

RESPECTFUL DISPLAYS OF CHILDREN'S ARTWORK

by Carol Seefeldt, *Creating Rooms of Wonder*

Thoughtfully displaying children's art products and other work is important for a number of reasons. First, displays surround children with beauty that they themselves have created.

Next, how children's first expressions, no matter how primitive, are treated will determine, in part, how children feel about themselves and how freely and fully they will be able to express themselves through a variety of media in the future. When children know their ideas and their work are valued, they are affirmed. They know they can achieve.

Displays serve to extend and expand children's project work and explorations of their world. Information in the form of photographs, pictures, or real objects added to a display reinforces children's learning and motivates them to learn still more.



Well-displayed work informs others about early childhood education. What and how young children are learning becomes clearer to parents, administrators, and other adults when they can view, handle and read about what children are doing and learning in the early childhood program.



work in the past and make plans for future work.

Even so, displays are primarily for children. Displaying children's work gives them a chance to think about their past. As they look at and handle a display, children can reflect and reminisce. They have the opportunity to talk and think about their

Framing artwork shows children you truly recognize and value their work.

Frames can be created or constructed from a variety of materials including:

- colored construction paper
- discarded paper of varying textures, colors, and materials
- pages from a discarded wallpaper book
- paper plate
- unused Styrofoam trays
- box lids
- found objects



Include still life objects in displays of artwork.

Hang things from the tops of windows or the ceiling to add other types of islands of beauty in your room.





Documentation panels and photos depict the process of children creating artwork.

Labeling children's work helps to communicate the progress children are making or what their drawing, painting, painting, invented spelling or other work means.



You can write a description of what the child's work means on the back of the work or the back of a frame. When displaying this child's work, copy his or her description and place it underneath the displayed work. Or, you might tell what the child was doing or saying at the time a piece of artwork was created.



Use the following questions to survey and evaluate the displays in your classroom:

- *How do you recognize and affirm children's work?*
- *Do children recognize that their work is being given special attention?*
- *Do they use the displays to talk about the things they've done and still want to do?*
- *Are your displays attractive to adults? (In Reggio Emilia many of the displays are arranged specifically for adults.)*
- *How do parents and other administrators treat the displays?*
- *Are the displays attractive? How often are they changed?*
- *Which displays and areas of the room are attractive to you, the children, and other adults?*
- *Which displays do you think could be enhanced, and how?*

Goals to think about when displaying children's work include:

- *presenting children's work attractively*
- *permitting children to reflect on their past experiences*
- *encouraging children to talk, discussing and reflecting on events represented on the display*
- *documenting and communicating children's work for parents, school personnel, and the community*

