



Professional Development
with Anna Reyner, MA

Registered Art Therapist
Licensed
Marriage & Family Therapist

TRAUMA-INFORMED ART





PROCESS NOT PRODUCT
IN THE
EARLY CHILDHOOD
CLASSROOM



1

What's so GREAT about art?



2

Art is a child's first language



3



OPEN ART engages childrens SENSES
and develops Cognitive, Social-Emotional & Multi-Sensory skills.

4

**Self directed learning with fluid, sensory
and tactile art materials**
is especially important in early childhood




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Open ended "sensory art" experiences
provide exciting physical contacts
that motivate exploration.



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Early Art experiences literally grow the brain!
How? Sensory-motor interactions with fluid art stimulates **neural activity**



 This stimulation creates the complex neuron networks that form the brain itself

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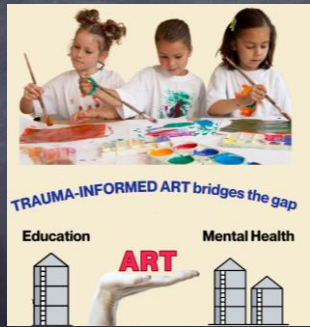
EDUCATORS ↔ THERAPISTS



EVERYONE IS TALKING ABOUT CHILDRENS MENTAL HEALTH
Where do early childhood educators fit in?

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EDUCATORS ↔ THERAPISTS



TRAUMA-INFORMED ART bridges the gap

Education **ART** Mental Health

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How can we protect CHILDREN from Stress Overload?




How can trauma informed art can increase childrens' emotional security?

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ACES - Adverse Childhood Experiences

ABUSE	NEGLECT	HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION
Physical	Physical	Worst/Disruptive
Sexual	Emotional	Wife Instability
Emotional	Emotional	Substance Use
Home		Parent



ART GIVES US A LENS TO SEE CHILDREN'S EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

To feelings of safety, security and caregiver attachments

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the GOOD NEWS about the ACES STUDY = PROTECTIVE FACTORS



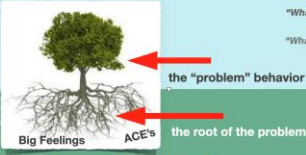


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Behavioral Challenges = Reactive Behaviors
 How do we apply trauma-informed practices to reduce reactive behaviors (instead of "punishment")



"What's wrong with you?"
 Versus
 "What happened to you?"



Art expresses the root of the problem



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Feelings / Emotional Expression
 Art is always a form of self-statement





What do YOU think?
 How safe does this child feel?

And reflects how children
 1) feel about themselves 2) feel about the world around them

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ART CHECKS ALL 3 BOXES for

Trauma-Informed Care

1. Creating a Safe Environment

2. Building Relationships and Connectedness

3. Supporting and Teaching Emotional Regulation

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Process Art

- Open Ended
- No Fixed Goal
- Your Own Way
- Free Expression Art

Art Process vs. Art Product

What you see on the surface is a drawing.
What's happening beneath is much more.

Product Art

- Structured
- Fixed Goal
- Right / Wrong Way

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Product Art

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Process art is trauma informed. Product art is not.

Which of these is NOT Trauma Informed Art?

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Teachers can use Art as a Protective Factor



Trauma-Informed Care

- Creating a Safe Environment
- Building Relationships and Connectedness
- Supporting and Teaching Emotional Regulation

✓ ✓ ✓ Checks all 3 boxes!

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Families can use Art as a Protective Factor




Trauma-Informed Care

- Creating a Safe Environment
- Building Relationships and Connectedness
- Supporting and Teaching Emotional Regulation

✓ ✓ ✓ Both these family scenes Check all 3 boxes!

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ART Helps us Express a wide range of emotions





Especially scary or confusing ones

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The engaged FLOW of Creativity is therapeutic



And helps children SELF REGULATE
And manage their own stress

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ART UNCOVERS FEELINGS

and confusion about feelings



Art lets children SHOW
adults how they feel

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BUILDS: Social Competency



BUILDS: Attachments

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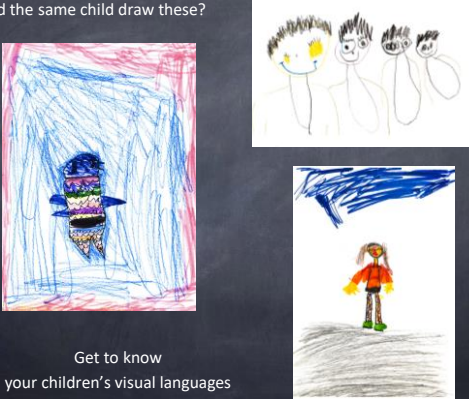
RED FLAGS

Extreme Behaviors (and in approach to art)

Big Changes in Behavior (and in approach to art)

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Did the same child draw these?



Get to know your children's visual languages


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What might you ask the child that drew these?



- How did you come up with your idea?
- What did you use to make this?
- What's your favorite part?

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Art & Inquiry Questions
The art of teaching is to ask the right questions.

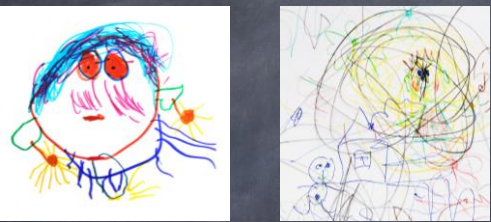
- How did you come up with your idea?
- What did you use to make this?
- What's your favorite part?
- How did you make these shapes?
- What did you learn?
- What's happening here?
- Do you feel proud of it?
- Would you like to add anything else?
- How did you like that paint?
- What else could you try?
- What materials did you use?
- What would you do differently next time?
- I wonder how you came up with that idea

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What materials did you use?
What would you do differently next time?

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How did you make these shapes?
What did you learn?
What's happening here?

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Interpreting drawings = for professionals
 HOWEVER,
 Every drawing documents a child's experience.

What to do NEXT if you see

1. Extreme Behaviors in Art Approach
2. Big Changes in Art Approach



Share story & drawings with your supervisor.


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HOW TO TALK WITH CHILDREN ABOUT ART

SERIOUS TALK about art shows children you care about who they are.

(not "just little kids" as the world so often treats them.)

1. What can you tell me about your picture?
2. What materials did you use?
3. Where did you get your idea?
4. What's your favorite part of the picture?
5. What title would you give it?
6. If you had more time, what would you add?



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Art & Early Brain Development

Brain development is "activity-dependent."



the electrical activity in every circuit - sensory, motor, emotional, cognitive - shapes the way that circuit gets put together, or the way our brains are built.

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Before a child talks they sing. Before they write they draw. As soon as they stand they dance. Art is fundamental to human expression.

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ACTION PLAN: How Can I Help?

- 1. Keep art open ended
- 2. Practice "noticing"
- 3. Teach self regulation for high energy
Scribble Wall / Double Doodling / Leaf Rubbing
- 3. Teach self regulation for low energy
Observational Drawing / Sewing Table / Watercolor painting
- 4. Choose your words - avoid empty praise like "what a pretty picture"
- 6. Read SEL Picture Books then make Art
- 7. Document: Keep Art Portfolios



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Put up a Scribble Wall (using butcher paper)



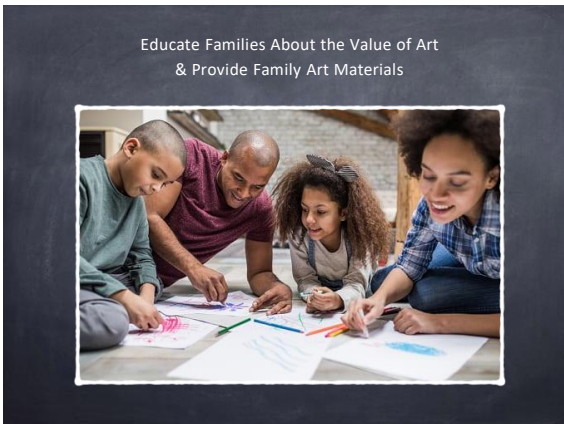
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Use ART to reinforce body awareness

Mind - Body Connection





True Arts

Where do I feel things in my body?



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Professional Development Workshops in Early Childhood Education

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TEACHER TRAINING

WELLNESS & STRESS MANAGEMENT

1. CREATE & CONNECT WITH NATURE INSPIRED ART
2. ART & MEDITATION - RELAX, CREATE & DE-STRESS
3. RENEW YOUR PASSION - SELF CARE FOR TEACHERS
4. EXAMINING ENERGY BODICES - JOYFUL MIND MEDIA
5. VISION BOARDS - SETTING GOALS & INTENTIONS

CURRICULUM COMPETENCIES

1. ART LITERACY & LANGUAGE
2. EARLY MATHEMATICS & SCIENCE
3. SOCIAL & SELF REGULATION
4. POSITIVE SOLUTIONS FOR CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS
5. MORE ART LESS CRAFT / WHY PROCESS ART MATTERS
6. MATHS IN AN UNEXPECTED WAY
7. STEM TO STEAM / ENGAGING ACTIVE LEARNERS
8. TRAUMA-INFORMED ART IN THE CLASSROOM
9. STEM & CREATIVITY IN THE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM
10. JUMPSTART FOR TODDLERS / MESSY ART & THE BRAIN
11. MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID / WHAT TEACHERS NEED TO KNOW
12. BUILDING COMMUNITY IN THE MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOM

To learn more visit CreativePlayLA.com or contact Art@AnnaReyner.com

Thank you for Participating!



TRAUMA-INFORMED ART ACTIVITIES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

HOW TO USE ART TO REPAIR TRAUMA AND HELP CHILDREN THRIVE

ANNA REYNER, RA
REGISTERED ART THERAPIST

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