



For Parents and Caregivers: Tips for Supporting Your Preschooler’s Science and Arts Learning

How does my preschool child learn about science?

Your child is a born scientist. He has a natural sense of wonder. When he is given opportunities to explore and question his environment, he is learning all about the world around him. Your young child learns best through direct, hands-on experiences.

How does my child learn about science through art?

Art is a great way to explore science. It allows your child to express her creativity. Let her decide what materials to use and how to use them. This gives her the opportunity to ask questions and experiment. Ask her questions about what she is doing to encourage critical thinking, promote experimentation and offer challenges. Display her creations when she is finished!

How can I support my child as she explores science?

Plan experiences that will allow your child to explore science through play. For example, discover motion and momentum through swinging, explore friction on the sliding board and investigate sinking and floating during water play. This will give him opportunities to observe, ask questions and describe what he is doing. Through this process, he is also learning to predict, experiment and share what he has learned.

How does my own curiosity support my child’s learning?

Explore with your child and encourage her to ask “why” questions. Allow plenty of time for exploration and talk to your child about what you are doing. Don’t offer quick answers to questions, instead, explore and find out together! Offer challenges such as, “what if we tried this,” or “what might happen if we did that?” When you share your own excitement and curiosity, you are encouraging your child to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills.

How do questions help my child learn?

Questions that require more than one or two word answers give your child opportunities to expand his thinking, build expressive language and learn new vocabulary. Questions that ask her to describe, compare or contrast support critical thinking skills. Your questions may encourage your child to also ask questions, which is an important part of the science inquiry process.



What topics should I choose for my child?

Think about what your child is interested in and explore it. Allow her to ask questions and investigate those questions to find answers. Remember, it's not about finding one "right" answer, it's about the process. You do not need to be a science or arts expert to help your child learn. Many of the topics she is interested in are things that she experiences every day—weather, water, color, shadows, insects, art, transportation and animals.

What can I do to help my child explore topics?

Take a trip to the library and check out nonfiction books about the topic, or look up information online together. Read together whenever you can. Children's literature awakens your child's imagination and provides many opportunities for learning about science and the arts.

Take a walk through your neighborhood to investigate nature, buildings or people in the community. Go to a zoo, museum or community events for planned, educational experiences.

Provide your child with age appropriate tools and objects for exploration and experimentation. Find lots of opportunities to talk.

How do science and arts activities support school readiness?

Exploring and talking about science and art concepts together will help build new vocabulary, expand oral language skills, increase comprehension, foster a love of learning and support critical thinking and problem solving skills—all of which are important for school readiness