

The Quality Connection

Issue 8



"Creativity and imagination are the beginning of problem-solving in a young child" - Fred Rogers

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Beyond the Rule

A Path to Quality Care



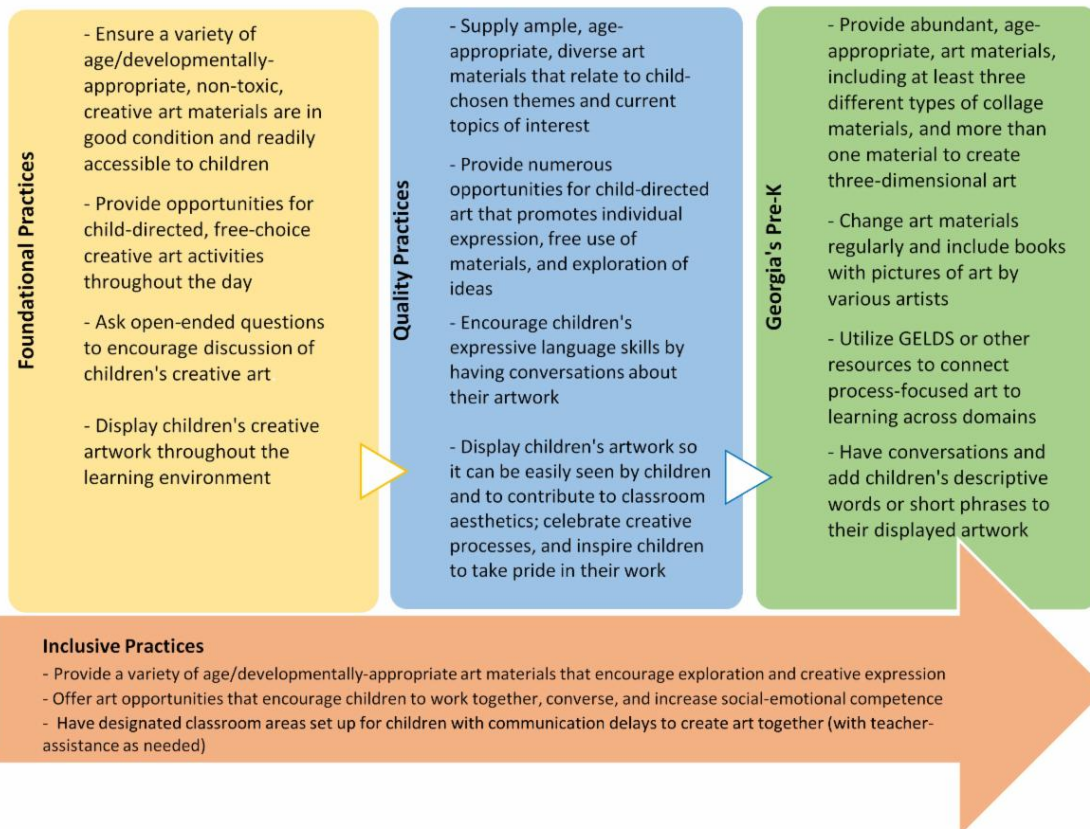
**Georgia Dept
of Early Care
and Learning**

BRIGHT FROM THE START

Each issue of *The Quality Connection* will focus on one classroom component and will identify connections between requirements and expectations of DECAL's various divisions and what impact each one has on classroom practices around the specific component. *The Quality Connection* will also illustrate how all DECAL programs are part of a quality continuum and are designed to work together towards continuous quality improvement.

This issue will focus on the importance of **arts and crafts – exploring process-focused art in early learning.**

The following chart shows the progression of foundational practices found in Child Care Licensing rules, to practices utilized in Quality Rated and preschool-specific practices found in Georgia's Pre-K. Strategies for Inclusion and Behavior Support should be embedded throughout all levels of quality practices.





Exploring process-focused art in early learning

Process-focused art allows children to freely explore ideas and diverse materials, implement their own designs, and experiment with visual representation. Children are allowed to use their imaginations, strengthen fine motor skills, and when paired together, improve communication and higher order thinking skills such as problem solving and social interaction. The focus of this art is on self-expression, rather than creating a specific product. This is beneficial as it encourages children to take different approaches to creativity, and can help children see differences among their peers, in a positive light.

Teachers can assist these skills by providing an abundance of varied art supplies, ample time and space for children to explore, asking open-ended questions to show interest and support, and encourage conversations about children's unique artwork. Theme-based art materials can also be supplied and changed intermittently to support process art choices on topics of interest.

Process-focused art vs. Product-focused art



Process-focused art:

- Is unique, original, and created entirely from children's choices and imagination
- Is not readily available online
- Has no step-by-step instructions, right or wrong way to create, or samples for children to follow
- Environment is relaxing and calming, and the experience is focused on creative expression and exploration of techniques, tools and materials



Product-focused art:

- Has a finished product in mind; all children's art looks the same
- Patterns and examples are readily available online
- Has instructions and/or samples to copy, right or wrong way to proceed, teacher might "fix mistakes"
- Environment may be frustrating; all art is created at the same time; some children may feel pressure to meet teacher expectations

Caregivers and Families Working Together:

Making Virtual Connections to process-focused art

Child Care programs can provide a variety of wonderful opportunities for children and families to engage in process-focused art, virtually. Suggestions include:

Caregivers/Teachers:

- Send creative art materials home with children and encourage families to use those items, along with items from their home to create their own art. Children can then bring them back to school and show their family project.
- Make a virtual classroom "creative art gallery" (via Google Classroom, Facebook, etc.,) with pictures of children's process-focused art. Invite families to view and have positive conversations with children at home about their work.
- Write children's words and/or quotes about their art on the artwork. This can provide a common topic of interest for family-child communication and engagement with their child's original, imagination-inspired designs.



Parents/Families:

- Arrange children's virtual learning environment to include an assortment of interesting, self-serve creative art materials.
- Give children ample time and space to use materials independently based on their own interests, and be joyful and playful in the art-making process.
- Host a virtual creative art party for children.
 - Allow children and classroom peers to share and talk about their creations.
 - Encourage participating families to nurture and support children's imagination by displaying their finished products at home.
- Read books with children that contain pictures of creative, original art by various artists.

Keep in mind:

- Emphasize and encourage children's creative efforts more than the outcome of the product.
- Some children may resist art materials or processes that involve sensory exploration such as finger-painting, play dough, etc.
- Creative art should also be facilitated "off-screen" to limit children's screen time and promote personal at-home interactions.

Resources available:

- Georgia's Pre-K at Home lesson plans: <http://www.dec.state.ga.us/PreK/WelcomeToGAPreKAtHome.aspx>
- Toddler Time at Home lesson plans: <http://www.dec.state.ga.us/InstructionalSupports/ToddlerTimeAtHome.aspx>

Click the link for: **The Value of Process Art**, which explains the value of process-art for young children and the differences between process-focused and product-focused art experiences.

Click here to listen!

How does process-focused art connect to child development and the classroom environment?

Infants	Toddlers & 2's	Preschool 3's & 4's	School Age
<p><i>Art materials should be non-toxic, and closely supervised by caregivers and used with infants 12-months and older</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers guide young infant's hands over sealed zip lock bags filled with multiple colors of paint to create various patterns and designs - Teachers sit near older infants to supervise them drawing on paper with large crayons - Teachers help infants tear and glue assorted types of paper 	<p><i>Art materials should be non-toxic, age-appropriate and allow individual expression</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers supervise while toddlers use paint, large paint brushes, and paper for individual expression - Teachers use songs, words and gestures to name colors and to teach toddlers how to use the art materials - Teachers ask open-ended questions, engage in conversations about toddler's artwork, and read books to toddlers with pictures showing creative art 	<p><i>Art materials should be diverse, and related to children's interests</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers model for children how to use more complex art materials such as 3-D materials - Teachers set up adequate space and materials (Ex. Flat cardboard pieces, paint, paint rollers, marbles, etc.) as two children create "friendship art" (Ex. Children work together and use materials to make designs) - Teachers display children's individual and peer artwork in the classroom, to celebrate children's creativity and positive social interactions 	<p><i>Art materials should be complex and allow development of various skills</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers arrange a wide assortment of art materials that students use to draw, paint, create collages and sculptures - Teachers maintain a free-choice learning environment, but also provide theme-based materials for opportunities to learn complex skills such as sewing, embroidery, etc. - Teachers discuss student's artwork and notice connections between colors, shapes and textures, and student's feelings, ideas and messages

How does process-focused art enhance the classroom environment?



Process-focused art promotes learning across all developmental domains.



Teachers assist with fine motor and language development.



Children practice sharing, and problem solving when creating art with their peers.



- Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning/Quality Rated - <http://qualityrated.org/>
- For Provider assistance/inquiries regarding children's behavior, please contact the Inclusion and Behavior Support Specialist Helpline, by phone at: 1-833-354-4357 or email inclusion@dec.al.ga.gov.
- Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) - <http://www.gelds.dec.al.ga.gov/>
- For additional information regarding process-focused art experiences, please see the following links:
- <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/feb2014/process-art-experiences>
- <https://va.gapitc.org/wpcontent/uploads/2012/11/3InfantToddlerSensoryArtExperiencesHandout.pdf>
- <https://www.continued.com/early-childhood-education/articles/baby-picasso-art-with-infants-22866>
- <https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/development/creative-development/school-age-creative-development>
- All issues of The Quality Connection can be accessed at: <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/CCS/Notifications.aspx>



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