

How do I encourage creativity?

1. Believe your child *is* creative.
2. Look for more than one right answer. Ask your child, "Is there another way?" then *LISTEN* and explore those ideas.
3. Explore interests in many areas, creative people get many of their ideas from other disciplines. Think about all the ways nature has inspired new innovations – like velcro™.
4. Think in "questions". How is this like something else? What if? How could this be better?
5. Provide a creative atmosphere with materials like books, water colors, drawing materials, fabric, music or (look for ways to reuse everyday objects) and then let children explore these objects without direction.
6. Make space in your home for children to display their work. Hang your child's framed picture on a wall.
7. Give time to dreaming and playing. Don't organize all of a child's time around structured activities. Boredom can lead your child to problem solving and finding ways to create his/her own fun.
8. Buy discount journals (blank) and use to make a scrapbook that can be decorated and filled with photos, drawings, poems and stories. It could be the journal work of an invention idea or a collection of ideas to be developed.
9. Use art activities as a part of a birthday or family celebration, like designing a logo to go on a t-shirt when you go to an outing or event.
10. Be flexible when giving your child everyday tasks, accept his/her ideas when appropriate.
11. Visit museums, art galleries, traveling artists exhibits or go to the library or other places of interest to your child. Discuss what it is they like about these places and events. Help them to seek more information about what was of interest. Don't try to see the entire museum in one visit. Choose one or two exhibits to explore. Let them compare the exhibits and tell what they liked or didn't like and just LISTEN.
12. Encourage thinking in metaphors. Questions like, if you were a flower, what kind would you be? Why? What color would you use to describe your best friend? Why?
13. Play different kinds of music and have your child move in response to that music. Or have your child quietly listen to music without lyrics, close his/her eyes and let the music invite them to a place. Ask them to describe the place, what they see and what they are doing? Ask them about the instruments they hear and which instrument they like the most.

Children need opportunity to take risk. These strategies for building creativity give your child that opportunity.