the rhythm, or create a dance that reflects the feeling of the musical selection. Your child will soon join in the fun.

- *Reading.* Young children love to listen to stories. There are many appealing stories that relate to music that might spark a child's interest in music making, musical instruments, or song and dance. Some of the most popular children's books are those that use the lyrics of a favorite children's song and add illustrations.
- *Expanding storytelling through music.* Introducing music in storytelling can be a powerful experience for a young child. Read a story like *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain* by Verna Aardema or *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry. Talk about and then plan music and sounds with your child to accompany the story you select. Shaking rice in a plastic container could make the sound of rain. Tapping two wooden spoons together could represent a woodpecker's pecking. Let your child use his or her imagination with simple objects that are commonly found at home or in the classroom. Children love the challenge of making music in this way.
- *Exploring the musical sounds of instruments.* Start by getting a few good quality instruments. Together explore the sounds the instruments can make. Percussion instruments such as drums and xylophones, blowing instruments such as slide whistles and recorders, and stringed instruments such as guitars and ukuleles all offer fertile ground for musical experimentation. Regardless of your level of aptitude with an instrument, just playing along with your child spurs interest and offers encouragement.
- *Making musical instruments.* Everyone can't afford to buy musical instruments for exploration. But everyone can make simple instruments at home. Something as simple as a rubber band can be turned into a musical instrument by stretching and plucking it. A pan can become a drum by turning it over and slapping the bottom. Rice or beans in a plastic container with a lid can become a maraca. You don't necessarily need an expensive instrument to have fun musically with your child—use the resources around you.

Photo courtesy of Tri-C JazzFest/Cuyahoga Community College

- *Attending live performances.* Share music that you love with your child and expand your own range of musical experiences by attending programs at local festivals, art centers, museums, community centers, and parks. Remember to choose performances that are more informal for preschoolers. Music at outdoor festivals, parks, and family days offered by museums provide the flexibility needed with small children. Older children are apt to handle longer productions and can even enjoy a Broadway-style musical if the subject matter is appealing and appropriate.
- *Exploring music from around the world.* Music is a universal language, evident in the wide array of musical expressions created by nearly every culture around the world. Experience the music of other cultures available on labels such as Smithsonian Folkways and Putumayo World Music. Many artists offer cultural selections specifically for children. Listening to a variety of different genres enriches your child's understanding and enjoyment.

EDUCATION AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS IN MUSIC

For preschoolers, there are programs offered by local educational organizations, music schools, and community centers that encourage musical experience. Many of these programs are planned for parents and children, and are structured around a shared experience of music making—singing or playing simple musical instruments. For this age group, the joy of making music and the shared experience count the most.

If your child is in preschool, that school should offer opportunities to sing and play simple classroom instruments, to respond to music through movement, to create music, and to grow in understanding music. Many preschools provide special training for teachers in early childhood music, but may also hire an outside specialist with particular expertise in exploring elements of music with young children. Preschools should devote space to music activities, instruments, and appropriate equipment for recording and playing music.

By the time your child reaches first grade, there are increased opportunities for a more formal approach to music. In elementary school, every student should sing; play instruments; create music; begin to read and write music; listen to, analyze, and evaluate music; and understand how music is a part of culture.

It is at this time that children express an interest in learning more about playing musical instruments and at the same time demonstrate skills that indicate readiness for this new endeavor. Take a cue from your child rather than setting your own desires as a basis for starting music lessons.

Teachers from your child's school can be useful guides in making decisions about timing for lessons, type of instrument, and other teachers who offer instruction for the younger musician. Another excellent source of information is faculty members from the music department at your local college or university. In selecting a teacher, you should find someone with an established track record with students of your child's age group. Ask to interview the teacher to make certain that his or her educational philosophy matches your goals for your child. It may prove fruitful to observe a lesson. You may decide to attend a recital or get a list of references from families of current students to learn more about the teacher and his or her style of instruction.

Parents should be supportive and encouraging as children choose to learn to play an instrument. This is not an easy task, but one that many children approach with enthusiasm in the right environment. It is important to remember that the joy of making music should always be at the heart of music experience in the early years.

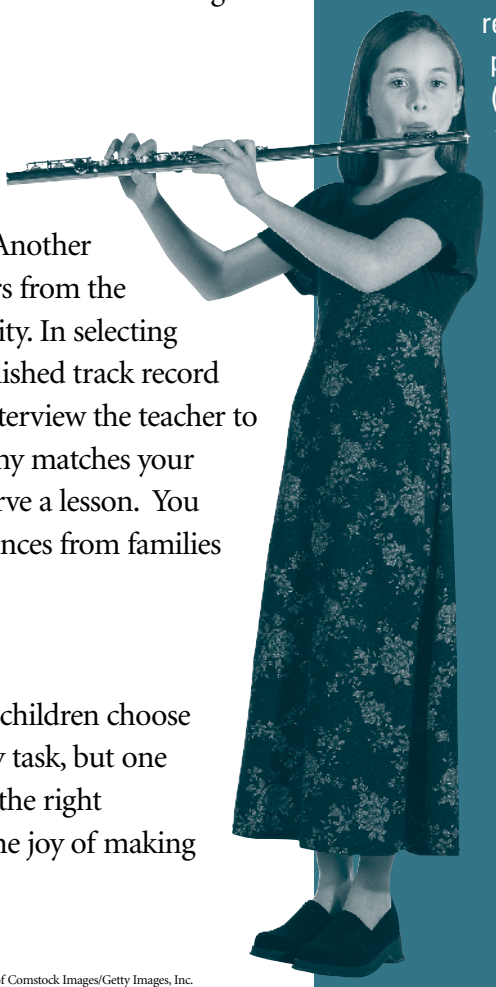


Photo courtesy of Comstock Images/Getty Images, Inc.

INSTRUMENTS

Local stores carry—or special-order—many instruments appropriate for young children. Remember that high-quality instruments are important for children who are learning to distinguish, produce, and manipulate musical sounds. Some reputable manufacturers of instruments for children that go beyond the toy stage are Malmark, Peripole-Bergerault, Remo, Rhythm Band, Sabian, Schulmerich, and Suzuki.

Beginning string and wind instruments are available from retail outlets across the nation. Ask about rental/purchase plans that allow time (typically one school year) to see if the instrument is right for your child before committing to purchase.

INTERVIEWING PROSPECTIVE MUSIC TEACHERS

Interview a new private teacher to establish that he or she is the right teacher for your child. By asking a few relevant questions, you can be well on your way to making a good selection.

- How much teaching experience have you had?
- What is the age range of your students?
- What performance levels do you teach?
- What is your professional experience as a musician?
- What is your educational background?
- What styles of music do you prefer?
- How much practice time do you expect from students, and how do you help students develop good practice habits?

BEGINNING MUSIC LESSONS

While interaction with music begins at birth, the decision to start lessons needs to reflect the attitude, interest, skill, and maturity of each child. In any case, early lessons should be tailored to the ways that young children learn—that is, they should be full of play rather than focused on polished performance. The decision about when to start instrumental music lessons depends on both the child and the instrument. Professionals in the field offer a few guidelines for parents that can aid in the decision-making process.

- *Piano.* Children can begin piano lessons whenever they can sit on a piano bench and concentrate for a period of time.
- *Stringed instruments.* Lessons on the violin or other stringed instruments can begin very early if scaled-down instruments are used. Most schools introduce stringed instruments at third or fourth grade.
- *Wind instruments.* The selection of band/orchestral wind instruments can begin in fifth grade. Younger children can gain valuable experience on the baroque recorder beginning in second grade.

RESOURCES

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin by Lloyd Moss

Duke Ellington by Andrea David Pinkney

The Bremen Town Musicians by the Brothers Grimm

RESOURCE BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

Many books define what's possible in music education, contain songs and pieces specifically chosen for young children, and present activities and strategies useful in helping children grow with music. Among them are:

Music for Young Children by Barbara Andress

Music in Childhood: From Preschool through the Elementary Grades by Patricia Shehan Campbell and Carol Scott-Kassner.

WEB SITES

MENC: THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MUSIC EDUCATION

www.menc.org

MENC's Web site has information on the benefits of music education, resources for helping your child (including activity guides), and links to manufacturers, publishers, and distributors.

SESAME STREET MUSIC WORKS

www.sesameworkshop.com/sesamestreet/music/

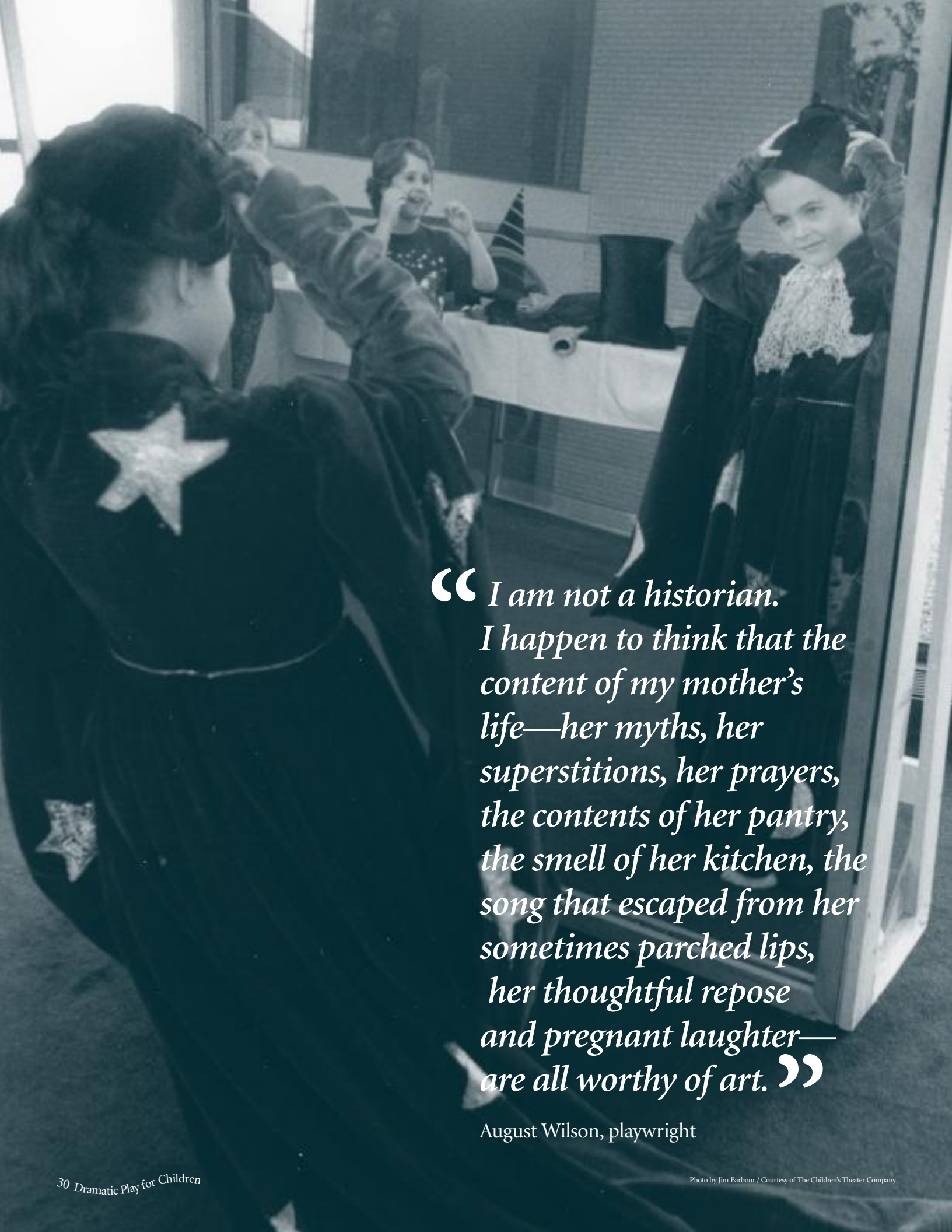
This site has online activities and ideas for children, as well as resource kits.

BASH THE TRASH

www.home.earthlink.net/~jbertles/

Bash the Trash is an organization that provides information on building musical instruments from unusual materials. This could include just about anything, ranging from recycled junk to discarded stereo components to old children's toys.

Photo by John A. Lacko / Courtesy of Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra



“I am not a historian. I happen to think that the content of my mother’s life—her myths, her superstitions, her prayers, the contents of her pantry, the smell of her kitchen, the song that escaped from her sometimes parched lips, her thoughtful repose and pregnant laughter—are all worthy of art.”

August Wilson, playwright

Photo by Jim Barbour / Courtesy of The Children's Theater Company

CHAPTER FOUR

Dramatic Play for Children

Children of all ages love to pretend. As toddlers, they mimic things they see in everyday life. In preschool, they recreate familiar roles and events. By elementary school age, they act out stories, creating original plots, adapting fairy tales or children's books. As children leave early childhood, they enter a new stage of drama that is a more formal type of play-acting—going on stage to present prepared scripts.

For young children, the theater arts are best thought of as informal endeavors that extend the natural habits of play and learning. In pre-kindergarten and elementary classes, children learn the basics of structuring their "pretending" for presentation to an audience. More advanced skills—acting, directing, scene and costume design, playwrighting, and stage management—come after elementary school.

In addition to creating theater in its many forms, children benefit from seeing it. Theater for young audiences, also known as children's theater, is dramatic theater performed by professionals specifically for an audience of children.

As young children take part in drama, they gain many benefits:

- Knowledge of and skill in theater arts.
- Improved literacy skills—reading, writing, and speaking.

- Development of imagination and aesthetic awareness.
- Independent and critical thinking and increased ability to solve problems.
- Social growth and the ability to work with others.
- A healthy release of emotion.
- Fun and recreation.

Educational theater offers parents benefits as well:

- Time spent with their child in creative moments.
- Insights into the observations, impressions, interests, fears, and humor that their child reveals.
- Opportunities to witness their child's developmental growth.
- The chance to help their child understand some of life's dilemmas.

ENGAGING YOUNG CHILDREN IN THEATER

There are several ways that parents and teachers can help children enjoy dramatic play, even with little or no theater background or experience. First of all, encourage children to play and to be imaginative. Enter into the game by giving children the chance to take the lead in play activities, taking your cues from them about your role. If you ask questions, you extend and deepen the experience. For example, children enjoy reenacting common everyday experiences. One child might decide to be a storekeeper and ask the parent or teacher to take the role of the customer. Simple questions can broaden play. "Do you have these shoes in the color red?" "How much do these shoes cost?" The adult allows the child to direct dialogue and ideas, but supports the play by developing the theme initiated by the child.

Very young children naturally engage in dramatic play in nearly any setting. As Mom or Dad cook in the kitchen, a set of plastic measuring cups and a wooden spoon are sufficient for even a young toddler to pretend to join in. This simple imitation of life marks an early stage of dramatic play. For preschoolers and kindergartners, it is possible to encourage dramatic play by providing a special space. This could be a corner of a child's room where toys are kept or a space in a family room or kitchen. Add to the possibilities by collecting "props,"

everyday objects ready for dramatization. For instance, a scarf can become a shawl, a sash, or any number of things. Hats can denote different characters. Baskets, bags, and plastic dishes are all useful props.

Dramatic play need not be confined to one space; it is spontaneous, and the impulse to enact a character or imitate an action is rarely planned in advance. Chances are it will be brief and fragmentary, although as children grow older, the games become longer and more detailed. Favorite stories and activities are often repeated, but even with repetition, new ideas are constantly generated.

Build on the interests children express through dramatic play. For example, ask a child who has demonstrated an interest in dogs to be the dog expert. You can take your pretend dog to the "expert" to find out what to feed the dog, what games the dog might like to play, and more generally how to treat a dog. Let the child be the expert and offer personal perspectives learned from his or her newly acquired interest. It is important to remember that the child should be the center of the dramatic play.

Storytelling through dramatic play is also a favorite activity of young children. Begin by reading a well-known children's story. A simple story like *Caps for Sale* has great appeal for the young child and sets the stage for an informal theater experience.

Finally, enjoy these early experiences with your child. Remember that they are the child's first engagement with this art form and can lead to lifelong pleasure. You are not necessarily encouraging a career in theater; you are helping the development of a human being through this most human of the arts, the theater.

Photo by Monika Graff / Courtesy of International Festival of Puppet Theater

Photo by Craig Scwartz / Courtesy of The Music Center

More formal encounters with theater can be found in a variety of places. Think about planning a vacation to visit a place where "living history" is an integral element of the experience, such as Colonial Williamsburg. Historical sites established by the National Park Service often include theater-like elements. In some places, children may dress up in period costumes and play a part in historical scenarios. The professionals planning these experiences ensure success for the children by taking the lead.

There are many benefits associated with children going to the theater. Among them are:

- Appreciation of theater as an aesthetic experience, and increased awareness of social and cultural values.
- Sharing in a communal art form.
- Increased knowledge of history and human events.

Theater for young audiences includes a wide range of subject matter: folk and fairy tales, contemporary social issues, adventure stories, and historical and biographical dramas. The form may be straight dramatic play, musical, documentary, or movement theater.

Here are some elements that parent and child can discuss after watching a production:

- *A good story.* Theater for young audiences today is wide-ranging, offering plays on subjects from traditional fairy tales to current events. Whatever the topic, a good production will clarify its subject. Did you learn something new or gain a new insight through the play?
- *Credible characters.* A "willing suspension of disbelief" is necessary for viewing theater, but the characters should be plausible. Did actions seem totally out-of-character for someone in the play? If so, did you lose interest in the drama?
- *Excellent performance skills (acting, dance, music, and any other skills called for such as juggling, fencing, etc.).* Do these skills support the development of character? Are they at a level befitting the expectations of the actors, both in terms of the amateur or professional status of the company and the actions of the characters?
- *Effective visual elements.* Do scenery, costumes, and lighting transport you to the place and time of the play? Are they visually engaging? In cases where scenery and lighting are minimal or absent, did the production stimulate your imagination in other effective ways?
- *Challenging ideas.* A good script can provoke thought, bring new ideas to light, perhaps help you look at a facet of life in a new or different way. Ask your child what he or she got from a performance. Try open-ended questions such as: What did you see on the stage? What was a particular character trying to do? What happened at the very beginning?
- *Insight into other cultures.* Theater can take us in time and place to other communities and cultures. Did the production help you learn about cultural or ethnic traditions?
- *Strong emotional response and involvement in the plot.* Were you moved by the action of the play? While emotions can't always be verbalized, a discussion with your child about his or her feelings about what happened can benefit both of you.

Following some productions, theater companies offer workshops, question and answer sessions, and discussion sessions that are facilitated by theater professionals (actors, directors, playwrights). Contact your local theater for young audiences to find out about these special offerings.

EDUCATION AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS IN THEATER

Because educational drama is a group activity requiring skilled leadership, you should consult your child's teacher or principal to see whether it is already part of the school program. While many schools are now adding theater to the curriculum, it is still absent in most elementary schools. As a parent, you can help promote educational drama by encouraging teachers to include drama in their classrooms or by helping bring artists-in-residence to the school.

It may be that you will want to discover other opportunities in your community for classes in the performing arts. You should look for available resources in the following places:

- Community centers and city or county recreation departments.
- Libraries, museums, churches, playgrounds and camps, and YMCAs and YWCAs.
- Local colleges and universities.
- Performing arts centers, as well as professional and community theaters.

Many facilities have splendid programs in the arts. Visit classes, note the age levels of the children and the preparation of the teachers. Ask questions about the school's philosophy: for instance, how does the school ensure opportunities for all children? Classes in educational drama, puppetry, mime, and dance offer enrichment beyond whatever the school provides. The chance to explore creatively and act spontaneously is essential.

RESOURCES

Some good sources of information about theater for young audiences are theater departments of colleges and universities, newspaper reviews, local or state arts councils, and the American Alliance for Theatre and Education (AATE). In addition, many regional arts agencies support touring theaters for children and young audiences. Your state arts council can put you in touch with the regional organization for your area.

BOOKS, PLAY PUBLICATIONS, AND ARTICLES

Theatre for Young Audiences, 20 Great Plays for Young Children by Coleman A. Jennings (Ed.)

Storytelling Games: Creative Activities for Language, Communication, and Composition Across Curriculum by Doug Lipman

The Dramatic Difference: Drama in the Preschool and Kindergarten Classroom by Victoria Brown & Sarah Pleydell

WEB SITES

AMERICAN ALLIANCE FOR THEATRE AND EDUCATION

www.aate.com

American Alliance for Theatre and Education aims to promote standards of excellence in theater and theater education, connecting artists, educators, and researchers with each other, and providing opportunities for members to learn, exchange, expand, and diversify their work.

ARTSEDGE

http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/artsedge.html

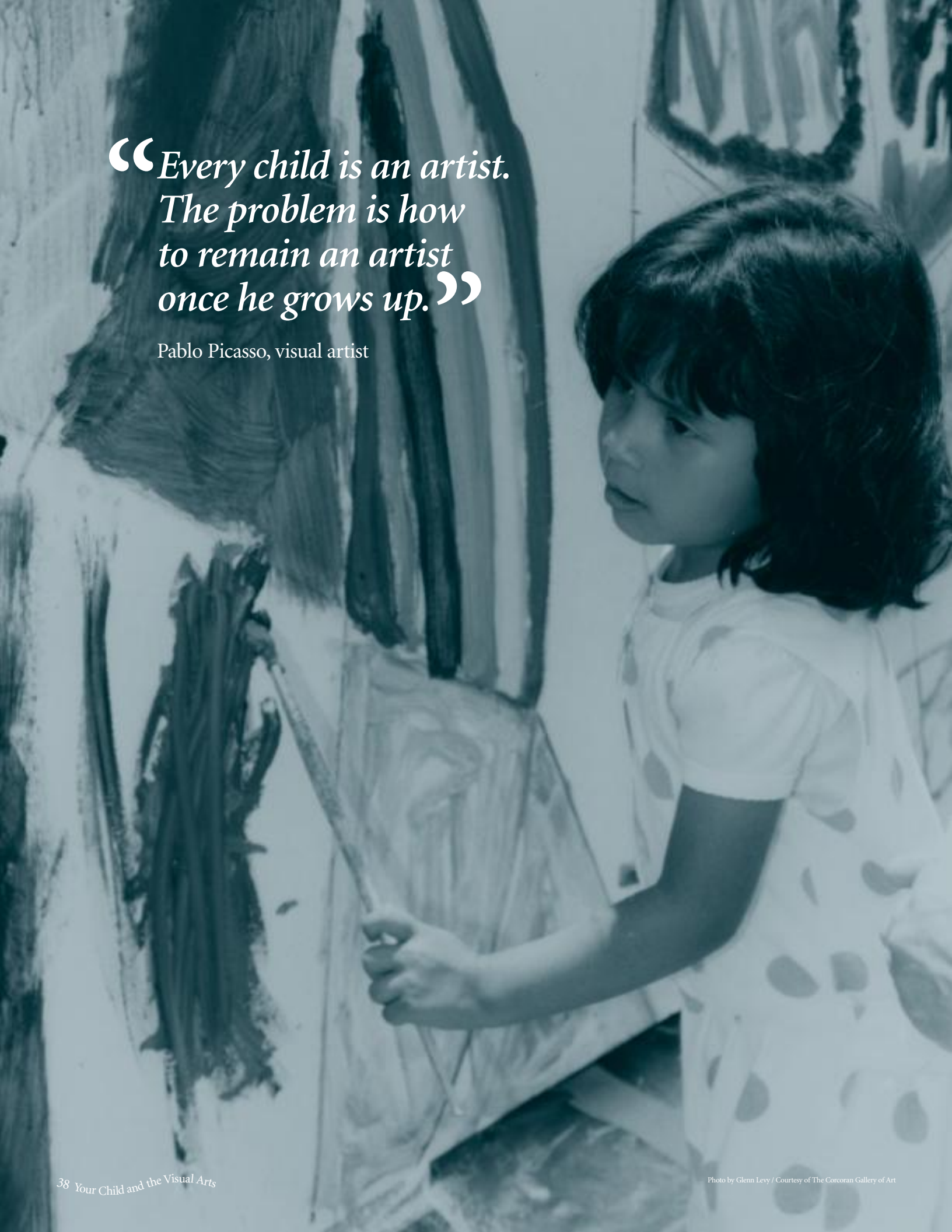
The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts provides this Web site to promote arts education; the site includes a section allowing site users to explore arts-related themes and activities.

FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY

http://www.folger.edu/education/kids/kidshome.asp

The Folger Shakespeare Library's Web site provides a section on activities and games for children related to Shakespeare and his work.

Photo by Jim Barbour / Courtesy of The Children's Theatre Company



"Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up."

Pablo Picasso, visual artist

Photo by Glenn Levy / Courtesy of The Corcoran Gallery of Art

CHAPTER FIVE

Your Child and the Visual Arts

When children explore their world, they rely most on the sense of sight. It is the visual world that gives children information about color, shape, and form, and provides an opportunity to revise ideas based upon visual data gathered from new experiences. The visual world also provides myriad opportunities for language development, as words are associated with visual images. Not only do children learn from visual experience, but they also respond to what they see, often recreating ideas through artistic expression when they color, paint, draw, or sculpt.

The visual arts can be defined as two distinct activities, art making and art appreciation. The first is about expressing ideas while the latter is more about responding to art. Both are important ways of learning and should be supported and valued by parents and teachers.

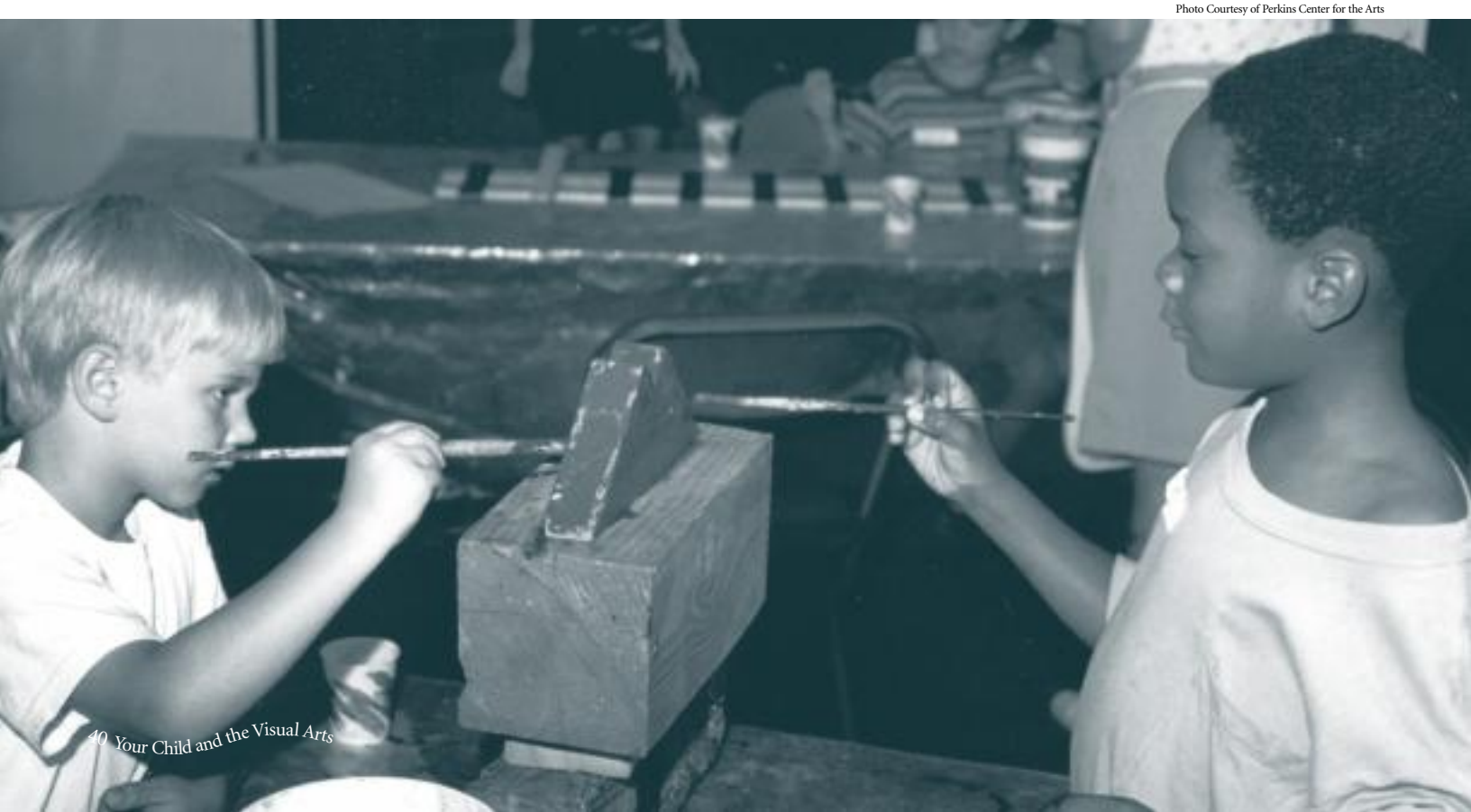
The joy of making art is apparent in almost every home across the country, illustrated by children's paintings and drawings proudly displayed on kitchen bulletin boards and refrigerators. In early childhood programs, the art area is often a hub of excitement, providing opportunities for children to explore and express ideas through artistic creations.

Art appreciation begins with the simple yet common practice of reading to young children. During story time, parents and teachers can help children develop visual literacy—the ability to interpret the visual world—by encouraging children to respond to illustrations that engage, enlighten, and excite them.

By exploring and experiencing the visual world, children have the opportunity to:

- Gain insight from visual experience to construct meaning by observation, reflection, and application of ideas.
- Recognize similarities and differences in the world.
- Attach visual images to words and abstract ideas.
- Grasp relationships in their environment.
- Think creatively while developing skills in drawing, painting, sculpting, designing, and crafting.
- Communicate, represent, and record ideas and feelings related to personal experiences.
- Reinvent the world in their own terms through art expression.
- Develop physical skills as they learn to handle tools and materials associated with creating art.
- Recognize personal preferences related to individual works of art, an early skill in the development of aesthetic awareness and critical judgment.

Photo Courtesy of Perkins Center for the Arts



ENGAGING YOUNG CHILDREN IN THE VISUAL ARTS

The visual arts reflect and interpret life. Artistic expressions can be found everywhere, from illustrations in children's books to images on calendars to decorative artwork displayed in homes, schools, libraries, businesses, and parks. In the formal art world, museums and cultural institutions are environments where paintings, sculpture, and other works of art are cared for and shared with the general public. Early experiences with the visual arts foster important skills while providing a sense of joy and excitement that can last a lifetime.

Making Art with Young Children

Opportunities abound for engaging young children in making art. Visit any toy, craft, or art supply store to find child-friendly art materials such as crayons, markers, colored pencils, paints, modeling clay, and play-dough. Recycled materials found at home (scraps of cloth, old buttons, bottle caps) can be used for making collages.

- Create an "art corner" at home. Choose a place that allows your child to explore different media—paints, crayons, and clay—and lends itself to easy clean up. Draft "art making" rules with your child so that everyone knows the expectations. Younger children will probably need guidance for use and clean up of materials. Art materials should be safe and age-appropriate.
- Engage your child in the choice and selection of art materials. Vary the art opportunities by changing the materials every few weeks. One month the art corner can be a collage center with small containers of recycled materials. Transform the space to a sculptor's studio at another time with modeling clay, play-dough, simple tools (Popsicle sticks or plastic knives), and an assortment of objects that can be used with the sculpting materials.
- Provide a place to exhibit artwork. A bulletin board or cork strip can be used for displaying art. A clothesline or drying rack with clothespins or clips can also serve as a place for children to exhibit completed projects. Some children will prefer to keep their art in a box or in a scrapbook for personal use rather than exhibit for others.

- Plan an "art party" for your child's next birthday. Your child may have some wonderful suggestions for art activities that will appeal to his or her friends.

For younger children, art is often more about the process of exploring materials than about creating an end product. Exploration should be valued for its contribution to self-expression and to learning. As children create art that is representational, some will freely talk about their creations while others will not. Some children feel more comfortable talking about the materials or colors used rather than about the ideas expressed in the artwork. Simply saying, "Would you like to tell me about your art?" gives a child the freedom to talk about the work from his own point of view. It is important to respect the child's motives, preferences, and aims.

Photo by Jerri Stanard / Courtesy of Gallery for Young People

Encounters with Art in the Everyday World

Art is a natural part of our world. Explore art with your child by focusing on your child's interests as well as his or her aesthetic and intellectual abilities. Find opportunities that encourage your child to:

- Find art in the everyday world (calendars, book illustrations, paintings in the home, murals in libraries, elements in architecture, design of ornamental gardens, monuments, and sculpture). Play a game when traveling in which your child searches for artworks in the environment.
- Visit a library or bookstore. The librarian or bookstore clerk can identify books honored for their outstanding illustrations.
- Look for patterns in the visual world (identify shapes or patterns formed by artistic elements in buildings) or search for similarities or differences in common objects.
- Talk about artwork by describing actual works of art. Most young viewers relate a possible story that comes from the image. Other ways to talk about art include exploration of line, shape, color, and texture.
- Make up a story that is related to the content of the artwork (for example, pretend to be a character in a painting and tell what is happening).
- Express personal ideas and feelings about individual works of art. Value your child's perspective.
- Recognize art as an important aspect of life that represents different places and different cultures around the world. Art offers children a worldview.

Share and enjoy art with your child. Read about, look at, and talk about works of art that you encounter. Conversations should be casual, not like a test or lecture. Expose your child to art from different cultures and times in history. Encourage your child to talk about works of art by making comparisons, finding similarities, and identifying differences.

Museums, Galleries, and Art Centers

Museums house cultural artifacts, natural specimens, and works of art that all have visual attributes. Children enjoy looking at and talking about these objects by drawing parallels to their own lives and experiences. There are many wonderful books that introduce museums and encourage children to think about their role in the world.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MUSEUM

- *Miffy at the Museum* by Dick Bruna
- *You Can't Take a Balloon Into The Metropolitan Museum* by Jacqueline Preiss Weitzman and Robin Preiss Glasser
- *I Spy Two Eyes: Numbers In Art* by Lucy Micklethwait
- *Bonjour Mr. Satie* by Tomie dePaola
- *Museum ABC* by the Metropolitan Museum of Art
- *Mon petit Orsay* by Marie Sellier
- *Dogs' Night in the Art Museum* by Hooper & Curless
- *The Shape Game* by Anthony Browne

Family Guides to Museums

Many museums offer guides for parents and teachers that introduce visual arts to young children. Teachers and parents should ask their local art museum about similar publications.

- *Museums & Learning: A Guide For Family Visits* by the U.S. Department of Education and the Smithsonian Office of Education
- *Family Guide* by the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
- *Behind the Lions: A Family Guide to The Art Institute of Chicago*
- *Looking Together: Introducing Young Children to the Cleveland Museum of Art*

Photo by Jerri Stanard / Courtesy of Gallery for Young People

A successful trip to a museum requires some thought and planning in advance, but the rewards will be well worth the time invested. The museum visit should build on specific interests of your child. Kids enamored with collecting bugs in the backyard will probably be interested in collections of insects at a science museum or a nature center to learn more about these unusual creatures. A budding interest in ballet expressed by a young child taking dance lessons might suggest a visit to an art museum to see paintings and sculptures of dancers. Whatever the preference, it is important to select exhibits or works of art that have a common idea or theme for your tour.

A visit to a museum should be fun and inspiring! Beyond planning your visit with your child's interests in mind, remember that selecting a few pertinent exhibits or galleries is typically more effective than touring the entire museum. Value your child's responses. It is likely that your child will show an interest in something not included in your plans. When you demonstrate respect for your child's point of view, you enhance your child's overall experience and attitude about museums.

Museums have different types of presentations. Look for interactive exhibits, special tours or programs designed for young children, and publications that offer suggestions that relate to specific exhibits. Family guides often highlight exhibits that appeal to the young visitor as well as suggest activities for engaging the child in a meaningful encounter with the art.

Art museums are often the most challenging environments for young children. For young children, keep the gallery activities simple. Think about those that would engage your child:

- Read a children's book that relates to your museum visit. Reading can take place at home or at the museum. Select a book that has a theme that relates to the art you plan to see. Some works of art actually have children's books written about them.
- See several different artworks that relate to the same theme.
- Create a personalized tour for your child using postcards from the gift shop. (Purchase the postcards before you bring your child to the museum.) Your child can look at and talk about the postcards before the visit to the museum. Encourage your child to think about the artwork. Since the postcard doesn't show the actual size of the artwork, it is fun for a child to guess whether the actual work is large or small. During the visit, finding the works of art will add an interesting dimension to the experience.
- Orient the museum visit in a different way each time you go. For example, plan a "shape" day and look for shapes in art. Each time your child spies a particular shape, let him or her pretend to draw the shape in the air. Look for shapes in your environment on the way home. Once you return, let your child make a drawing using different shapes or create a collage using cutout shapes.
- Ask your child to strike a pose similar to that of a figure in a sculpture.
- Encourage your child to use his or her imagination through storytelling or pretend play. For example, when looking at a painting of royalty, let your child pretend to be the king. Ask your child to wear a majestic robe and crown and make up a story about the king.

- Allow your child to pick a favorite art postcard from the gift shop following the museum visit. Buy two of the same card and help your child begin a collection. After several visits, the cards can be used for a matching game at home. Cards can also be used for storytelling games or for planning future museum visits. Returning to see old favorites at the museum is often fun for a child. When relatives visit from out of town, your child can plan the tour using favorite artworks.
- Encourage an older child to sketch with pencil and paper something interesting found in the art galleries.

EDUCATION AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS IN THE VISUAL ARTS

Schools, art centers, and museums offer a wide variety of special classes that relate to art appreciation. Look for programs that engage your child in age-appropriate experiences. For the young child, art appreciation should provide opportunities for art making as well as looking at art. The actual process of creating art gives a child a better understanding of an artist's work. It is also important to remember that young children take in information through a variety of senses. Programs that respect the learning style of the young child are probably the best choices.

Photo by Comstock Images/Getty Images, Inc.

RESOURCES

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN INTRODUCING ARTISTS AND ART ELEMENTS

My Name Is Georgia by Jeanette Winter

Picasso and the Girl with a Ponytail by Laurence Anholt

Harold and the Purple Crayon by Crockett Johnson

A Color of His Own by Leo Lionni

Tout Le Monde Est En Formes by Ed Emberley

PARENT RESOURCE BOOKS

Considering Children's Art: Why and How to Value Their Works by Brenda Engel (available at www.NAEYC.org)

Oxford First Book of Art by Gillian Wolfe

Preschoolers and Museums: An Educational Guide by Sharon Shaffer (available through the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center)

WEB SITES

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

www.si.edu

The Web site of the Smithsonian Institution, the world's largest museum complex, contains activities, games, and information for children.

KIDS' SPACE

www.kids-space.org

Kids' Space is a nonprofit Web site that provides activities to encourage artistic expression in children.

HIRSHHORN MUSEUM AND SCULPTURE GARDEN

www.hirshhorn.si.edu/education/interactive.html

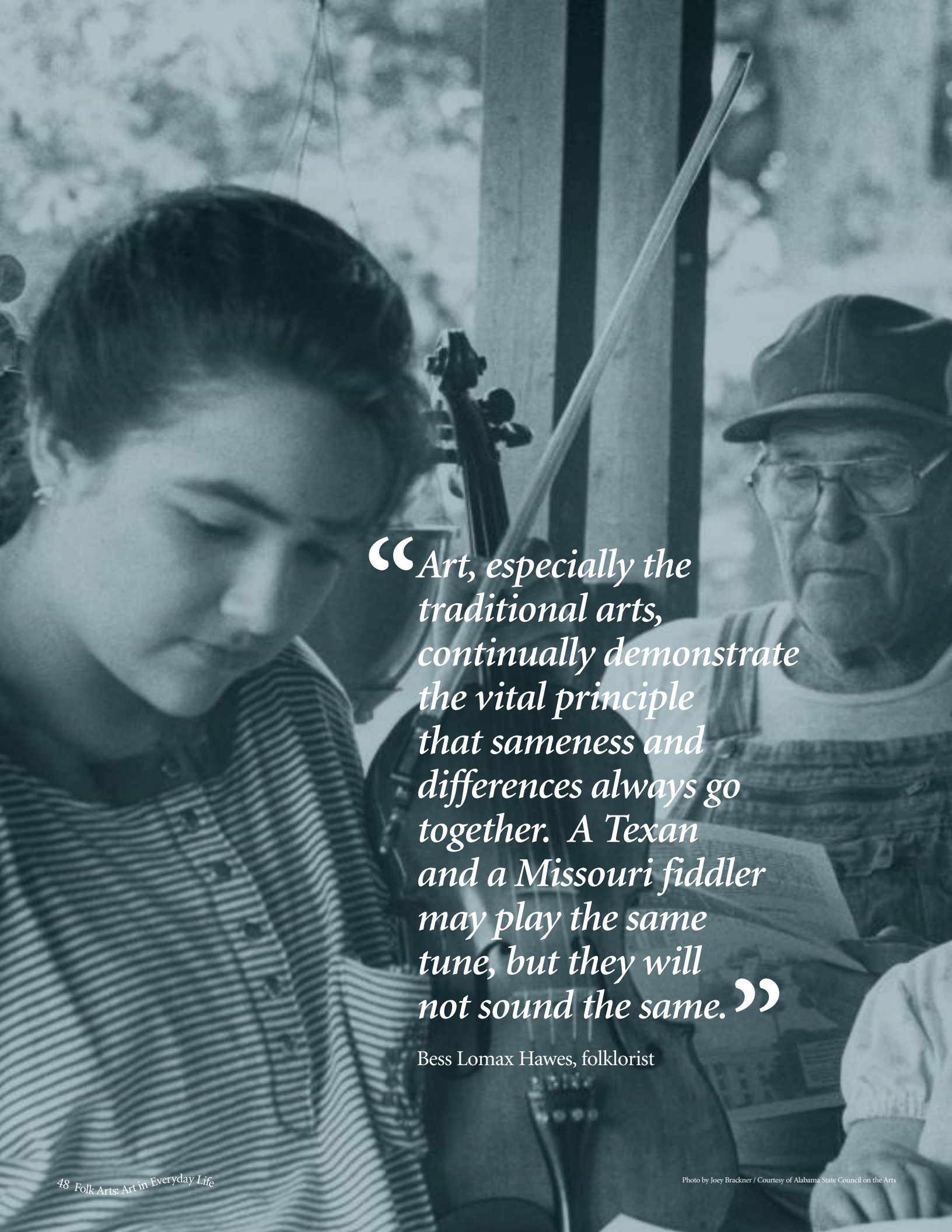
The Hirshhorn Museum's Web site includes an education section with interactive features for children, including a Create a Sculpture feature.

NATIONAL ART EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

www.naea-reston.org

The National Art Education Association's membership includes K-12 teachers, arts administrators, museum educators, arts council staff, and university professors from throughout the United States, Canada, and abroad. One of NAEA's services is to provide information on arts education, including such topics as the National Visual Arts Standards for students.

Photo by Jerri Stanard / Courtesy of Gallery for Young People



"Art, especially the traditional arts, continually demonstrate the vital principle that sameness and differences always go together. A Texan and a Missouri fiddler may play the same tune, but they will not sound the same."

Bess Lomax Hawes, folklorist

Photo by Joey Brackner / Courtesy of Alabama State Council on the Arts

CHAPTER SIX

Folk Arts: Art in Everyday Life

Art is an important part of everyday life. It is not only the work of well-known artists in renowned art museums, but it is also the art of distinctive societies and subcultures. This is folk art—art that develops its styles, techniques, and subject matters within the culture and history of a social group.

Many things, some biological and some historical, define who we are—gender, age, ethnicity, region, religion, language, or occupation. Thousands of artistic expressions come out of our collective American cultural roots in the form of rituals, objects, celebrations, dance, music, and stories passed on from elder to child, from artist to apprentice, and from neighbor to neighbor. Some traditions are as ancient as storytelling, others as new as jump-rope rhymes and poetry slams. Folk art represents the traditions and practices of closely connected groups, preserving cultural and community identity through artistic expressions such as music, dance, art, and craft.

Folk arts enrich our lives by:

- fostering a sense of group belonging;
- giving us similar experiences as a basis for meaningful communication;
- helping us reflect on basic life questions and concerns;

- making life interesting by creating beauty and fun in unexpected places; and
- upholding creativity as an important value, often by utilizing existing (sometimes taken for granted) resources in unique ways.

Children comprehend their world and the cultural significance of events by witnessing and participating in celebrations and ceremonies, creating objects, singing, dancing, and sharing stories with family and community. In this way, children learn from these practices, develop self-awareness, and form relationships with others. As parents and teachers, we can help our children explore connections between their own life experiences and artistic expressions. We can also help them observe and respect their own cultural traditions and those of other people.

ENGAGING YOUNG CHILDREN IN THE FOLK ARTS

Folk arts are commonly practiced by most children in everyday life through neighborhood games, songs, and rhymes repeated in play, as well as in celebrations that represent family traditions. For children, it is likely that the term "folk arts" is unfamiliar, even though the practices may be well known. Children develop a personal repertoire in the arena of folk arts through interactions with family members, classmates, and friends. It is often through games that oral traditions are communicated by young people, such as:

- Sidewalk chalk drawings and finger paintings
- Songs that imitate
- Forts and dollhouses
- Puppetry, dress-up, and magic shows
- Fortunetelling games made from folded paper and costume making
- Clapping games, cheers, jump rope, and bicycle tricks

Talking with your children about games is a way to begin exploring folk arts with them. Ask your children about the games they play and what makes certain games "special." Teach your preschooler a game that you used to play and talk about your enjoyment of it. Read *Bein' with You This Way* by W. Nikola-Lisa and act out the chants. For the preschooler, it is important to share simple finger plays, sing songs, and repeat rhymes that you remember from your own childhood.

While younger children simply enjoy the games, older children have the ability to analyze the characteristics of those games. For six- to eight-year-olds, it's interesting to think about whether there is a certain way to play a game or whether the game can be played according to other rules. What makes the game special? Is there a set way to do a bicycle trick? Older children will be able to talk about characteristics that make games special. Is it originality, repetition, rhythm, rhyme, or volume that makes the game special? Encourage him or her to ponder the "how" and "why" of particular games. Together, compare similarities and differences to determine which characteristics make the games unique and interesting.

Photo by Avis Mandel Pictures / Courtesy of Urban Gateways: The Center for Arts in Education

The beauty of exploring folk arts with your children is that traditional arts provide a framework for meeting lots of people, learning about a wonderful array of cultures, and experiencing important subject matter in unforgettable ways. For example, a visit to an outdoor museum like Colonial Williamsburg or Sturbridge Village might introduce children to historic artistic skills that are still practiced today. Weaving, quilt making, needlepoint, blacksmithing, and decorative woodworking are all demonstrated in outdoor museums. In these visits, children experience music, dance, and games that played an important role in the culture of earlier times.

There are other activities that you can share with your child:

- Document family traditions by interviewing grandparents, uncles, and aunts to find out about family history. Listen to family stories, learn about grandparents' hobbies, listen to their childhood songs and games, and investigate special holidays and family events. Make a scrapbook with your child that includes stories and pictures from the past. Include specific recipes for foods that are traditions in your family. Encourage your child to ask a grandparent to join in this project.
- Make a calendar with your child identifying specific dates, special events, customs, and celebrations that are important to your family. Remember to include birthdays, religious holidays, and community festivals. Add events described by grandparents and other family members.
- Visit local markets or craft shows that sell homemade objects, crafts, or even foods. Craft shows are especially engaging if they give spectators a chance to watch the artists creating their art. This firsthand view enables children to see someone paint pottery, cross-stitch, or weave.
- Create a neighborhood history. Ask friends and neighbors about their often-told stories, artistic skills, handmade objects, foods, songs, and dances. Older children can collect information and

then create a record of neighborhood traditions by taking pictures, documenting stories told, and writing captions that explain cultural customs. Note the specific ethnic traditions of your family and friends, and how they might differ from others.

- Investigate other ethnic traditions with your children. Read children's stories that introduce customs and rituals from other countries. Encourage your child to compare them with your own—what customs and rituals are similar and which are different? Do any of the traditions overlap with your own? Do you all celebrate birthdays in the same way? Teach respect for different ideas and people. Talk about the elements that are common to everyone. For example, people from different cultures wear distinctive costumes or clothing for special occasions or holidays.
- Enjoy local festivals. This is a good way to see ethnic traditions in action. Find out what festivals are planned for your town, county, or region by looking in your newspaper, contacting your state arts council, or calling a local historical society.
- Visit community museums that reflect specific ethnic groups and cultures. Many of these museums were formed to preserve cultural traditions and reflect community values and aspirations. Family days at these museums typically offer authentic celebrations, customs, music, dance, food, and crafts associated with a cultural identity.
- Music is an important aspect of the folk arts. Share songs that are important to you and your family by singing and teaching them to your children. Look at popular folk songs, and see where they originated (for example, many

Photo by Andrea Graham / Courtesy of Nevada Arts Council

American folk songs originated from English or African folk song melodies with new words added). Ask your child how a song makes him or her feel. Folk songs from other cultures reveal a way of life and expand your child's knowledge of the world.

- Food is often the most enduring tradition in any family, regional, or ethnic group, persisting long after community members have forgotten "old country" language, dances, and other rituals. Think about foods that are unique to your family, your community, or to the cultures of your neighbors. You may want to document these diets with your children by creating a family or community cookbook. Include photographs and oral histories to make a more complete history.

EDUCATION AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS IN FOLK ARTS

Young people absorb their own cultural traditions from family members, friends, neighbors, and spiritual leaders. Experiencing cultural traditions of others through local programs offered by museums and other cultural institutions helps young children learn about others.

Six- to eight-year-olds gain knowledge about folk arts in many settings: home, school, community centers, libraries, museums, festivals. Quality educational programs integrate folk arts into language arts, social studies, math, science, visual art, music, theater, and dance. This approach teaches literacy, civic responsibility, and cultural curiosity in an authentic, meaningful fashion. In today's schools, folk artists share their talents with students by demonstrating cultural traditions and performing stories, songs, or dance.

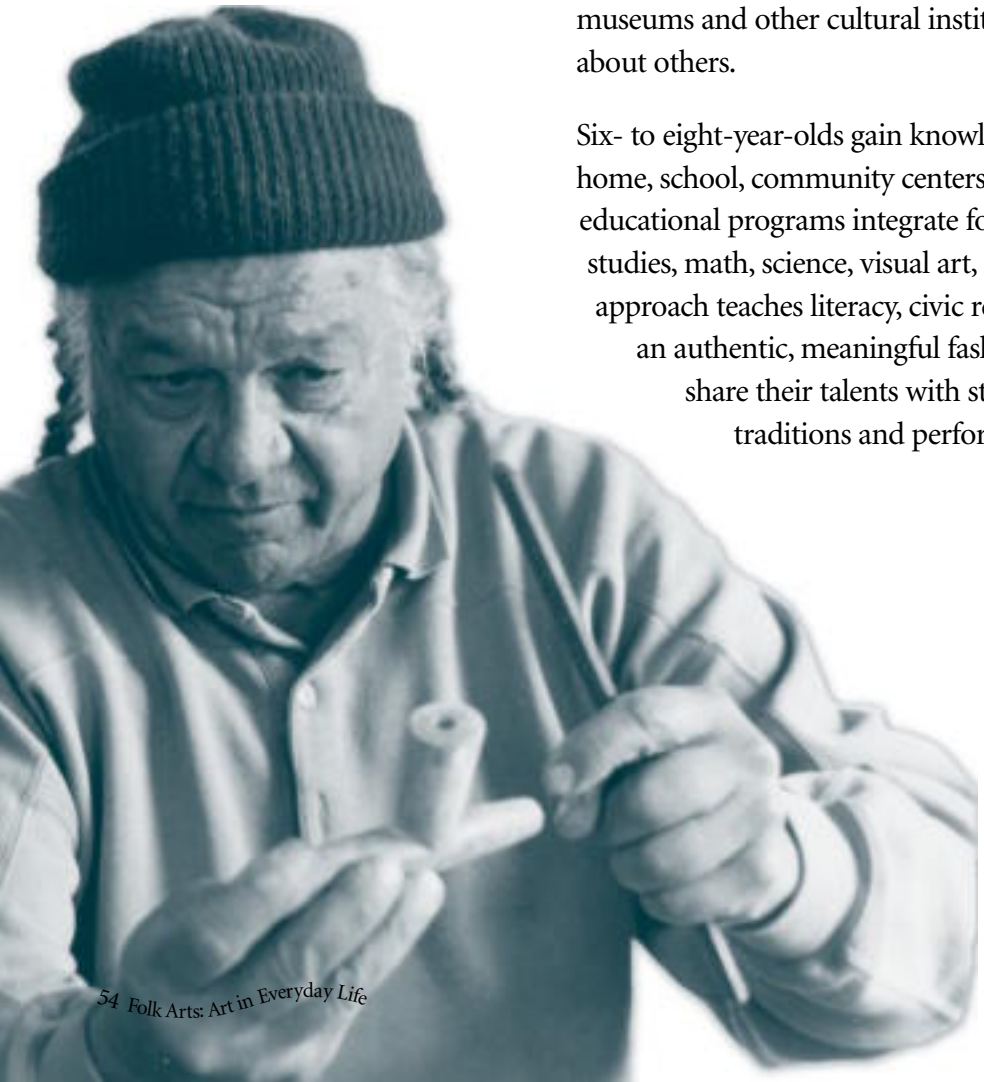


Photo by Blanton Owen / Courtesy of Nevada Arts Council

For example, a local artist may visit the school to show students the art of Navajo basketweaving. Encourage your children's teachers to strengthen school-community connections by incorporating folk arts into their ongoing lesson plans.

In elementary school, students work with educators to document folk arts just as professional folklorists do by interviewing, photographing, and recording family and community members. Six- to eight-year-olds interview family members and document their findings like junior ethnographers. As students mature, they test interesting venues to present their fieldwork findings: exhibits, performances, multimedia presentations, Web sites, publications, radio programs, and videos.

If we take the time to stop, look, question, and listen, we discover that art is all around us, often in the form of folk arts. The process of exploring folk arts with our children helps us rediscover that our families, neighbors, and communities provide rich, engaging learning environments.

RESOURCES

Today we can find hundreds of books, Web sites, and recordings about local, regional, national, and global cultural groups and their folk traditions. Organizations such as the National Council for the Traditional Arts, National Network for Folk Arts in Education, Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, and American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress strive to introduce people to authentic resources that convey accurate portraits of people and places. Individual state arts agencies employ or collaborate with state folk arts coordinators who will be able to provide expertise and information concerning folk arts.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS ABOUT THE FOLK ART

Rechenka's Eggs by Patricia Polacco

A Is For Amish by Kim Gehman Knisely

Lion Dancer: Ernie Wan's Chinese New Year by Madeline Slovenz

PARENT RESOURCES

Masters of Traditional Arts, A Biographical Dictionary by Alan Govenar is a two-volume set with biographical entries for all of the NEA National Heritage Fellows from 1982-2001. Many libraries have a copy of the set. A DVD-Rom presenting audio-visual samples of the works of National Heritage Fellows is also available.

Children of the Midnight Sun: Young Native Voices of Alaska by Tricia Brown profiles children from eight Alaskan Native groups.

Step It Down: Games and Songs From the Afro-American Heritage by Bessie Jones and Bess Lomax Hawes includes many games and play songs and stories that will jog parents' memories of their own childhood play.

WEB SITES

AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

lcweb.loc.gov/folklife

Houses thousands of photographs, recordings, and documents. Look for online collections such as the John and Ruby Lomax Collection, which has many children's songs, and publications such as Folklife and Fieldwork, a guide to doing fieldwork.

CARTS: Cultural Arts Resources for Teachers and Students

www.carts.org

CARTS is a Web site created by City Lore, a nonprofit cultural organization, to provide resources and best practices for integrating the folk arts into schools' curricula. The site also includes information on the National Network for Folk Arts in Education, funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, which provides artist residencies with NEA National Heritage Fellows, activities, and links to national and regional resources. Click on the map under "Resources" and find out about the folk arts of your region.

SMITHSONIAN CENTER FOR FOLKLIFE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

www.folklife.si.edu

Find a virtual festival, online guides such as "Borders and Identity" about the U.S.-Mexico border, and Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, offering hundreds of recordings of traditional music from around the U.S. and the world, *http://www.si.edu/folkways.*

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE TRADITIONAL ARTS

www.ncta.net

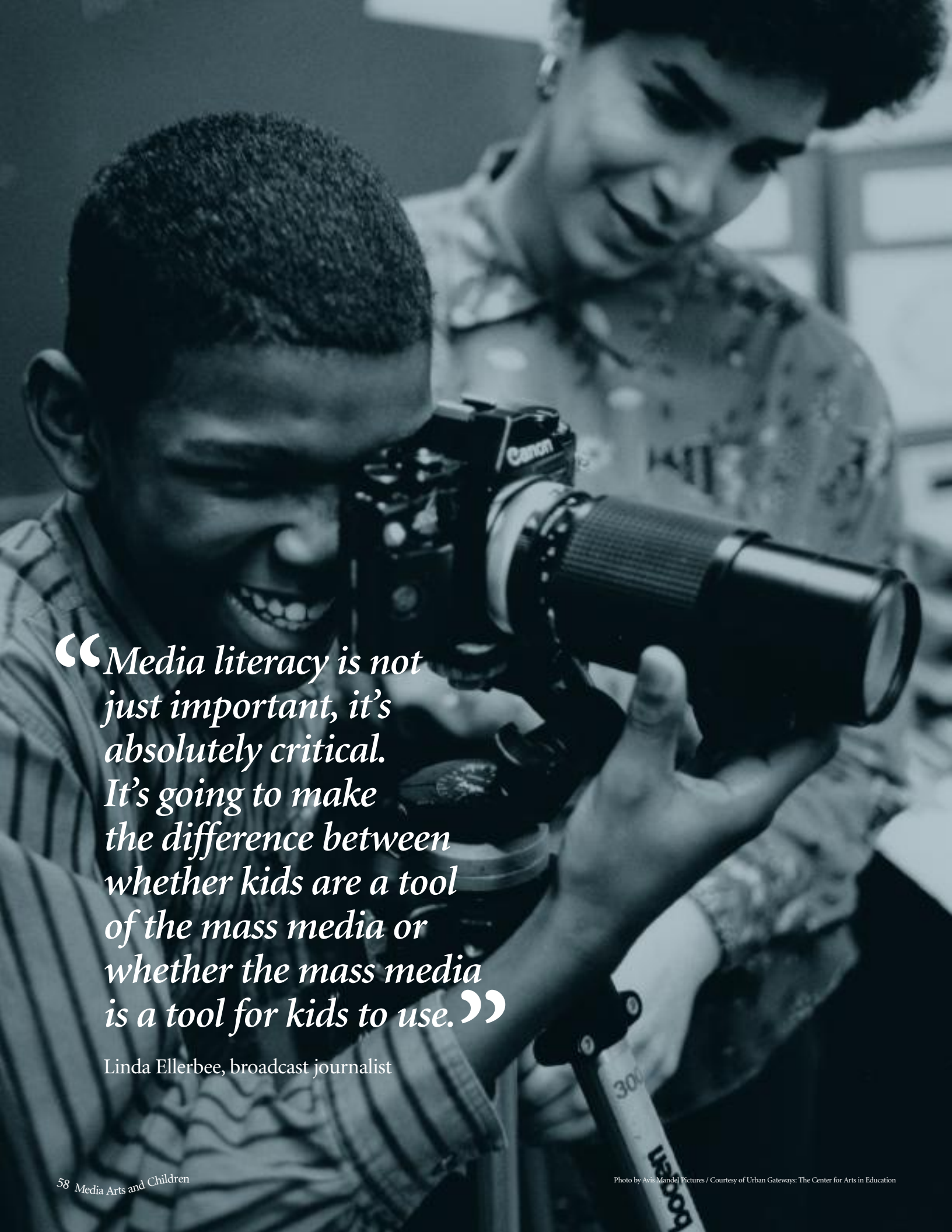
Founded in 1933, the National Council for the Traditional Arts is the nation's oldest presenting organization that deals with folk, ethnic and tribal arts, dedicated to the preservation and documentation of traditional arts in the United States.

FOLKSTREAMS.NET

www.folkstreams.net

This is a Web site intended to build a national preserve of documentary films about American folk culture. Educational materials are presented to accompany the streamed audio-visual presentations.

Photo by Marlin Wagner / Courtesy of Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble



“Media literacy is not just important, it’s absolutely critical. It’s going to make the difference between whether kids are a tool of the mass media or whether the mass media is a tool for kids to use.”

Linda Ellerbee, broadcast journalist

Photo by Avis Mandel Pictures / Courtesy of Urban Gateways: The Center for Arts in Education

CHAPTER SEVEN

Media Arts and Children

The world of the 21st century differs greatly from the past, particularly in the area of technology. For today's young children, encounters with media and technology are familiar experiences in daily life, from the grocery store visit where items are scanned to the ATM machine where Mom does her banking. Even toddlers know the intricacies of playing a favorite videotape or DVD long before they have words to express their actions. When you add to this today's technologically advanced toys where sounds and movement are the norm, it's impossible to separate technology from everyday life. By the time children become teens, they spend more time on the Internet than even watching television. According to a 2002 study by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, more than three quarters of American children aged 12 to 17 go online.

It's important for adults to recognize that young children experience technology as end-users rather than as media producers. For them, the learning curve related to media begins with exposure in daily life. Eventually, the child develops the skill to take an active role in using media as a tool to accomplish other goals.

Digital technologies have made media arts tools—television, film, video, photography, radio, audio recording, computers, and the Internet—accessible to more people than ever before. Having the

THE MEDIA ARTS

Visual Media

Mainly film, video, DVDs, photography, and television. The use of still cameras to make arresting images and new, inexpensive camcorders to make movies offers children opportunities to create visual media art. Television provides access to a wide variety of art forms, especially film and photography.

Audio Media

Mainly radio, audio tapes, and CDs. Audio recording equipment can be used to produce music, comedy, and narratives using spoken word and sound effects. The radio, as well as familiar devices like CD players, can expose children to a wide range of music and spoken word art forms.

Digital Media

Computers have become the most prevalent tool for creating and using digital art. In many cases, their use with other media forms—for example, using editing software to create a movie from camcorder footage—provides new and exciting possibilities for working in the media arts. In many instances, digital technologies, which are often cheaper to use than older equipment, are replacing other media tools.

world at their fingertips is an exciting prospect for older children. At the same time, the sheer mass of images and sounds now available can be daunting, increasing the importance of adult guidance. Media arts tools should be used to enhance and encourage young children's creativity and imagination—not to replace it.

MEDIA LITERACY IN TODAY'S WORLD

In the media-saturated world in which we live, every child needs to be media literate. That means knowing not only how to use the new technologies, but also when and why. Children often demonstrate a level of sophistication that is surprising to adults. In fact, children readily adapt to new technologies, often more quickly than their parents.

As the quantity of and access to images and sounds increase, all of us—and especially children—need to remember that all media are made by people with a specific purpose in mind.

The skill and artistry of media professionals make it increasingly difficult to separate the real world from the crafted worlds represented in a wide range of media formats. Media literacy allows audiences to appreciate the best of the art form while increasing their awareness of subtle, as well as overt, messages.

As with all of the arts, parents and teachers should guide children through the intricacies. With preschoolers and kindergartners, it is important to relate issues to common experiences familiar to children. A relevant discussion about television commercials could focus attention on the fact that ideas represented through media are not necessarily true or beyond criticism. For instance, children should know that a television commercial is intended to send a specific message that will persuade audiences to consume the product.

Elementary students typically have analytical skills that surpass those of younger children. They can grasp the basic concepts that film and video makers, television and radio producers, and computer and other new media artists use. By studying the media arts, children can gain valuable insights into the world around them, especially if they receive quality media education in their schools and guidance at home. Media make strong impressions on children. It is for this very reason that adults should share the experience and provide a balanced perspective.

ENGAGING YOUNG CHILDREN IN THE MEDIA ARTS

Given the demands of time, work, and family life, few parents can monitor everything a child sees, hears, and experiences through the media. It is possible, however, to promote positive use of media by fostering active media criticism, and encouraging your child to play and experiment with media arts tools. The key is to ensure that expectations and activities are appropriate for the age and capacities of the child. Here are a few suggestions for activities, some appropriate for preschoolers and others better suited to elementary students:

- *Search for media in everyday life.* The use of media is now a part of childhood. Just look in any toy store, even in the baby section. In the past, children's toys were simple objects like blocks, books, and dolls that required activity and imagination on the part of the child. Technology has changed that! Encourage your child to look at his or her toys to see which ones include media-related elements. Engage your child in conversation about toys such as barking toy dogs and compare them to the real thing.

- *View actively.* With preschoolers, sing or dance along with the TV, DVD, and video. With older children, focus attention on details like how lighting makes a scene scary or how background music sets a certain mood. At another time, encourage children to make up and act out their own stories starring their favorite characters.

- *Sing a song or tell a story on tape.* A comfortable first activity with media is tape recording your child's voice as he or she tells a story, sings a song, or puts on a puppet show. Replay the tape. Most young children are totally fascinated by hearing their own voices and the voices of their friends.

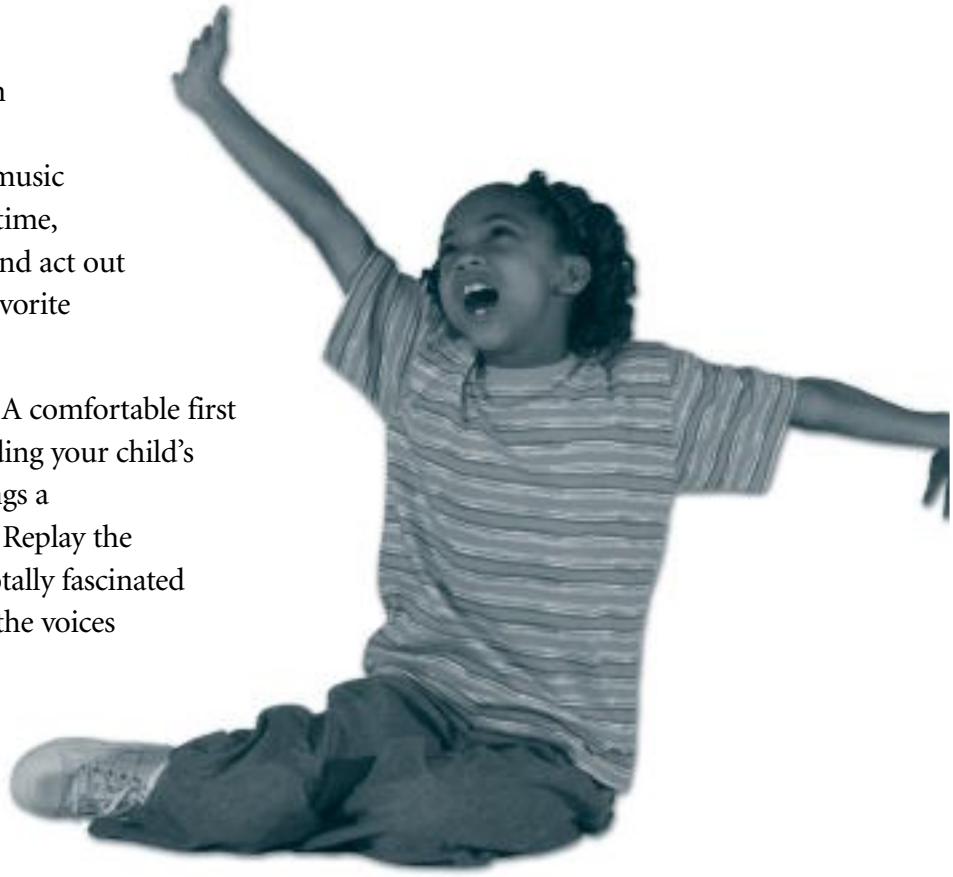


Photo by SW Productions/Photodisc Green/Getty Images, Inc.

- *Be a Star.* Plan a birthday party entitled "Be a Star" and send invitations for a gathering of your child and his or her friends. Let the children select their favorite songs from your collection of children's CDs as well as your "oldies" and then tape record the group singing along. At the end, give every child a chance to sing independently. This solo could be a familiar song or an original tune made up on the spot. Make copies of the tape for every child to take home. Pretend to have a media opening with fancy dress up clothing and special foods. Invite parents to the "Opening."

- *Visit children's museums, science exploratoriums, and technology centers.* In many communities, first-rate museums offer opportunities for children to have hands-on experiences with media art tools. Some may have a radio or television "station" they can explore. Others use computers to engage children in interactive exploration and self-expression.

- *Become a shutter bug.* With appropriate supervision, even preschoolers can take simple pictures with a digital camera. The beauty of this medium is that pictures that are not quite up to par can easily be discarded without cost. Parents or teachers can review pictures with children and then choose the best for printing.

- *Make a movie.* With a video camera, older children can become a director, producer, or star of their own videos. Encourage your child to use the camera to tell a story, perhaps using family and friends as actors and subjects. Children and parents can collaborate to write a simple script and shoot it. Turn a room of your home into a theater, make some popcorn, and invite friends and family as guests for a screening of the finished product.

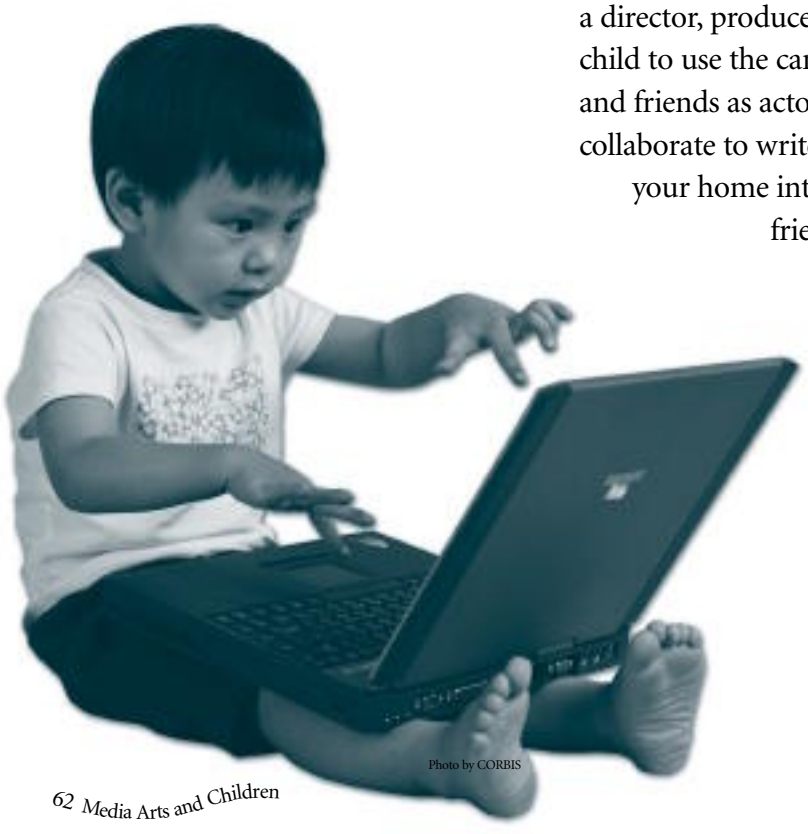


Photo by CORBIS

- *Use media to prepare for attending live performances.* Help children learn about live performance by showing them a concert, play, or ballet on tape. Not only can children begin to understand what to look for in these performances, but they can also gain a sense of appropriate behavior. Point out details such as how the instruments in an orchestra are grouped in different sections, how the audience sits in the dark to help focus attention on the stage, and how people wait to clap until a scene, movement, or song ends.
- *Introduce your child to new kinds of art forms through media.* Designate selected family video nights to explore a new genre of film, style of dance, or type of music.
- *Use the Internet.* Find Internet sites that give your child an experience that may not be accessible in your community. For example, many museums have Web sites that offer interactive games and activities that introduce young children to museum collections. Access to the Web needs to be carefully supervised for all children.
- *Use digital media to expand knowledge.* Many new media offer background material or enhancements in addition to the main show. Renting DVDs rather than videotapes allows children to hear directors describing the choices they made in making the films. Jazz clips on a university Internet site, for example, might include a music professor's notes about the history of the piece.
- *Create your own Web site.* With scanners, digital cameras, word processing software, and digital music making tools, you can demonstrate the power of media by constructing a Web site to create a family page to share with grandparents, cousins, friends, and others. This collaborative process may lead to more independent activities as children mature and gain more sophisticated skills.

Talk to children about the media they see, hear, use, and produce. Ask them to share their interpretations and let them know your opinions. Conversations about media help children develop the vocabulary to appreciate and analyze what they watch and hear.

EDUCATION AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS IN MEDIA ARTS

Elementary schools offer children a wide range of technology experiences. Although computers can be found in many preschool classrooms, more formal involvement in media arts instruction begins with older children. Schools can enhance children's educational experience by providing students with opportunities to express themselves using media arts tools. Computer labs and Internet access are becoming more and more the norm in elementary school buildings. While the basics begin in elementary schools, they serve as a foundation for more advanced media productions in middle and high school.

In schools with quality media arts programs, instructors encourage children by answering their questions and by taking students' work seriously without holding children to unrealistic standards. Good teachers gently critique student work in ways that help children understand how to achieve their own goals. That kind of feedback not only helps hone artistic skills, but also provides a positive model for children to share their opinions with others.

As a parent, you can reinforce the efforts of media arts educators by providing students with opportunities to continue their work outside of school, and by attending student performances or art shows. Work with schools to help them get and maintain the equipment they need. Schools can create programs that offer free computers, digital cameras, and other media tools. Offer to share your own skills with teachers and ask them to help you get to know your child better through the art your child produces.

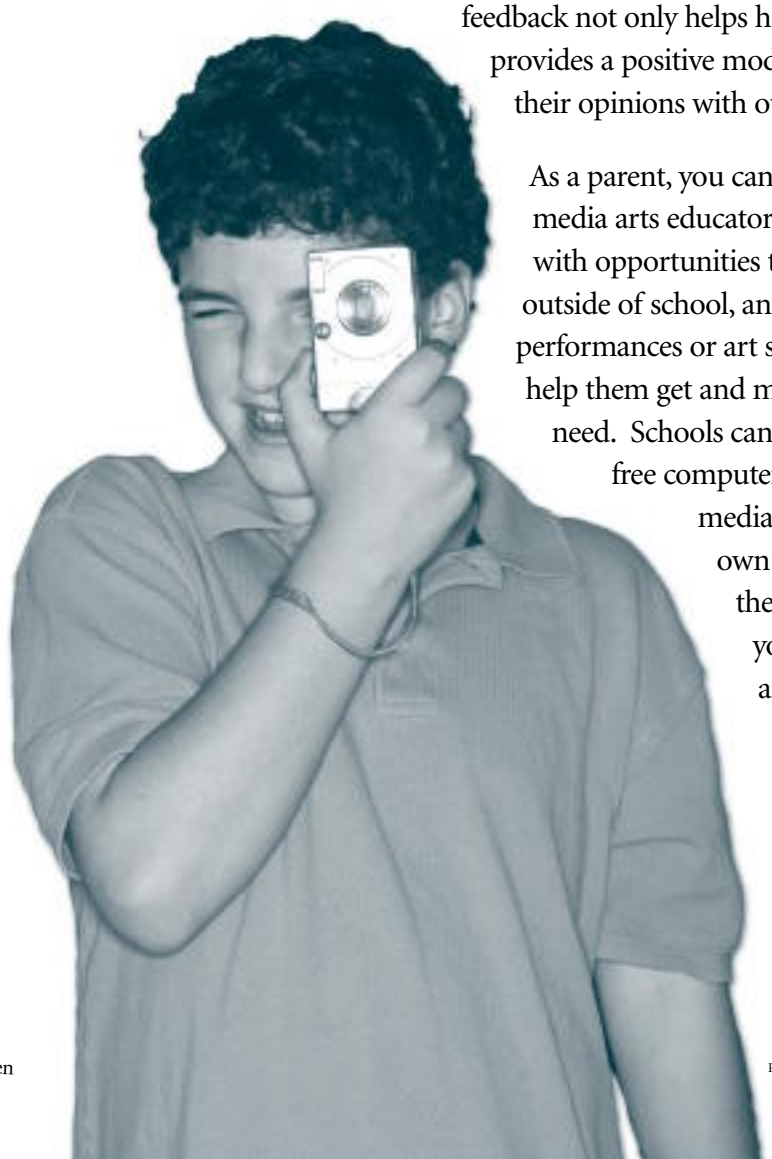


Photo by CORBIS

RESOURCES

WEB SITES

ALLIANCE FOR A MEDIA LITERATE AMERICA

www.AMLAinfo.org

This membership organization for people involved in media literacy education runs the National Media Education Conference.

CENTER FOR MEDIA LITERACY

www.medialit.org

The Center for Media Literacy provides a comprehensive catalogue of selected publications, videos, and teaching materials. This Web site also offers resources for preschoolers and early elementary students

NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR MEDIA ARTS AND CULTURE

www.namac.org

The National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture (NAMAC) is a nonprofit association comprised of diverse member organizations that are dedicated to the production, exhibition, distribution, and preservation of film, video, audio, and online/multimedia arts. Its mission is to strengthen media arts organizations as an integral part of the community; facilitate the support of independent media artists form all cultural communities and regions; integrate media into all levels of education and advocate for media literacy as an educational goal; promote humane uses of and individual access to current and future media technologies; and encourage media arts that are rooted in communities, as well those that are global in outlook.

PUBLIC BROADCASTING SERVICE (PBS)

www.pbskids.org

The Public Broadcasting Service, created and owned by the nation's public television stations, exists to serve its members with programming and services of the highest quality and to demonstrate the imaginative use of technology to advance education, culture, and citizenship.

Photo by Jeff Whetstone / Courtesy of Appalshop Films

Photo courtesy of K-12 Gallery for Young People

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- Chapter 7: Alliance for a Media Literate America (Faith Rogow)

Contact information for the organizations is found in the Resources section of each respective chapter.

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