

Creative Arts

at Gretchen's House

We believe that the best creative art experiences for young children emphasize *process* over *product*. When children are able to express themselves creatively, they develop healthy self-esteem.

At our centers, you will find:

- ▶ Art stations that allow children to select media and tools, and create messy masterpieces.
- ▶ Dramatic play nooks and props that promote realistic and inclusive role playing.
- ▶ Background music that enhances children's quiet and active play.
- ▶ Attractive art on display at the children's level.
- ▶ Group art projects that foster cooperation and inspiration.
- ▶ Opportunities for children to display and discuss their work.
- ▶ Professional and home-made musical instruments that encourage children to experiment with rhythm, tones, and melodies.



Key Art Experiences in Early Childhood

- ▶ **Expressive Art:** Children need daily opportunities to express themselves creatively. They also need experiences with all kinds of media and tools to discover what works for them.
- ▶ **Art Appreciation:** Experiencing other people's artwork gives children a sense of wonder, an eye for detail, and lets them discover meaning and make connections with the world around them.
- ▶ **Music:** Music is a core element of a quality creative arts curriculum, both for its soothing and inspiring qualities, and also for the math and literacy learning opportunities it provides.
- ▶ **Dramatic Play:** Dramatic play allows children to express emotions and role play in a safe setting. Facilitated free play with realistic, child-sized props encourages pro-social behavior. More focused performances (show and share, concerts, and skits) help children practice articulation, sequencing, and gain confidence addressing groups.

Our bottom line: children who experiment with artistic processes and experience other people's creativity develop respect for and appropriate responses to other people's ideas.

Our Creative Arts Curriculum

We teach according to children's actual development rather than expecting them to conform to an age-based standard. Our curriculum is cumulative, so older children might demonstrate many outcomes on this page. Our art projects are messy, whole-body experiences, so we request that parents dress children in play clothes every day.

Infants:

- ▶ Explore non-toxic and/or edible art with fingers, feet, or whole bodies.
- ▶ Listen to environmental music during play and rest.
- ▶ View high-contrast patterned mobiles, textiles, and wall art.
- ▶ Use shakers, bells, and drums to experiment with sound and rhythm.



Toddlers:

- ▶ Use big crayons, markers, and sidewalk chalk on tables and outdoor canvases.
- ▶ Paint using big brushes, various tools, and easels.
- ▶ Collaborate on group art projects.
- ▶ Play music using real and home-made instruments.
- ▶ Role-play various jobs, situations, and cultures using real-life dramatic play props.

Preschoolers:

- ▶ Construct three-dimensional art using recycled and natural materials and modeling clay or play dough.
- ▶ Dictate captions or descriptions of their art projects.
- ▶ Experiment with blending paint colors, textural tools, and collage.
- ▶ Adapt favorite songs and tunes or compose their own tunes using classroom instruments.
- ▶ Perform poems, stories, or skits for their peers or adults.
- ▶ Use emotional vocabulary to describe the art they see.
- ▶ Visit art museums and community sculptures.



Kindergarten & 4K

- ▶ Illustrate their stories.
- ▶ Create art and objects with textiles.
- ▶ Design and redecorate dramatic play areas using themes.
- ▶ Use journals and scrapbooks to document art experiences.
- ▶ Visit with real artists to learn about techniques.
- ▶ Perform songs or poems at local venues such as Arbor Hospice or senior community living centers.
- ▶ Choreograph dance routines to favorite music.
- ▶ Learn folk dances.
- ▶ Collaborate to perform music in a classroom band.
- ▶ Study famous artists' work to determine the techniques used.