

# Arts in the Early Childhood Creative Curriculum

## Reframing Arts-Related Interest Areas

Of the ten named Interest Areas in *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*, Dramatic Play, Art, Music and Movement can be especially effective at introducing a wide variety of experiences for students throughout the day while supporting standards for preschool. Early childhood teachers, even with limited training in the arts, can work to deliver meaningful and high quality arts instruction. *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* provides excellent suggestions for embedding arts content into weekly planning, and can even be taken farther. Here are some additional suggestions for each arts area:

**Dance:** Learning about the body’s ability to move and using rhythm and space in different ways.

Dance	Exploring the Topic	Activity Ideas	Rationale
<p><b>Dance Making</b></p> <p><i>Developing skills and techniques</i></p> <p><i>Improvising</i></p> <p><i>Choreographing</i></p> <p><i>Performing</i></p>	<p><i>In what ways can my body move?</i></p> <p><i>Why do different people create different movements?</i></p> <p><i>In what ways might we improve our dance?</i></p> <p><i>Why might a dance feel different to an audience from the way it feels to the performer?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Practice structured warm-ups:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learn and lead students in Anne Green Gilbert’s rhyming <i>BrainDance</i> for children ages 0-5 years.</li> <li>- <b>Handout:</b> “Rhyming” from <i>Teaching the Three Rs Through Movement Experiences</i> by Anne Green Gilbert</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Move in different levels: low, middle, high.</li> <li>▪ Move in different directions: forward, back, side, up, down.</li> <li>▪ Move in straight, circular, curved, and zigzag pathways in the air and through space.</li> <li>▪ Execute basic locomotor (traveling) movements.</li> <li>▪ Practice freezing and traveling, starting and stopping.</li> <li>▪ Practice basic motor skills: walk, run, leap, hop, jump, skip, and gallop.</li> <li>▪ Improvise with props: balls, hoops, ribbons, scarves.</li> <li>▪ Explore original movement and dance concepts:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Follow-the-leader</li> <li>- Mirroring</li> <li>- Partnering</li> <li>- Responding to music</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Explore images that suggest a beginning, middle and end.</li> <li>▪ Compose a short dance phrase – a movement sentence – with a beginning, middle and end.</li> <li>▪ Perform for peers in dance class.</li> <li>▪ Participate in group decisions about class choreography.</li> <li>▪ Perform for students and family at school assemblies, celebrations, and at “Wow” experiences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The <i>BrainDance</i> is an effective full body and brain warm-up for people of all ages. It is composed of eight developmental movement patterns human beings are programmed to move through from 0-12 months that wire the central nervous system.</li> <li>▪ By moving through these movements and using them in a fun musical ways, children have a varied movement experience to assist in wholeness and integration of body and brain.</li> <li>▪ Exploring original movement helps students with focus and concentration.</li> <li>▪ Movement can highlight response to music, images, words, ideas, and symbols and help children distinguish a range of movement qualities to express feelings, characteristics, sensations, and environments.</li> <li>▪ Students begin to understand the concepts of cooperation through the examination of body shapes and body actions.</li> <li>▪ Students become keen observers and can manipulate and remember dance experiences.</li> <li>▪ Through performance, students demonstrate the ability to recall, repeat, and refine movement sequences.</li> <li>▪ Student increase expressiveness and coordination.</li> <li>▪ Students begin to develop positive audience behaviors.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dance Literacy</b></p> <p><i>Critical and Creative Thinking</i></p> <p><i>History and Culture</i></p>	<p><i>Why do people dance?</i></p> <p><i>Why do people from different places dance in many different ways?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contribute to a list of reasons people dance, sharing personal dance experiences.</li> <li>▪ Students talk about favorite dance activities with the class.</li> <li>▪ Take performance to another</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students understand performance space and meaning in performance.</li> <li>▪ Students understand that dance is a special way of expressing and communicating.</li> <li>▪ Students develop basic dance</li> </ul>

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<p><i>Dance Vocabulary</i></p>	<p><i>How do our surroundings change our dance?</i></p>	<p>space – like to outdoors – and discuss how space changes meaning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Respond to action words in texts and symbols with movement.</li> <li>▪ Name different body parts we use while dancing and</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate various shapes with the body.</li> <li>▪ Contribute to a class word wall on dance</li> <li>▪ View different types of dance performances live, on film, or on the web.</li> <li>▪ Respond verbally and in movement to famous dancers and dance works.</li> </ul>	<p>vocabulary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students respond in words, movement or pictures.</li> <li>▪ Students understand that there are different approaches to and forms of dance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dance – Making Connections</b></p> <p><i>Personal Connections</i></p> <p><i>Cross-Curricular Connections</i></p>	<p><i>Where do you see people dancing?</i></p> <p><i>How does dance help us to be strong and healthy?</i></p> <p><i>How do animals move?</i></p> <p><i>Can we move like animals?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Family Partnerships: interview parents/guardians about the dance tradition of their childhoods, and share with the class.</li> <li>▪ Interview classmates to find out whether and in what ways dance is a regular part of their family experience.</li> <li>▪ Learn dances marking holidays, celebrations and traditions of various cultures.</li> <li>▪ Learn or invent dances using:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Music: rhythms</li> <li>- Visual Art: movement, color, spatial design in a painting</li> <li>- Theatre: character-based movement</li> <li>- Language Arts: actions, dynamics or pathways drawn from words and images in a book</li> <li>- Math: geometric shapes in the body or in group formations</li> <li>- Science: movement qualities found in natural elements in different seasons; movement qualities of various animals</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Explore and observe changes in posture and describe how they affect mood.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students actively observe the movements of other students, people, and things.</li> <li>▪ Students begin to learn about various cultures and historical periods.</li> <li>▪ Student connect dance to other disciplines.</li> <li>▪ Students connect dance to health and well-being.</li> </ul>

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**Music:** Developing an awareness of different kinds of music and becoming comfortable with different forms of musical expression

Music	Exploring the Topic	Activity Ideas	Rationale
<p><b>Music Making</b></p> <p><i>Developing Skills and Techniques</i></p> <p><i>Singing</i></p> <p><i>Playing Instruments</i></p> <p><i>Performing</i></p>	<p><i>What is the difference between music and noise?</i></p> <p><i>Why does some music make us feel happy and some music make us feel sad?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Learn, sing, and performs songs individually and in a group.</li> <li>▪ Perform in unison and in a round with varying dynamics.</li> <li>▪ Sing songs that demonstrate the ability to sing loud/soft, high/low, and fast/slow.</li> <li>▪ Sing a variety of chants, games, and call-and-response songs.</li> <li>▪ Clap simple rhythmic patterns individually and in a group.</li> <li>▪ Listen to a CD containing soothing environmental sounds (e.g., ocean, rainforest, birds, wind, etc.) then have small groups of students recreate the sounds while the rest of the class closes their eyes and imagines.</li> <li>▪ Play simple rhythmic patterns on classroom instruments or using found objects to create sounds (i.e.: homemade shakers, buckets, spoons, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Improvise a response to a rhythmic pattern by clapping.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A complete music experience includes opportunities for hands-on and interactive learning, self-expression, and reflection.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Music Literacy</b></p> <p><i>Reading and Notating Music</i></p> <p><i>Genre and Style</i></p> <p><i>Instruments, Voices, and Ensembles</i></p> <p><i>Music Vocabulary</i></p>	<p><i>Why might music make you feel different emotions?</i></p> <p><i>How is your speaking voice different from your singing voice?</i></p> <p><i>What is the difference between loud/soft, high/low, fast/slow in music?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify high and low through visual icons.</li> <li>▪ Though movement, identify high/low, loud/soft, fast/slow in musical selections.</li> <li>▪ Make connections between sounds and symbols.</li> <li>▪ Identify ensemble groupings.</li> <li>▪ Categorize voice types and how they sound.</li> <li>▪ Categorize instruments and the sounds they make.</li> <li>▪ Listen to a music selection sung by different artists/groups. Compare/contrast each performance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A complete education in music develops the ability to use and understand the language of music through listening and responding to live and recorded repertoire, notation, recording, and music technology, description, analysis, and evaluation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Music – Making Connections</b></p> <p><i>Personal Connections</i></p> <p><i>Cross-Curricular Connections</i></p>	<p><i>Where do you see people making music?</i></p> <p><i>Where or when do you see people singing or playing instruments?</i></p> <p><i>How does music help us to feel?</i></p> <p><i>Where else do you hear music?</i></p> <p><i>What sounds do we hear outside?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Define music as a means of self-expression.</li> <li>▪ Describe the mood of a piece of music.</li> <li>▪ Sing and play music from a variety of world cultures.</li> <li>▪ Use student-constructed puppets to communicate responses to music.</li> <li>▪ Listen to music that tells a story.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students recognize parallels between music and other disciplines.</li> <li>▪ Students gain an understanding of the cultural and historical context of music.</li> <li>▪ Students explore personal connections with music.</li> </ul>

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**Drama:** *Communicating a message or story through action and dialogue.*

Drama	Exploring the Topic	Activity Ideas	Rationale
<p><b>Drama Making</b></p> <p><i>Developing skills and techniques</i></p> <p><i>Imagination, analysis and process skills</i></p> <p><i>Choreographing</i></p> <p><i>Performing</i></p>	<p><i>In what ways can we tell stories with our body, voice, and mind?</i></p> <p><i>How might we use our body, voice, and mind to pretend to be a character from a book?</i></p> <p><i>How might a picture tell us a story?</i></p> <p><i>What are different ways we can move our bodies?</i></p> <p><i>How can we tell if a character is young/old, boy/girl, etc.?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pantomime simple daily activities.</li> <li>▪ Participate in teacher-guided imaginative journeys through various settings and situations.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate the sound and movements of animals and/or people in a story.</li> <li>▪ Dramatize storytelling through use of body, voice, and gesture.</li> <li>▪ Listen to a story and create improvised dialogue to play a scene from the story.</li> <li>▪ Use a gesture and voice with a prop, mask, or puppet to express character.</li> <li>▪ Use a photograph as a prompt for asking and answering the “who, what, where, when, and why” about the characters in the imagined story.</li> <li>▪ Retell a story individually or in groups with attention to accurate sequencing.</li> <li>▪ Supply an ending to an existing or original story.</li> <li>▪ Alter the classroom space, using existing furniture to create a space or stage for theatre activities.</li> <li>▪ Give objects imaginary qualities – for example a saucepan becomes a magic helmet.</li> <li>▪ Practice “freezing” to help concentration and focus.</li> <li>▪ Practice the idea of “personal space”, with attention to size, shape, weight, height, and speed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creative play and make-believe are demonstrations of the imagination.</li> <li>▪ Acting should not emphasize performance projects, but rather creative process, group sharings, and presentations within the classroom.</li> <li>▪ Students explore the physical, vocal, characterization and staging components of acting by developing the actor’s instrument: the body, voice, and mind.</li> <li>▪ Rules of dramatic play include focus, freeze, and personal space.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Drama Literacy</b></p> <p><i>Terms and tools</i></p> <p><i>Theatre history/research</i></p> <p><i>Dramatic texts</i></p> <p><i>Responding to theatre performances</i></p>	<p><i>How is acting different from telling a story?</i></p> <p><i>How do we use our imagination differently in the telling of a story and acting it out?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dramatize a narrative text.</li> <li>▪ Explore stories that are thematically or dramatically similar appearing in a variety of cultures (animal myths, hero, or Cinderella stories).</li> <li>▪ Read a story and retell it verbally. Then act out key sections of the story.</li> <li>▪ Use various techniques to activate storytelling like puppets, masks, and props.</li> <li>▪ Gather and use historic images to demonstrate the historical and cultural aspects of storytelling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Theatre vocabulary should be used in all theatre activities and exercises in which students are engaged.</li> <li>▪ Students should develop an understanding on dramatic structure and theatre traditions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Drama – Making Connections</b></p> <p><i>Interdisciplinary connections</i></p>	<p><i>Have you ever felt like a character in a story?</i></p> <p><i>How does a story remind you</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dance/Movement               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create dance or movements to link a series of dramatic moments.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students extend their understanding of theatre by connecting it to other disciplines.</li> <li>▪ Students explore how other art</li> </ul>

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<p><i>Cultural connections</i></p> <p><i>Personal connections</i></p>	<p><i>of your own life?</i></p> <p><i>Can we guess what a character was/is thinking?</i></p> <p><i>How much can we guess about a character by watching a play?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a simple dance in response to a dramatic script or story.</li> <li>▪ Language Arts             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use a work of children’s literature to animate improvisation, role-playing, storytelling or group sharings.</li> <li>- Sequence a story or script by creating beginning, middle, and end tableaux or “pictures with the body”</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Music             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use a variety of musical selections or rhythms to inspire and/or underscore theatre games and improvisations.</li> <li>- Add found music to a story or play to heighten mood and atmosphere.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Science             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improvise movement based on life cycles.</li> <li>- Use an exploration of the five senses in improvisation activities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Social Studies             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify and report on character types or roles in the neighborhood such as lunchroom attendant, firefighter, store clerk, etc.</li> <li>- Dramatize and explore similar stories from different cultures such as animal myths and hero stories.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Visual Arts             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create puppets to be used in storytelling or in a group share.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>forms are incorporated into theatre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students connect personal experience through explorations of theme and context.</li> </ul>
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**Visual Art:** *Using a variety of media to communicate; learning to use art materials; appreciating many forms of art.*

Visual Art	Exploring the Topic	Activity Ideas	Rationale
<p><b>Visual Art – Art Making</b></p> <p><i>Construction</i></p> <p><i>Content</i></p>	<p><i>In what ways can we use paints and brushes?</i></p> <p><i>How do artists express themselves?</i></p> <p><i>How does color and placement of shapes create depth?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create paintings that demonstrate personal observations about a place.</li> <li>▪ Experiment with mixing colors.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate the various ways that paints and brushes can use used:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Paint: thick, thin</li> <li>- Strokes: long, short, curved</li> <li>- Colors: light, dark, dull, bright</li> <li>- Shapes: big, small, layered</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Create drawings that experiment with different tools such as oil pastels, pencils, colored pencils, and crayons.</li> <li>▪ Create prints by stamping objects or sponges with tempera paints.</li> <li>▪ Construct a collage using paper and found objects. Experiment with:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Placement of shapes</li> <li>- Color</li> <li>- Pre-cut and torn paper</li> <li>- Composition</li> <li>- Textured materials</li> <li>- Layering</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Sculpt and carve into molding clay. Experiment with:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pinch</li> <li>- Coil</li> <li>- Texture</li> <li>- Add and subtract</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Design fiber art using textured fabric and string or yarn.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students hone observation skills and discuss works of art.</li> <li>▪ Students exercise imagination, construct meanings, and depict their experiences.</li> <li>▪ Student use basic art tools and gain knowledge of compositional elements.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Visual Art – Art Literacy</b></p> <p><i>Elements of art</i></p> <p><i>Principals of design</i></p> <p><i>Expressive/interpretive qualities</i></p>	<p><i>What kinds of colors do we see in works of art?</i></p> <p><i>How do we know when something is bigger or smaller?</i></p> <p><i>What is the difference between the shape of a circle and the shape of a square?</i></p> <p><i>Why do people create art?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Compare and contrast line vs. shape, color vs. texture, shape vs. size.</li> <li>▪ Identify primary, light, and dark colors.</li> <li>▪ Identify varied lines, geometric shapes, textures, types of space, size.</li> <li>▪ Listen to a read-aloud a famous artist.</li> <li>▪ Look at a work by a famous artist.</li> <li>▪ Identify proportion through visual examples (house to mouse).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students develop visual arts vocabulary to describe art making, the tools and techniques used to produce art, and the elements and principals of design.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Visual Art – Making Connections</b></p>	<p><i>Where do we see art in our community?</i></p> <p><i>What is art?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Observe community sites on a neighborhood walk (or school walk) and note:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Colors</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students reflect on the process of art making.</li> <li>▪ Students read and write about art to reinforce literacy skills.</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Buildings</li><li>- Vehicles</li><li>- Signs</li><li>- People</li><li>▪ Explain and compare various personal art experiences.</li><li>▪ Explore the customs and traditions of various cultures.</li><li>▪ Identify types of art found in daily life.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Students recognize societal, cultural, and historical significance of art.</li></ul>
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