

Art Education at Home!

A Guide for Caregivers

Ask questions!

Ask your child open-ended questions before they embark on their artmaking.

For storytime prompts, good questions are:

What was your favorite part of this story? What did you learn from the story? What did you like about the illustrations?

For general artmaking prompts: What materials do you think you might use? How will you use these materials? Where will you begin? What you are thinking about making?



Encourage exploration and play!



As your child is making, give them freedom to explore what the materials can do. Their artwork will evolve throughout the process of making. Allow your child to run with their ideas, as wild as they may seem to you! Avoid inhibiting their exploration by telling them what they must make.

Art can be messy. Build studio cleanup into the process! We often tell our young artists, “let’s respect our artmaking space as much as we respect the artwork we make!”

Ask them about their art!

When they are done with their project, ask them encouraging questions about what they made. For example, “what can you tell me about this shape you added, or the use of these colors?”

Allow them to tell you about **their** artwork without you telling them what you think the artwork might be about; this will give your child confidence in their artmaking abilities and help them to practice crafting a narrative.

Show your child’s art the respect you would pay to artwork at a museum. Yes, you might only see scribbles but to a child that is a masterpiece!



Be specific about what makes the artwork shine!



Express parts of the artwork that stand-out to you and why. For example, “I think it is really interesting the way you used blue and green in the clouds because it makes them look super fluffy!” Allow your child to elaborate on how they created those areas.

Be POSITIVE. Children at this age are beginning their artmaking journey and negative observations like, “this doesn’t look like a tree,” or “you drew the person wrong” can inhibit a child’s artistic development.

Reflect together!

For older students reflecting on the artmaking process can be a very positive practice. Some questions to consider are:

What did you learn from this project? What did you learn about how you make art?

Do you have favorite part from the making of your artwork? What about your artwork makes you proud?

If you could make it again, what would you do differently? What would you do the same?

How might you expand on this project?



HAVE FUN!



Most importantly have fun and allow your child to teach you as much as you are teaching them!

Additional tips: Asking questions and *listening* goes a long way!

Museum and art educators LOVE to ask questions! The more open-ended the better-- in other words, questions that begin with what, how, or why and allow for a variety of answers.

Great questions to ask when looking at art are: What do you notice? What's going on in this artwork? What do you see that makes you say that? What else do you see? What part of the artwork are you drawn to? What do you notice about the materials?

If you have information about why an artist made something, especially if it is in the artist's own words, share that with your child! Sometimes students are stymied by questions like, "Why did the artists make this?", "What is this about?", or "Who is the artist?". These questions assume knowledge. Let the viewer experience the art through their own unique lens and work together to create a flowing discussion about the artwork.

Great questions for making art are: What materials will you use? What are you thinking of making? How will you begin? What are you feeling inspired by? What ideas do you want to explore today?

Listen closely to your child's answers to your questions. Show that you are listening by reacting to what they are saying. Ask follow-up questions based on what they have told you. Paraphrase their answers back to them and make sure you understood them correctly.

THANK YOU!

Further resources!

Click on these links for further resources:

- To learn more about the art at Chinati: [The Chinati Foundation Website](#)
- To learn more about contemporary artists practicing today: [Art21](#)
- To learn more about current practices in art and museum education: [National Art Education Association](#)
- To learn more about current practices in museum education: [American Alliance of Museums Education and Interpretation](#)