

March, 2017 is Youth Arts Month

Youth Art Month is a month of promoting art and art education in the United States. It is observed in March, with thousands of American schools participating, often with the involvement of local art museums, civic organizations, and performing art programs.

In recent years, school curricula in the United States have shifted heavily toward Common Core subjects of reading and math, but what about the arts? Although some may regard art education as a luxury, simple creative activities are some of the building blocks of child development. Learning to create and appreciate visual aesthetics may be more important than ever to the development of the next generation of children as they grow up.

Some of the Developmental Benefits of Art Include:

- **Motor Skills:** Many of the motions involved in making art, such as holding a paintbrush or scribbling with a crayon, are essential to the growth of fine motor skills in young children.
- **Language Development:** For very young children, making art or just talking about it provides opportunities to learn words for colors, shapes and actions.
- **Decision Making:** According to a report by Americans for the Arts, art education strengthens problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.
- **Visual Learning:** Drawing, sculpting with clay, and threading beads on a string all develop visual-spatial skills, which are more important than ever.
- **Inventiveness:** When kids are encouraged to express themselves and take risks in creating art, they develop a sense of innovation that will be important in their adult lives.
- **Improved Academic Performance:** Studies show that there is a correlation between art and other achievement. A report by Americans for the Arts states that young people who participate regularly in the arts are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement. <http://www.americansforthearts.org/>

Help to promote the arts in your children by:

- Taking your children to performances and art exhibits and start at a young age.
- Talk with your children about all kinds of art.
- Listen to a wide variety of music in the car – and listen at home, too.
- Watch arts programs, videos, or DVDs together as a family.
- Be an enthusiastic audience for your child's artistic efforts. Post their drawings on the fridge, wear the clay beads they made.
- Encourage your child to participate in arts activities at school.
- Be accepting and encouraging of your child's artistic efforts, there is no right or wrong way to draw a tiger, for young people art has no right or wrong answers.

Enjoy "Youth Art Month" and compliment a young artist you know!

If you have further questions or comments about this message or would like information on how to become involved with the Community Coalition for Healthy Youth, please email ahendrix@tompkins-co.org

Thank you in advance for forwarding this monthly message to all of your networks.

