



10

SKILLS CHILDREN LEARN FROM THE ARTS THAT HELP THEM SUCCEED IN LIFE

"All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once they grow up."

- Pablo Picasso

10 SKILLS CHILDREN LEARN FROM THE ARTS THAT HELP THEM SUCCEED IN LIFE

Growing up in today's world presents challenges that didn't exist 20 years ago, so how are parents going to equip their children with the tools to overcome road blocks and launch them on a path to success? An education that includes the arts is essential to a child's success in developing a fulfilling life. Skills developed through participation in the arts are increasingly important in the workplace and therefore, key to a successful career.

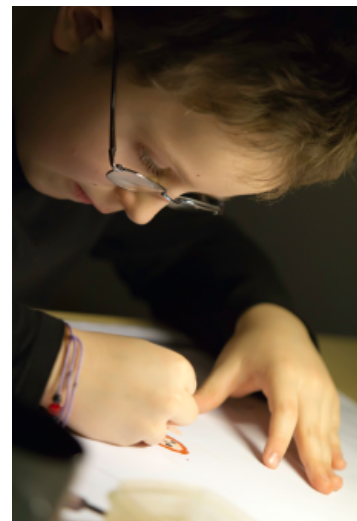
1. CREATIVITY

Now more than ever, employers are looking for creative thinkers who can move their business forward, not just academic achievers who know how to maintain the status quo. Being able to think on your feet, approach tasks from different perspectives and think 'outside of the box' will distinguish your child from others. In an arts program, your child will be asked to recite a monologue in 6 different ways, create a painting that represents a memory, or compose a new rhythm to enhance a piece of music. If children have practice thinking creatively, it will come naturally to them now and in their future career.

DEVELOPING CREATIVITY

HOW WILL YOU KNOW?

- They initiate new ideas
- They express ideas in unique ways and from diverse perspectives
- They seek to make their piece or performance different from others
- They use something in a new way or for a different purpose



*"All art requires courage."
- Anne Tucker*

2. CONFIDENCE

For many people, stage fright is one of their greatest fears. Some people get physically ill at the thought of speaking in front of their colleagues or making a presentation to clients. The skills developed through theatre, not only train you how to convincingly deliver a message, but also build the confidence you need to take command of the stage. Experience in theatre gives children practice stepping out of their comfort zone and allows them to make mistakes and learn from them in rehearsal. This process gives children the confidence to perform in front of large audiences. Imagine what children could achieve with all the confidence they need to succeed.

DEVELOPING CONFIDENCE

HOW WILL YOU KNOW?

- They volunteer opinions and ideas
- They walk with their head high and a smile on their face
- They are willing to try new things
- They are comfortable meeting new people

3. PROBLEM SOLVING

Artistic creations are born through the solving of problems. How do I turn this clay into a sculpture? How do I portray a particular emotion through dance? How will my character react in this situation? Without even realizing it kids that participate in the arts are consistently being challenged to solve problems. All this practice problem solving develops children's skills in reasoning and understanding. The arts teaches children to approach problems as exciting opportunities to challenge their skills and creativity. Art is a powerful avenue to work through problems that may occur in life. It allows children to imagine possible solutions and test them out on their peers. This is a valuable exercise that will help develop important problem solving skills necessary for success in any career.

DEVELOPING PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

HOW WILL YOU KNOW?

- They approach a problem as an exciting challenge
- They analyze a problem by asking relevant questions
- They are able to make complex choices by weighing possible solutions in light of the context
- They are open to trying multiple ideas until a solution is found



4. PERSEVERANCE

Life presents us with many challenges that require us to be dedicated, persistent, and patient, whether it be writing a 10-page history paper or working on a multi-layered presentation for the CEO of your company. Experience in the arts helps kids understand and appreciate where persistence can get you. When a child picks up a violin for the first time, she/he knows that playing Bach right away is not an option; however, when that child practices, learns the skills and techniques and doesn't give up, that Bach concerto is that much closer. In an increasingly competitive world, where people are being asked to continually develop new skills, perseverance is essential to achieving success.

DEVELOPING PERSEVERANCE

HOW WILL YOU KNOW?

- They see mistakes as opportunities to learn
- They not give up on something they want to learn
- They believe that goals are achievable even though they may present challenges
- They ask for coaching from others more skilled than they are

5. FOCUS

The ability to focus is a key skill developed through ensemble work. While participating in music, children must watch and listen to each other in order to know when and how to make a contribution to a piece of music. The same applies to experiences in dance and theatre. Keeping a balance between listening and contributing involves a great deal of concentration and focus. It requires each participant to not only think about their role, but how their role contributes to the big picture of what is being created. Recent research has shown that participation in the arts improves children's abilities to concentrate and focus in other aspects of their lives.



DEVELOPING FOCUS HOW WILL YOU KNOW?

- They make eye contact and angle their body towards someone they are listening to
- They respond with an understanding of the question
- They are able to focus on a task despite distraction
- They are observant of the world around them

*"You can't depend on your eyes when your imagination is out of focus."
- Mark Twain*

6. NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

The performing arts develops a child's awareness of how they are communicating with the world through their body language. Many people go through life unconscious of the messages they are sending with their posture and gestures. Through experiences in theatre and dance education, children learn to breakdown the mechanics of body language. They experience different ways of moving and how those movements communicate different emotions. They are then coached in performance skills to ensure they are portraying their character effectively to the audience. This is powerful, not only, on the stage, but in a job interview!

DEVELOPING NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

HOW WILL YOU KNOW?

- They walk tall without hunching over
- They stand with their arms uncrossed
- They make eye contact during interactions with people they meet
- They use their facial expressions to express positivity

7. RECEIVING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

Receiving constructive feedback about a performance or visual art piece is a regular part of any arts instruction. Visual arts, for example, has a culture of group critique, where children are encouraged to share and talk about each others' work. Children learn that feedback is part of learning and it is not something to be offended by or to be taken personally. It is something helpful. The goal is the improvement of skills and evaluation is incorporated at every step of the process. Each arts discipline has built in parameters to ensure that critique is a valuable experience and greatly contributes to the success of the final piece. This is an invaluable skill to develop, because when children become adults, they will be evaluated in their workplace and must take that feedback as constructive and not as a personal attack.



"Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand." - Albert Einstein

8. COLLABORATION

Most arts disciplines are collaborative in nature. Through the arts, children practice working together, sharing responsibility, and compromising with others to accomplish a common goal. When a child has a part to play in a music ensemble, or a theatre or dance production, they begin to understand that their contribution is necessary for the success of the group. There are no small parts, only small actors! Through these experiences children gain confidence and start to learn that their contributions have value even if they don't have the biggest role. In a work environment this skill is essential, as companies always want employees who are team players.

DEVELOPING SKILLS IN RECEIVING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

HOW WILL YOU KNOW?

- They ask for feedback about something they are doing
- They listen to the comments without interrupting
- They are honest with themselves and accept areas that need improvement
- They are not defensive and are grateful that someone has taken the time to help them develop

DEVELOPING COLLABORATION SKILLS

HOW WILL YOU KNOW?

- They are willing to make compromises to accomplish a common goal
- They value and respect the opinions of others in the group
- They take initiative to contribute
- They feel their contributions have value

9. DEDICATION

When kids get to practice following through with artistic endeavors that result in a finished product or performance, they learn to associate dedication with a feeling of accomplishment. They practice developing healthy work habits of being on time for rehearsals and performances, respecting the contributions of others, and putting effort into the success of the final piece. In the performing arts, the reward for dedication is the warm feeling of an audience's applause that comes rushing over you, making all your efforts worthwhile. The incredible achievements kids experience through the arts help them realize that extraordinary things can occur when you are dedicated and persevere through challenges. With this outlook on life, there are no goals that a child cannot accomplish.

DEVELOPING DEDICATION HOW WILL YOU KNOW?

- They practice in their free time
- They are focused while at rehearsals
- They take feedback as a chance to improve
- They trust coaches to push them beyond what they think they can achieve

*"The artist is not a different kind of person,
but every person is a different kind of artist"*
- Eric Gill

10. ACCOUNTABILITY

When children practice creating something collaboratively they get used to the idea that their actions affect other people. They learn that when they are not prepared or on-time, that other people suffer. For example, when one person does not show-up for a dance rehearsal, it affects the progress of the ensemble and the morale of everyone there. There is a gap, someone without a partner and someone who will be behind when they return. Through the arts, children also learn that it is important to admit that you made a mistake and take responsibility for it. Because mistakes are a regular part of the process of learning in the arts, children begin to see that mistakes happen. We acknowledge them, learn from them and move on. This is a crucial skill to learn early in life because it contributes to the development of integrity of character, which every employer is seeking in a staff member.

DEVELOPING ACCOUNTABILITY HOW WILL YOU KNOW?

- They are committed to being on time and prepared
- They do not want to miss a rehearsal because they are aware that this will make things difficult for others in the group
- They are willing to admit they made a mistake
- They correct mistakes quickly and use them as an opportunity to improve



The next time you are considering an extra curricular activity for your child, make the choice that will garner benefits long after the program is over. Choose an activity that will help your kids stand out, be heard and dream big. Choose the arts and give your kids the artistic edge. For that is what young people need to succeed in today's society.