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## Betty edwards stages of art development

The first distracted scribble is simply a pleasant kinesthetic activity record, not an attempt to describe the visual world. After six months of doodling, the marks are more regular as the kids become more engrossed. Soon they began to mention scribbles, an important milestone in development. The creation of the first conscious form occurs around the age of three years and provides a real account of the child's thought processes. The first representation effort is a person, usually with a circle for the head and two vertical lines for the legs. Then other forms develop, clearly recognizable and often quite complex. Children are constantly looking for new concepts so that symbols are constantly changing. The boy arrives at the scheme, a sure way to describe an object, although it will be modified when he needs to describe something important. This scheme represents the child's active knowledge of the subject. At this stage, there is a definite sequence in the relationship of space: everything sits at the baseline. The child found that schematic generalizations were no longer enough to express reality. The dawn of how things actually look is usually expressed in more detail for the individual part, but is far from naturalism in drawing. Space is found and depicted with overlapping objects in images and horizon lines rather than baselines. Children began to compare their work and became more critical of it. Although they are more independent than adults, they are more anxious to fit in with their peers. This stage marks the end of art as a spontaneous activity as children become increasingly critical of their images. The focus is now on the final product as they seek to create naturalistic images like adults. Light and shadows, folds, and movements are observed with mixed success, translated to paper. Space is described as three-dimensional by reducing the size of the object further. Art at this stage of life is something to do or be left alone. The development of nature will stop unless conscious decisions are made to improve drawing skills. Students are well aware of the maturity of their images and are easily discouraged. Lowenfeld's solution is to enlarge their adult art concepts to include artwork and non-representational art other than painting (architecture, interior design, handicrafts, etc.) Random scribbles begin at the age of one and a half, but quite quickly take definite shape. Circular movements are the first because of the most natural anatomy. After weeks of doodling, children make art discoveries: drawn symbols can stand for the real thing in the environment. The circular shape becomes a universal symbol for almost anything. The symbols then become more complex, children's observations of the world around them. At the age of four or five, the child begins to tell stories or solve problems with his drawings, changing the basic shape as needed to Meaning. Often once the problem is expressed, the child feels more able to overcome it. At five or six, the children develop a set of symbols to create a landscape that eventually becomes a single variation that is repeated endlessly. The blue and sun stripes at the top of the courtyard and the green lines at the bottom become symbolic representations of the sky and soil. The landscape is carefully arranged, giving the impression that removing any single shape will throw off the balance of the entire image. At nine or ten years old, children try to go into more detail, hoping to achieve greater realism, a valuable goal. Concern for where things in their images are replaced by concerns about how things look – especially tanks, dinosaurs, superheroes, etc. for boys; models, horses, landscapes, etc. for girls. The passion for realism is in full bloom. When images don't come out correctly (real-looking) they seek help to resolve the conflict between how the subject looks and previously stored information that prevents them from seeing the object as it appears. Struggle with perspectives, ramans, and similar spatial problems as they learn how to look. Early adolescence marked the end of artistic development among most children, out of frustration at getting things right. Those who manage to weather the crisis and learn the secrets of drawing will become absorbed in it. Edwards believes that the right teaching methods will help children learn to see and draw and prevent this crisis. Copyright 1985 and 1987 Susan K. Donley, All Rights Reserved Adapted from teacher inservice training materials for early childhood, arts education, and special education workshops. Source: sdonley@learningdesign.com Back to my Main Office Some time ago, my friends visited with their toddlers and after lunch we pulled out pencils and did a little drawing. My friend, a talented musician, was somewhat less confident in the visual arts and asked how to cultivate drawing skills in his son. At that point I had to admit that I didn't really know, other than just encouraging him to draw and explore. As a high school art teacher, I have little knowledge of the early stages of drawing. Later that week I started reading 'Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain' by Betty Edwards and, incidentally, she wrote about the artistic development of children. I think I'll share this for anyone who might be interested in how to cultivate drawing skills in their children. It is also interesting to note the journey we took each as we learned to draw and the stage where we stopped. Stroke Stage From age one and a half kids found making marks on paper. They learn that they can make a line out of the end of the crayon and that they can control where the line goes. The sheer joy of this can send the child on the scribbles of sprees over the wall as they master this new creative magic (I know I do!). Often the first scribble is a circular one, since it is an easy and natural movement, which is the basis for the next stage of the face. The symbol stage It doesn't take long for children to make discoveries that images can represent something in the world. A child will state that their circular markings with dots for the eyes are Mummy or Daddy or me. A child will come forward to add lines to the mouth, arms and legs, and this is a universal motif drawn by the baby. Circular shapes can be used for almost anything. With a slight variation can turn into flowers, sun, crocodiles or jellyfish. The image is whatever the child says, although there are usually some sort of characteristics included to communicate their idea. My friend's son drew a kangaroo with a long tail. Betty Edwards writes in her book that she believes 'one of the main functions of the symbolic image stage of childhood is to enhance language acquisition'. So this isn't all about drawing! At the age of three or four symbols become more complex. Children begin to understand that the body is attached to the head and begins to pull the arms and legs coming from the body rather than the head. They see more details such as buttons on clothes. I remember my brother drawing my father, drawing a thick wavy line on my father's forehead. 'What are they, April?' 'Oh, those are dad's worry lines!' Other details are completely ignored, but this is normal during this stage. A child will develop a favorite image and perfect it. They are memorized and very stable over time. The narrative stage At the age of four or five a child will use images as a way to tell stories or solve problems. A child can make adjustments to emphasize the most important part of the image, for example, drawing a large arm that swoops on their sister to represent how their sister gets angry and hits them. Landscape stage By five or six, children have developed enough symbols to create their own landscapes. Most children's landscapes come with houses, trees and sun (perhaps the iconic corner sun). Many children position their homes on the bottom edge of the paper, knowing the ground is at the bottom and the sky is at the top. This arrangement reflects this understanding. Stage complexity At the age of nine or ten children want to see realism and greater detail in their art. The whole scene is discarded and greater emphasis is placed on the favorite subject. Although it shows more complexity, these images are often less assured than the confident landscape images made of At this stage we see a split in the choice of boys and girls for the subject matter. Boys draw cars, rockets, monsters and heroes. Girls tend to draw flowers, waterfalls, and beautiful girls with complicated hairstyles. Stage Stage By ten or eleven, a child's desire for realism is at full strength. The children exclaimed that their picture wouldn't come out properly, which meant it didn't look real. This is usually where a good art teacher makes all the difference. Children need to get out of what they think they saw (symbols memorized since childhood) and learn to draw from observations. Many art teachers hope that children will become freer and more imaginative in their work at this stage – including myself until I read this. It seems that this will counter the natural development of drawing and we have to cultivate realistic drawing skills in children when they want it. What the child wants is to know about light and shadow, perspective and form. If a child cannot learn to draw realistically at this age, many will give up completely, thinking that drawing is a talent they do not have. Unfortunately, they will never advance to the adult picture. Maybe this is what happened to you. Children will naturally learn to draw if they are encouraged to do so. Give them some tools and they tend to explore the drawing stages themselves. Talking to them about their images and symbols can also be a huge boost. Of course, you can always pick up crayons and go! Until next time, Erin Erin