

Art-based activities

A recent report by several independent researchers concludes that participating in the arts nurtures the development of social, personal and cognitive skills. Programs based on Arts can improve academic achievement and decrease the tendency towards delinquency. It helps youth form positive attitudes about themselves and build self-esteem.

Arts programs involve communication, interpretation and understanding of complex symbols, much like mathematics and languages. Thus it fosters higher-order analytical skills and skills of evaluation and synthesis. Many of the programs make the child regularly use multiple skills thus making him dynamic and versatile.

Development of imagination, judgment and philosophy are fringe benefits of an arts-based activity. As opposed to the short 45-minute duration of the art classes at school, the extra time allowed in after school activities allows the child to get more involved. This results in more satisfactory opportunities for development of latent capabilities in the child. In turn, the child learns to set high standards of achievement. He understands what sustained focus is and learns that regular practice is the way to excellence.

In the shy or the withdrawn child, theatre, speech or drama lessons may be an outlet for pent up emotions. As drama entails getting into the 'skin' of another person, the child learns to verbalize emotions and express thoughts. These reasons account for the popularity of arts-based activities.

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