

MAKING MARKS AND DISCOVERING FORMS

Toddler to 3-year-old may:

- * boldly investigate with basic materials such as markers, paints and crayons.
- * scribble using simple, random marks—dots, roving lines, or masses of repetitive lines that reflect the circular movements of their arms.
- * discover that her scribbles give way to circles, circles inside of circles, radiating sun-like forms, mandalas (circles divided into sections), and repetitive line formations. This is non-objective art. This art is "about" art itself—colors, shapes, lines, and such—and represent a mood or feeling, rather than a particular thing.
- * begin to recognize that the marks she makes can represent objects in the real world. She may "name" her creations, for example saying, "This is mustard," about a drawing full of round, brownish/yellow forms. But the process, not the representation, is still most important.

3- to 4-year-old may:

- * begin to experiment with symbolic art—art that represents objects. He may continue to draw circles, concentric circles, radiating lines, and other basic forms, but is increasingly concerned with using these forms to make "real things."
- * create forms that become more detailed. Yet, most fours are unable to share all their ideas at once and tend to focus on a few features at a time. For example, one day a child may add eyes and ears to a picture of a face and another time draw only the mouth and nose.
- * represent several different ideas on a page, but instead of making objects interrelate, tend to place them randomly. For example, a child may put a person in the middle of the page, perhaps a house and a large tree near the bottom, and maybe circular scribbles floating near the top.

5- to 6-year-old may:

- * have an increasing drive to create realistic art. By kindergarten, many children begin to place objects in relation to one another, although it's still common for them to leave out or exaggerate objects, sizes, and shapes.
- * still enjoy working non-objectively as well as symbolically. Many children this age take great delight in creating seas of forms and shapes, which are often full of fantasy.
- * may have gained a great deal of physical knowledge, and are able to handle tools and materials with considerable skill. Now they enjoy more demanding kinds of activities. Problem solving becomes an exciting challenge as the child works to figure out, for example, how to keep paint from running down easel paper or how to secure a heavy piece of plastic foam to a cardboard base.