Creativity can be revealed in many ways, including through drawing, writing, sculpting, painting, photography, music, dance and play. Creativity is also part of STEM classes (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) where students utilize a design process that helps create solutions for problems. Even on a soccer field, you can see creativity as a player uses their feet to manipulate the ball around a defensive player. If you have ever watched a young child build with Legos or a child tell a story with superhero figurines, you have observed creative children at work!

Art is a wonderful way for children to express their feelings and “use” their creativity. Sometimes as adults we can “get in the way” of the creativity of children. Robert Schirrmacher, an instructor of early childhood education, encourages adults to listen to a child’s explanation of their artwork without letting their own assumptions to get in the way.

Schirrmacher cautions us to be careful about complimenting artwork. Comments such as, “What a beautiful picture” may result in an automatic “Thank you” from the child. The child may feel that everything they create needs to be beautiful. Encouraging rather than complimenting invites the child to express a range of feelings in their artwork and discuss the story behind their work. You might say, “I can see you put a lot of time and energy into your work, can you tell me about it?”

Schirrmacher suggests the following approaches:

• Focus on the abstract and design qualities of the artwork such as: color, line, shapes, space and texture. For example, “Your picture is very colorful; can you tell me about your purple turtle?”

• Use open-ended questions to invite the child to share. “Can you tell me about the object you made with the clay?” “Can you share how you felt dancing to the music?”

• Make observations about the art without interpreting it to the child—let the child tell you. “I noticed a lot of jagged lines in your picture...can you tell me about them?”

• If objects are easily recognizable, something helpful to say might be, “I see you drew a building with some people in front of it. Can you tell me who they are...what are they doing?”

When we encourage children to share what they have created, their artwork and creations can offer much about their thoughts and feelings.

“Play is the work of children. It’s serious stuff.”  

-MAYA ANGELOU

Patti Gasparello, MSW, LCSW
Director of Kids Path
This issue of the newsletter is focused on creativity and expressive arts. We've included a website that describes ways to promote creativity in your home. The article may not fit with every parenting style, but gives good developmentally appropriate ideas for how to encourage your kids to step out of the “boredom” rut that I’m sure so many kids are struggling with these days. It helps us as parents reflect on how our limits can sometimes interfere with their natural curiosity. I hope this helps inspire new ideas and expression within your homes!

Read the article here.

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

Our media spotlight this week is a Youtube Channel offered by McHarper Manor, an art school located in Ohio. Since the beginning of Quarantine, they began recording videos of different art activities for families to do with their kids. If you follow the link below, you can access the whole catalog of art activities. Some of them will require specific art supplies. We hope you can find videos that will inspire art expression.

Visit the Youtube channel here.
FAMILY ACTIVITY

Play the Scribble Game

Here's a game to get those creative juices flowing! For this game, each player will need their own sheet of paper and some coloring materials (a pencil will also work). Each player draws a large scribble on the paper, and then the players switch papers. Each player must then transform their scribble into a picture. Children who enjoy art may want to spend some time on their pictures, but a quick sketch is fine! Once all of the players have completed their pictures, share them with one another and have each person create a story to go along with their picture. You might also enjoy swapping around who tells the stories. This game has several different elements, so see what resonates most with your child and follow their lead!
LEARNING RESOURCE

Creativity

Define who YOU are instead of trying to be like someone else. Creative thinking can help tweens and teens find their own voice and their place in this world.

This link can help you learn to do just that.

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

This video expands on the idea of what it means to be creative. We are ALL creative in different ways. What’s yours?

Learn how a young teen faced creative problem solving as she rock climbed some of the most difficult peaks in the world. Check out her Ted Talk here to see how she used those experiences to help her face normal everyday challenges.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Thinking Outside the Box

Here is a website with a great game for the entire family that encourages thinking outside the box. It is a really good way to spend family time and see how creative each family member can be.

Check out other ideas from this website as well. Have fun!
LEARNING RESOURCE

Creativity

In this article, creativity coach Katherine Parrott writes about 5 Ways a Creative Practice Can Help You Through Grief.

This link offers interesting information about how art helps your brain, plus lots of inspiring images of “everyday” art and artists.

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

This week we’re highlighting several simple but fun games that allow you to flex your creative muscles, even if you have no experience with making art!

Google Quick Draw
This online game is a little bit like computer solitaire meets Pictionary. The true objective is to contribute to an A.I. (artificial intelligence) project in which each experience of guessing a drawing adds to a computer’s understanding of human drawings, but it’s also just an easy and fun way to creatively relax your brain!

Color Me! (Android only)
A completely free coloring book app for adults. Lots of different images to choose from and color any way you please. An easy and fun way to stretch your creative muscles and calm your mind at the same time.
Download the Android App Here.
If you’re an iOS user, check out this similar free app called Color Book for Adults.

Bamboo Paper (iOS and Android)
This free app is basically a digital sketchbook or notebook. You can use it for doodling, mapping out a garden plot, journaling, or anything else you can dream up.
Fun and Easy Watercolor (or Whatever) Collage

The next activity is adapted from an idea for using a brush on glue called “Mod Podge.” But any glue will do. You don’t have to be an artist or even especially creative to do this activity! All that is required is to fill a blank page with color, cut that page into pieces and then rearrange and glue those pieces onto a blank sheet of paper or canvas. You will be amazed at the beauty you can create in this simple activity!

Here’s the link for inspiration.

Materials

- Watercolors, or washable markers, or crayons or whatever you have
- Watercolor paper or cardstock
- Glue
- Blank sheets of paper or canvas

Tools

- Scissors
- Paintbrushes
- Newspaper or something to protect the surface you are working on

Instructions

1. Randomly cover your entire page with colors you love. If using watercolors, wet the paper lightly first, then apply the watercolors for a tie dye look. If using markers you can wet the marker tips lightly to blend colors together. For crayons or colored pencils, try layering colors for different effects.
2. Once finished (and dry), cut the page into triangles of various sizes.
3. Lay out all of the triangles on a blank canvas or page for placement. Apply glue to the back of the triangles and attach.
4. Repeat until the canvas is covered in a design pleasing to you.

If you’d like to do this activity as a family, you can elect to each create one page of color, then share and swap the cut pieces. You’ll end up with several unique collages made from all your shared pieces!
Kids Path Connections Resources

How to Explain COVID-19 to Children

- Sleep Guidelines During the COVID-19 Pandemic
  https://www.sleepfoundation.org/sleep-guidelines-covid-19-isolation

- Resilience and Routines for Families during the Pandemic

- Why Teens May Never be the same after the Pandemic

- Talking to Children about COVID-19 (novel coronavirus)

- Talking to Kids about the Coronavirus

- How to Talk To Your Kids about COVID-19

- Helping Children Cope With Changes Resulting From COVID-19

Resources for Food and Other Assistance

- Phone Call regarding resources/food: Dial 211
- United Way: resources including regarding food, housing
  Burlington, Greensboro, Orange Co.
- Texting tool for students who are on free/reduced lunch for info: Text FOODNC to 877-877
Emotional Health Resources

- **The Kellin Foundation – A Variety of Resources**
  Builds resilient children, families, and adults through behavioral health services, victim advocacy, and community outreach.
  [http://www.kellinfoundation.org/covid-19-resources.html](http://www.kellinfoundation.org/covid-19-resources.html)

- **Now’s a Good Time to Teach Your Kids to Play on Their Own**

- **If Your Kid Keeps Asking ‘Why,’ Give Them an Answer**

- **4 Ways to Help Your Anxious Kid**


- **The Heartbreaking Reality of Parenting in the Coronavirus Pandemic**
  [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/parenting-social-distancing-coronavirus_n_5e6fb52ac5b6eab7793a0c4d](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/parenting-social-distancing-coronavirus_n_5e6fb52ac5b6eab7793a0c4d)

- **Guide to Living with Worry and Anxiety Amidst Global Uncertainty**

- **Teaching Our Kids (and Ourselves) Mindfulness to Get Us Through the Coronavirus Anxiety – The Washington Post**
Educational Resources

- Teachers Share Their Favorite Free Learning Websites and Apps for Kids
  https://www.huffpost.com/entry/free-online-learning-activities-for-kids_l_5e73848dc5b63c3b648bc968

- Veteran Home-Schoolers Share Tips for Parents during Coronavirus Closures

- Khan Academy
  A nonprofit with the mission to provide a free, world-class education for anyone, anywhere.
  https://www.khanacademy.org

- Scholastic Learn from Home
  Day-by-day projects to keep kids reading, thinking and growing
  https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html

- TED-Ed
  Free daily lessons, activities and challenges to support student, parents and teachers
  https://ed.ted.com/

- Duolingo
  The world's best way to learn a language
  https://www.duolingo.com/

Fun Activities

- 18 At-Home Ideas to Keep Kids Busy and Entertained During the Coronavirus Outbreak
  https://apple.news/A5MpYtgBZTfaPmUofqJ9Dg

- Video Games to Play with Your Kids That Won't Drive You Crazy

Activities to Remember Your Loved One

- The Dougy Center
  The national center for grieving children and families
  https://www.dougy.org

Behavioral Health
Mental Health, Bereavement Care, Substance Abuse, Suicide Intervention, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

- The Kellin Foundation – A Variety of Resources
  Builds resilient children, families, and adults through behavioral health services, victim advocacy, and community outreach
  http://www.kellinfoundation.org/covid-19-resources.html
• **Alamance County Crisis Care: RHA Walk-In Crisis Center** (behavioral health and/or substance abuse)
  - Walk-in between 8 am and 3 pm M-W-F
  - “Crisis Hour” between 8am and 8pm Monday - Friday
  - Payment based on a sliding scale to those living in Alamance Co., no charge if unemployed
  - 2732 Anne Elizabeth Dr.
  - Burlington NC 27215
  - 336-229-5905
  - 336-229-5906 - FAX #

• **Cardinal Innovations**
  - Includes 24 hr/7 day a week crisis and mobile crisis team
  - Only serves the following counties – Alamance, Caswell, Person, Orange and Chatham
  - 1-800-939-5911

• **Open Door Clinic**
  - For those not eligible for Medicaid or stat funding
  - 336-570-9800

• **AuthoraCare Collective and Kids Path**
  - Adult/Child Bereavement/Grief Counseling
  - 336-532-0100

• **Children’s Developmental Services Agency (CDSA)**
  - Children under 3 years
  - 336-334-5601

• **Residential Treatment Services of Alamance**
  - Detoxification & Crisis Stabilization
  - Offers recovery programs that are invaluable to those struggling to overcome alcoholism, addiction and/or mental illness.
  - 336-227-7417

• **Crisis Intervention Team**
  - If 911 is called, Alamance Co. does have law enforcement members trained to handle calls related to mental health or substance abuse.
  - Prefer that the above is used instead of CIT

• **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Also Veterans Crisis Line)**
  - 1-800-273-8255
  - Call will begin with a recording, follow prompts

• **Suicide Prevention Lifeline Web chat**
  - [https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat)
  - Texting option: text HOME to 741741 (Not a part of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, but you are connected to qualified professionals who can help)

• **Mobile Crisis Team** (by phone or home visit)
- Provided by Psychotherapeutic Services
  - 24-7, 365 days a year
  - 336-538-6990
  - 336-538-6991 - FAX #

- **Mobile Crisis Services—other Counties**
  - **Caswell Co.**
    - Provided by Psychotherapeutic Services
    - 24-7, 365 days a year
    - 336-538-6990
    - 336-538-6991 - FAX #
  - **Orange and Person Co.**
    - Freedom House
    - Offers residential recovery services for adults who are alcohol or drug addicted and those who are dually diagnosed with a mental illness
    - 1-877-967-8844
  - **Durham Co.**
    - Alliance Behavioral Healthcare
    - Serves people in Durham, Wake, Cumberland and Johnston counties
    - Offers treatment and support for mental illness, substance use disorders, and intellectual/developmental disabilities
    - 1-800-510-9132
    - Call will begin with a recording, follow prompts
Activity Links from Past Kids Path Connections Newsletters

**Children**
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation for Kids
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDKyRpW-Yuc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDKyRpW-Yuc)
- Sleep Strategies for Kids
  [https://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/sleep-strategies-kids](https://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/sleep-strategies-kids)
- Aluminum Foil Moon Sensory Craft
- Ninja Focus: To help engage your kids with healthy content while they’re home from school (Free from 4/1/2020 – 7/1/2020). Download the app on Google Play or the App Store.
- Getting Children Outside While Social Distancing for COVID-19
  [https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/Getting-Children-Outside.aspx](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/Getting-Children-Outside.aspx)
- Hand In Hand: How to make the most of special time with your child
- Breathe, Think, Do! In challenging situations, taking slow deep breaths can help children calm down and solve problems.

**Tweens and Teens**
- Do the Cha Cha Slide! Have fun, laugh, and get a little silly all while taking care of yourself!
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZv62ShoStY&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZv62ShoStY&feature=youtu.be)
- Yoga for Teens - a great twenty-minute yoga video designed for teens, available on YouTube. Physical movement and breathing can help you feel strong, while practicing taking good care of yourself.
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kgZnJqzNaU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kgZnJqzNaU)
- Relax Melodies Phone App - The Relax Melodies App can be a creative way for you to make your own sleep melody. In this app, you can play relaxing white noise sounds that may help you fall asleep. Relax melodies also has meditations and stories available to help you relax before bed or release emotions.
- Sleep Can Help Heal
  [https://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/teens-and-sleep](https://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/teens-and-sleep)
- Make a Positive Change in your Life with a Digital Planner
  [https://kidshealth.org/misc/javascript/js_apps/planners/making_a_change_module.html](https://kidshealth.org/misc/javascript/js_apps/planners/making_a_change_module.html)
- Some ideas on how to handle stress and change
- What is Mindfulness? The benefit of mindfulness and examples of how to practice it.
- [https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/what-is-mindfulness.pdf](https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/what-is-mindfulness.pdf)
- Relaxation Techniques to help you cope with emotions
- [https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/relaxation-techniques.pdf](https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/relaxation-techniques.pdf)
- Resources for Connecting with Nature
• NATGEO@HOME - https://www.nationalgeographic.com/family/at-home-education-resources?cmpid=int_org-ngp::int_mc=website::int_src-ngp::int_cmp=natgeoathomeglobal::int_add=natgeoathomeglobal
• National Aquarium - https://www.aqua.org/
• Houston Zoo - https://www.houstonzoo.org/explore/webcams/
• North Carolina Zoo - https://www.nczoo.org/virtual-visit
• Frederick Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park - https://www.meijergardens.org/virtual-visits/
• Common Sense Media: Reviews for what your kids want to watch (before they watch it) https://www.commonsensemedia.org/
• Find Peace Anywhere: Check in with how you’re feeling, and try short activities tuned to your emotions https://www.stopbreathethink.com/

Adults
• Host a Family Olympics - You may have seen the trending topics #QuarantineOlympics and #FamilyOlympics on social media recently. One of the ways you can encourage your whole family to practice good physical wellness habits is to create your own family competitions that involve kids and adults of every age! https://www.pbs.org/parents/crafts-and-experiments/host-a-family-olympics
• Getting Some Exercise with an African Dance Activity - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ewqq-3xJFdI
• Being Well: Being on Your Own Side – focuses on the importance of self-compassion https://www.rickhanson.net/well-podcast-side/
• Visit Dr. Hansen’s website for more podcasts https://www.rickhanson.net/
• Live Nature Cams: Hundreds of live nature cams: https://explore.org/livecams
• Podcast: Authentic Parenting; Parenting from the Heart
  o Parenting through Quarantine https://authenticparenting.com/podcast
• Download the UCLA MindfulApp for iOS (App Store) and Android (Google Play)
• With this easy-to-use app, you can practice mindfulness meditation anywhere, anytime with the guidance of the UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center.