

RESOURCES:

Here are helpful resources that can make it easy for you to have fun, literacy-rich Artistic Adventures with the children in your life:

www.rif.org

Reading Is Fundamental, Inc.

www.picturebookart.org

Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art

www.nccil.org

National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature

Teaching Art with Books Kids Love: Art Elements, Appreciation, and Design with Award-Winning Books by Darcie Clark Frohardt. Fulcrum Pub, 1999.

Stories in Art

by Helen Williams. Millbrook Press, 1994.

Arts as Meaning Makers: Integrating Literature and the Arts Throughout the Curriculum by Claudia E. Cornett. Prentice Hall, 1998.

READING IS FUNDAMENTAL, INC. prepares and motivates children to read by delivering free books and literacy resources to those children and families who need them most. RIF's guides are designed to help parents and other adults aid children in becoming lifelong readers. To support RIF's work, please visit www.rif.org and click on "How You Can Help."



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A Guide for Parents from
Reading Is Fundamental®



Artistic Adventures

HOW *Appreciating Art* CAN PROMOTE LITERACY

What is an Artistic Adventure? It's an outing devoted to appreciating art in its many forms. Whether you visit a museum, walk through a sculpture garden, or look at the architecture in your hometown, you prepare children to tap into abilities they'll need later in life. By encouraging children to analyze what they see, you help them develop their imagination, critical thinking skills, and powers of observation. You also broaden their horizons and can inspire them to create masterpieces of their own. And if that's not enough, Artistic Adventures even give you an opportunity to build children's literacy skills.



The next time you take children on an Artistic Adventure, try "reading" the works of art together. You'll help children develop reading-related skills as they learn about the artist and the people, places, and time period depicted in the artwork.

- * Talk descriptively about what the artist created.
- * Discuss the people, places, and things you see in the work of art.
- * Ask children to tell you what is happening or what is depicted in the work of art.
- * Learn about the artist and ask children to imagine what the artist was thinking when he or she created the work of art.
- * Prompt children to discuss what they like or dislike about what they've seen.
- * Ask children to talk about how the work of art makes them feel or of what it reminds them.
- * Encourage children to bring a notebook and jot down their observations.
- * Have children write a response to a particularly memorable work of art when they get home.
- * Encourage children to check out books from the library on the artist or technique in which they demonstrated the most interest.

Like any school trip or family outing, **Artistic Adventures** can engage children in a part of the world around them about which they may have known little or nothing. These experiences can inspire them to read about what they saw so they can learn more.

Go on an Artistic Adventure

While picture books can have amazing art, there is nothing like seeing great works in person. Use these suggestions to get the most out of your next museum visit.

BEFORE YOU GO:

- * Leaf through art books at your local library, and check out a few that might catch a child's eye. Let children pore over the books at home.
- * Identify a museum in your area that is appropriate for children. Call the museum's education office with any questions or concerns before you arrive.
- * Coordinate with children's holiday schedules to travel to new places and visit museums that complement what children are studying.
- * Review the museum's collection online to determine which pieces or sections may be most age-appropriate and of most interest to children.
- * Visit the museum website together. Identify must-see pieces to build excitement.

WHILE YOU'RE THERE:

- * Allow children to explore. Try not to hurry them from one piece to another.
- * Discuss background information about the artwork (e.g., time/era of the action in the piece, the artist's life, artistic technique used, etc.).
- * Make comparisons and connections between paintings and children's experiences. Encourage children to develop a personal connection to the art.
- * Compare works to one another, and help children develop an appreciation for the styles, techniques, or tools the artists used to create their work.

AFTER THE MUSEUM VISIT:

- * Use the Internet or books at your local library to learn more about artists, places and periods in history featured in the artwork, and techniques the artists used. Children can find out where the artist grew up and what he or she looked like. They can also discover whether the place in the artwork really exists, where it is, and how far it is from home.
- * Give children opportunities to work in different media. For example, they can make a sculpture by carving a bar of soap or molding a piece of clay. They can add finishing touches with paint or by gluing on small objects like paper clips, pompoms, or leaves.
- * Encourage children to write about or tell you what they saw, enjoyed, learned, or didn't like.
 - * Send children's comments to the museum staff.
 - * Help children write a thank-you letter, especially if they thought the museum was great!
- * Encourage children to make an *Artistic Adventure* travel journal and include sketches of different places or pieces of art they saw. Children who can write should use words or sentences as well as drawings to describe their experiences.

Quick Tips!

Take advantage of children's programs at local museums. These events are often free. Call the museum or visit their website to find out what's available and when.

Keep art supplies accessible and well stocked. Cover the table and floor with newspaper so children can make a worry-free mess when they create. Provide a variety of art supplies:

- * Split open paper grocery bags or cardboard boxes to provide new textures of paper for drawing.
- * Keep egg cartons and empty cardboard rolls from paper towels and toilet tissue for crafts.
- * Encourage children to use unusual paintbrushes—try applying paint with pieces of plastic bags, sponges, or even vegetables like squash or potatoes.
- * Make three-dimensional art with toothpaste, glue, chewing gum, or other substances around the house.

