CultureCase

How parents and teachers can help get young children into the visual arts

This research was conducted by **Sarah Probine** at the **Manukau Institute of Technology, New Zealand**

Summary

This paper sketches out some of the factors that shape how young children come to value and use the visual arts in their learning. The research tries to reflect the many ways in which ‘history, tradition, values, beliefs, cultural tools, and materials’ shape how young children get into the visual arts. The research focused on the interactions between children, teachers, and families at three early childhood learning settings and at six domestic homes in Auckland, New Zealand. From close observation of parents, teachers and children in school and at home, and by studying the materials they created, the author asserts that 'children have a deep capacity to explore, imagine, and develop their thinking through the visual arts'.

The children’s curiosity and creativity was treated with respect and encouragement

The research clearly outlines ‘the powerful roles that adults play in providing permissive, inspiring, and provocative environments to enable this to occur’. For this creative enquiry to take place it needs ‘environments where their work was valued and where their parents, in alignment with their teachers’ practices, demonstrated deep respect and interest in their artwork and the dialogue’ that it prompted.

It is important to generate a shared vision and set of values and between parents and teachers

The teachers in the study ‘actively engaged with children through the visual arts’ (those who displayed ‘enjoyment and expertise in the visual arts were a particularly potent influence’) and the ‘parents recognised how visual arts can enrich and support their child’s learning’. This is the sort of thing that might be discouraged by educational policy or lazy assumptions about the capabilities of young children. It just takes a few passionate and capable adults to create the right conditions for the learning and creativity of young children to flourish.

Keywords

school **observation** **parents** **Child development** **visual art** **new zealand**

Title	How young children come to value and engage in the visual arts: Examining the impact of bi-directional interactions on children as imaginative visual researchers
Author(s)	Probine, S.
Publication date	2021
Source	Early Childhood Education Journal
Link	**https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-021-01204-2**
Author email	**Sarah.Probine@manukau.ac.nz**

By **Culture.Case** | | **Educational impacts of arts and culture** |

King's Culture
© Copyright 2026
Designed, developed and maintained by **King's Digital Lab**
Originally built by **weheartdigital Ltd**
Accessibility Statement