

Creative Connections

Advanced Academic Services
1111 West 6th Street
Austin, Texas 78703

Fall/Winter 2004



Creativity is the focus
for this edition.

ADVANCED ACADEMIC SERVICES
1111 WEST 6TH STREET
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78703

GT Express

A NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS

Creativity—the quality of being creative and the ability to create.

Creative—marked by the ability or power to create.

Create—to bring into existence; to produce through imaginative skill; to make or bring into existence something new.

Merriam-Webster Online. (2004). <http://m-w.com/>

What is creativity? Who is creative? Crabbe and Betts (1988) propose fifteen characteristics that creative people exhibit:

Positive self-concept: a healthy awareness and acceptance of who and how you are.

Persistence: the drive to continue with pursuits despite obstacles or challenges that may surface.

Expressiveness: the ability to convey thoughts, ideas, and emotions using language as well as other modes of communication.

Independence: the ability to rely on one's self without the need to be guided by others.

Sense of humor: recognizing, understanding, and expressing humor ranging from comical to absurd.

Tolerance for ambiguity: the realization that either-or thinking and only one way of knowing or doing is limiting. Being able to consider multiple perspectives, comfort with open-ended questions and responses, and at ease with processes that lack clarity are examples of tolerance for ambiguity.

Perceptiveness: a high level of understanding, insight, and sensitivity.

Openness to ideas: the willingness to explore alternatives.

Problem solving: the ability to solve problems adeptly.

Flexibility: the ability to change or adapt.

Elaboration: the development of ideas and projects that go markedly beyond a cursory overview. Elaboration includes details as well as depth and complexity of thought.

Intelligence: capacity for learning, reasoning, and decision-making.

Intuition: the sensing of something through instinct or impression.

Originality: the capacity to invent something new.

Fluency: the ability to easily express ideas, opinions, thoughts, and beliefs.

Rather than have a perfect balance of all of the characteristics, creative children and adults tend to have and share these traits at varying levels. The interconnectivity of these characteristics express themselves in the unique ways that creativity impacts and enhances our lives.

Crabbe, A., & Betts, G. (1988). *Creating more creative people: Book II*. Laurinburg, NC: St. Andrews College.

Characteristics of Creative Children

Is your child creative? See if you can answer yes to most of the following questions:

- Does your child display a great deal of curiosity about many things? Does your child constantly ask questions about anything and everything?
- Does your child generate a large number of ideas or solutions to problems and questions? Does your child often offer unusual, unique, clever responses?
- Is your child readily express their opinion? Is your child sometimes very spirited in disagreement?
- Is your child a high risk taker? Adventurous?

- Does your child display a good deal of intellectual playfulness? Does your child often daydream? Does your child engage in imaginative play (“what if”)?
- Does your child have a keen sense of humor? Does your child see humor in situations that may not appear to be humorous to others?



- Is your child aware of their impulsiveness and irrationality? Does your child show emotional sensitivity?

- Is your child sensitive to beauty? Does your child pay attention to aesthetics?
- Is your child nonconforming? Does your child accept disorder? Is your child disinterested in details? Is your child comfortable with being different?
- Does your child criticize constructively?

Renzulli Hartman Rating Scale. Available: <http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/3summers/pdf/rhrs.pdf> (October 25, 2004)

Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.

~ Goethe

Creativity Continuum

Creativity is not a preexisting trait. Creativity is an attribute that can be taught and develops on a continuum over the lifetime of an individual. LeoNora Cohen (1989) proposed a six-stage theory of creativity:

Stage 1— learning something new

Stage 2— making connections that are novel and original when compared to peers

Stage 3— demonstrating talents in a certain field or fields

Stage 4— producing ideas and information using talents

Stage 5— creating by extending, or going beyond what already exists, the field

Stage 6— creating by revolutionizing or changing the field

Tapping into creativity provides children with opportunities to grow. As a result, creative children have the potential to make significant contributions to society as adults.

Rostan, S., & Goertz, J. (1998). Creators thinking and producing: Toward a developmental approach to the creative process. In Fishkin, A., Cramond, B., & Olszewski-Kubilius, P. (Eds.), *Investigating creativity in youth* (pp. 97-113). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton.

Department of Advanced Academic Services

Dr. Jim Granada, Director	414-9986
Antonia Casarez, Secretary	414-9986
Barbara Mayo, Project SOS Director	414-0141
Debi Torres, Gifted Specialist	414-0155
Rhonda Boyer, Gifted Specialist	414-0279
Ron Garza, Data Clerk	414-0139

We're on the Web!
<http://www.austin.isd.tenet.edu/k12/student-support/gt/index>

Practical Strategies to Support Creativity

Jane Piirto, Ph.D. provides these suggestions and others for supporting creativity in her book, *Understanding Those Who Create* (1998):

- 1. Provide a private place for creative work to be done.** Ask your child, "Where do you want to go when you want to think?" and "Have you ever built yourself a place that is just yours?" For creativity to develop, a safe place is necessary.
- 2. Provide materials.** Role-playing games, musical instruments, art supplies, sketchbooks, dramatic play, and cameras are all materials that allow creative expression.
- 3. Encourage and display your child's creative work, but avoid overly evaluating it.** Too often children's creativity is stifled because of judgments others place on their work. Have you ever heard someone say, "I can't sing," "I'm not creative," "I can't draw." Somewhere someone taught those individuals that there is a right and wrong way to be creative. This is simply just not true.
- 4. Value creative work of others.** Visit libraries and museums, listen to music, subscribe to magazines, and attend live performances with your child.
- 5. Consider your family mythology.** Complete the sentence starter, "In our family we . . ." Your answers set the tone of what is valued in your family. What is perceived as valuable underlies what children believe is expected of them. If creativity is valued,

then children are more likely to develop their creative talents.

- 6. Avoid emphasizing sex-role stereotypes.** Sex-role stereotypes create rigidity and rules, and, in turn, stifle creativity. Creative individuals tend to be more androgynous, or less defined as solely feminine or masculine.
- 7. Emphasize that talent is only a small part of creative production, and that discipline and practice are important.** Talent alone is not enough. Hard work, perseverance, motivation, repetition, and interest impact the development of creativity.
- 8. Avoid emphasizing socialization at the expense of creative expression.** Creative children often do not feel the need to conform in order to get along with others. As a result, they may seem different from their peers.

For children to realize their creative potential, it needs to be supported. These strategies are a starting point for parents.

Piirto, J. (1998). *Understanding those who create*. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Po-

"One can't," declared Alice, "believe impossible things."
"I daresay," replied the Queen, "you haven't had much practice. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as ten impossible things before breakfast."
~ Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

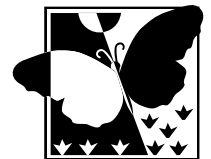
You're invited to our Spring GT PARENT FORUMS

Ways to Help Your Brainy Child

January 26, 2005
6:30—8:00 p.m.
Baker Center
3908 Avenue B

Preparing for the Future: Careers and College

April 6, 2005
6:00—7:30 p.m.
Professional Development Academy
2608 Richcreek



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Promoting Potential

Spring GT Parent Symposium

Saturday, February 19, 2005

8:45 a.m. —11:45 a.m.

Professional Development Academy

2608 Richcreek



Nurturing Creativity

The following websites are a designed to get those creative juices flowing. Enjoy!



<http://www.rhymezone.com/>
Rhyming dictionary and more

<http://www.howstuffworks.com/>
A site devoted to how stuff works

<http://thinks.com>
Fun and games for playful brains

<http://www.cut-the-knot.org/Curriculum/index.shtml>
Interactive math activities

www.wolinskyweb.net/word.htm
Word play - lots of links

<http://hirshhorn.si.edu/education/interactive.html>
Create an online sculpture

<http://magneticpoetry.com/magnet/index.html>
Magnetic poetry

http://www.repertoire-sites.com/index.php/Kids_and_Teens/Arts/
Arts for Kids and Teens Website Directory—
comprehensive categories and links

fun-with-words.com
Anagrams, palindromes, spoonerisms, pangrams, etc.

<http://www.mycoted.com/creativity/techniques/index.php>
Creativity techniques

<http://www.kporterfield.com/journal/Illuminations.html>
Visual journaling

<http://www.cartoonster.com/>
Learn to how to create animated cartoons

Creative Questioning

Ask open-ended questions. Show your child a picture, then ask questions to stimulate and create a thinking atmosphere, for example: What are the people in the picture doing? What are the people saying? What would happen if ...?

Ask children to use their senses. Young children may often have their creative talents stretched by asking them to use their senses in an unusual way. Have children close their eyes and guess what you have placed in their hands - a piece of foam rubber, a small rock, etc. Have children close their eyes and guess what they hear - use such sounds as shuffling cards, jingling coins, rubbing sandpaper, ripping paper, etc.

Ask children about changes. One way to help children to think more creatively is to ask them to change things to make them the way they would like them to be, for example: What would taste better if it were sweeter? What would be better if it were quieter? What would be happier if it were bigger? What could be more exciting if it went backwards?

Ask "What would happen if..." questions. These questions are fun and allow the children to really use their imaginations. What would happen if all the trees in the world were blue? What would happen if all the cars were gone? What would



happen if everybody wore the same clothes? What would happen if you could fly?

Ask "In how many different ways..." questions. These questions also extend a child's creative thinking. In how many different ways could a spoon be used? In how many different ways could a button be used? In how many different ways could a string be used?

Excerpt reprinted with permission from the National Network for Child Care—NNCC. (1993). Creative play helps children grow. In M. Lopes (Ed.) Care-giver news. (October, p. 3). Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Co-operative Extension.

Creative Play

Every child is born with creative potential, but this potential may be stifled if care is not taken to nurture and stimulate creativity. Creativity shows one's uniqueness. It is the individual saying: "I can be; I can do." Isn't this what we want for our children? Creativity is the ability to see things in a new and unusual light, to see problems that no one else may even realize exist, and then come up with new, unusual, and effective solutions to these problems.

CREATIVE GAMES

Object Creation. Have children create a "machine" piece by piece. Some players become parts that move and make noise, while other players operate the machine. Others can then guess what it is. Try making a lawnmower with people as wheels, body, and handle, and have another player push it. Everyone can join in the sound effects as it tackles the lawn. More objects to role play: eggbeater, record player, garbage disposal, toaster, pencil sharpener, and water fountain.

Continuing Story. Start a story and take turns adding to the story.

Creative Dramatic Play. One of the best ways children have to express

themselves is through creative dramatic play. Here they feel free to express their inner feelings. It occurs daily in the lives of young children, as they constantly imitate the people, animals, and machines in their world. It helps them understand and deal with the world. Stimulate this spontaneous kind of drama by providing simple props and encouragement.

- Animal Cracker Game - Child chooses one cracker; looks at it; then eats it. Then the child becomes that animal for a few minutes.
- Read a story and then act it out.
- Puppets

CREATIVE MOVEMENT

Pretending. A child can develop and express his or her personality in their own way - pretending to be animals, snowflakes, fairies, giants, etc.

Role-playing. Acting out family happenings, everyday activities such as a visit to the doctor, store, or bank, etc., stimulate creative thinking and is a good way to help children see the viewpoints of others, help them their own feelings, and handle emotions.

The following activities require the use of large muscles and help in the development of those muscles:

Follow the Leader. The leader child moves freely about. He or she may imitate animals, hop, skip, or whatever. The others must follow the leader and act as the leader does.

Guess What I Am? Without saying a word, a child tries to act out the movements of some object. Suggestions include an airplane landing, a rooster strutting around the barnyard, a cement truck dumping its load, a clock telling the time.



Building with Sand, Mud and Clay. Children use large muscles to build sand mounds with moats around them. Sand pies and sand forts can be built in a sandbox, on a sand table, or at the beach. Children use mud to make large structures. Clay is also used to create structures and shapes.

Excerpt reprinted with permission from the National Network for Child Care - NNCC. (1993). Creative play helps children grow. In M. Lopes (Ed.) Care-giver news. (October, p. 3). Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Co-

"If creative behavior is determined by heredity, there would be little that parents could do to increase it. There is compelling evidence that this is not true. How a young child's creative behavior is treated by parents and other important people in his [or her] life seems to make all the difference."

~ E. Paul Torrance

Advanced Academic Services
1111 West 6th Street
Austin, Texas 78703

