



November 8, 2024

LITTLE LEARNERS

NEWS FROM GILLISPIE PTEP!

GROWING TOGETHER: COLLABORATIVE ART AND SKILL-BUILDING AT THE EASEL

Have you wondered why your child is so drawn to the big easel at PTEP? It's not just about getting messy (though that's a big part of it!). Painting, especially on a vertical surface like an easel and one as large as the one we've designed for PTEP, is a powerhouse for development, offering a whole bunch of benefits.

Think of it like a social canvas. Our PTEP easels are intentionally large to encourage our little learners to collaborate, share ideas, and create masterpieces together. Sometimes they'll work side by side, focused on their own individual masterpieces. Other times, they'll join forces, building on each other's work over days and weeks. Either way, your children are learning the fun of community collaboration.

Not only is brush painting on the easel fun it's also a great activity for building important skills:

- **Large motor skills:** When your child reaches across their body with their arms or legs to paint, it's called "crossing the midline." This is an important development motor skill that children need to perform everyday tasks. When your child draws a simple horizontal line across the page without switching hands, this is a big step in building those skills!
- **Fine motor skills:** Dipping brushes, angling them to paint vertically, moving paint from a container to the easel... these are all tasks that help strengthen those tiny muscles in their hands.
- **Pencil grip:** Painting vertically on an easel requires naturally extending the wrist. When your child is painting, they are stabilizing their hand and shoulder muscles, setting the stage for a better pencil grip.
- **Full-Body movement:** Reaching and twisting to paint is a workout for the whole body! The larger the surface to paint on, the more exercise your child is getting.

Next, we encourage you to explore without the brush!

Painting with traditional brushes is already so much fun, but imagine how much fun painting with hands, fingers, and unconventional tools like scrapers, q-tips, and sponges is for a toddler! Those tools open a whole new world of creativity and a new relationship to painting through different senses. And while we're at it, why limit yourself to just paper? Let the world be your canvas! Painting on unconventional surfaces like cardboard, rocks, or even the ground can be an absolute adventure and can turn everyday objects into artistic masterpieces.

So, the next time you see your little one immersed in their painting, remember, they're not just making a mess; they're building a strong foundation for future learning and development.



RECOMMENDED READS

Here are links to articles that discuss “the twos.” Another recurring topic among parents!

- [Growing Independence: Tips for Parents of Toddlers and Twos](#)
- [Toddlers and Twos: Parenting During the “No” Stage](#)

IDEAS FOR PARENTS OF TODDLERS

Less Messy Activities for Toddlers at Home

As you may have noticed over the last several weeks, toddlers love to get messy! Many of you have mentioned that you prefer to keep the mess at school, which is understandable. Here are some ideas for less messy activities that encourage continued growth and development of your toddler.

Water Painting

Use water instead of paint on any surface. Give your toddler a paintbrush (or other nontraditional material) to “paint” with water on construction paper, the sidewalk, wood fences, and anything in between.

Cardboard Boxes

Keep a stash of cardboard boxes from packages to use as large building blocks, to create a fort, or to make towers that your toddler can crash into.

Nature Collage

Take a walk around the neighborhood or park and allow your toddler to collect natural treasures along the way. Use glue or tape to create a collage out of the materials.

Spray Bottles

Fill a small water bottle with water and invite your toddler to water all of the plants outside.

Scrub Brush

Equip your toddler with a wet scrub brush and find items to clean outside, such as bikes, car tires, hoses, rocks, or anything within reach.



ASK US ABOUT PTEP!

Gillispie’s Parent Toddler Exploration Program (PTEP) offers fun-filled mornings where you and your little one can learn and explore together, interact with peers, and build lasting friendships. For more information please contact info@gillispie.org.

Upcoming sessions:

- **Session 2:** January 8 - February 26
- **Session 3:** March 5 - April 30

