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Creativity is Crucial in Problem-Solving

Creativity is more than art and music. Creativity supports mental growth by involving measurement, equality, balance, shape, spatial relationships, and problem solving. Using creativity, children gain sensory perception, verbal skills, and hand-eye coordination. Creativity provides opportunities for experimenting, imagination, freedom of expression, and learning how to cope with feelings. Promoting creative thinking can elevate children to become the adults who make a difference in our world with creative problem-solving skills.

Creating a stimulating environment by leaving time for play and fantasy can enhance creative problem solving and thought. Seeing others in different cultures will encourage respect for choices others make, and brainstorming is recommended to allow children to come up with more than one answer to a problem.

Creativity can seem irritating because creative people tend to work outside the rules. Give creative space – freedom to make mistakes and respect for multiple ideas. If a reward is not expected, there is more creativity and enjoyment.

10 Tips for Supporting Creativity

1. Don't be afraid of messes.
2. Encourage experimentation.
3. Be specific in your questions about your child's art.
4. Don't compare your art with theirs – it can be discouraging.
5. Embrace your child's art without making suggestions for changes.
6. Emphasize the process of creativity, not just the finished art project.
7. Give children the independence and control they need to create.
8. Regularly schedule long, uninterrupted periods of play.
9. Share in children's excitement about discoveries.
10. Display children's artwork and stories.

Creativity and problem-solving walk hand-in-hand throughout life. Letting children have the freedom to make mistakes and respecting their ideas will allow them to solve problems in creative ways.

Source: Marcy DeJonge, UNL Extension Harlan-Furnas Counties, County Extension Assistant

Reference: Sara Gable, University of Missouri State Extension Specialist, Human Development.

<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/20/06/understanding-creativity> Emily Boudreau, June 25, 2020.