UNIT 26  ART FOR CHILDREN

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26.1 INTRODUCTION

As a caregiver or a preschool worker, you would want to help children grow into happy and confident persons who are eager to know about the world and to communicate with other people. The various play activities described in the different Units so far, have been planned with this in mind. The focus in this Unit is on planning artistic activities for children. Through appropriate selection and organization of art and related activities, children can be helped to develop their potential, abilities and interests. Illustrations of children's drawings and other examples of art work are printed in the centre pages of the Block.

Objectives
After studying this Unit, you should be able to
• understand the significance of providing art activities in the curriculum for children's centre
• appreciate children's art
• identify appropriate art activities for preschool children
• plan and organize art activities for a group of preschool children
• identify materials and tools needed for these activities
• trace the developmental stages in art activities

26.2 ART—ITS MEANING FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

When children are given materials like paints, brushes and paper, they get a chance to do something original. They enjoy making drawings and paintings and expressing themselves. Some teachers may think that these activities are a means of keeping children busy and out of trouble. This perspective is not correct. Art activities must be planned so that they help children develop rather than merely keeping them engaged.
Providing a variety of art activities creates opportunity for the all round development of children. Thoughts and feelings, which young children cannot express fully because of their limited vocabulary or fear of disapproval, are brought out in the colours of the painting, the moulding of clay, the stamping of feet, and the like. A feeling, which a child does not understand, can be expressed through a painting. You may have observed a child colouring so vigorously with crayon that the crayon breaks or the paper crumbles. Perhaps the vigorous movement serves as a means of expressing some overwhelming emotion which the child could not do in words.

Cognitive concepts are learned through art activities. While painting children get to know the names of colours. A child who dips a brush in yellow paint and then in blue paint, learns that by mixing yellow and blue one gets green. Excited about this discovery, she may try mixing other colours. While playing with clay, she comes to know that she can make things only with wet clay and that clay toys are breakable when dry.

Motor skill development is an important outcome of experience with art materials. While using crayons, brushes, chalks and scissors, children train the small muscles of the hand and the eyes.

In most of these activities, you will find children talking to each other and sharing the thrill of discovery. Children also learn to share materials and take turns to use them. Such an interaction aids social and language development.

Children need no persuasion for art work. When you lay out the material for art activities, children will get attracted and want to try them out. Those who hesitate at first will join when they see others doing something. Later on you will find that children get so engrossed, that they may forget the presence of others.

26.2.1 Appreciating Children’s Art

Adults are often critical when children’s drawings do not look like the real thing. Teachers and parents may not like the drawings. They may say: “A tree is never pink” or “This does not look like your sister. Why can’t you draw something which looks pretty?”

For the children, however, what is more important is choosing the colour, enjoying the brush strokes and giving shape to their ideas. You will see that their drawings are not realistic, but an expression of how they see an object or feel about an event. They may draw the same thing differently the next time. Looking at one thing in many ways and giving a variety of meanings to the same thing is a necessary step for the development of concepts.

A child’s creation may not seem complete to an adult. The activity may end as a few streaks on paper or a rolled out ball of clay. The child may not be willing to refine or complete it in the way in which the adult finds appropriate. You must appreciate what the children make. The child feels that her work is appreciated if you ask questions about it, display it with her name on it or give it to her to take home.

When you appreciate the work of art in this way, you are not evaluating it. How like the real life the picture is or how pretty it is, is not important. What one should encourage is the process of creation and the child’s self-expression. When you look at a child’s drawing which you cannot identify, you might ask the child what it is. Children enjoy talking about what they have made. Talking about their art gives them another opportunity for self expression. However, they often make drawings or paintings which are not of objects, but only of their feelings. It is not necessary to ask the child to talk about the art work every time.

When you give something new to the child, you will find that she examines it and tries to use it in more ways than one. This is true for art materials as well. Allow children freedom in selection of media, techniques and expression. The tools and materials of art fascinate children. Sometimes a child may want to know more about
the tool, say a paint brush, rather than start painting. She may move it on paper, trying all kinds of movements or dip it in paint and then sprinkle the paint. Getting to know the tools freely, gives rise to new and unique uses.

As the children get involved in what they are doing, they do not like to be disturbed. Your intention to help may become an interference in their activity. Give them the freedom to create and use the materials as they like. Instructions like: “Hold the brush like this” or “This is not the way to roll clay”, hinders the process of creation.

Do not ask the child to copy something. If you do it, the whole purpose of allowing for creative expression is lost. Let the child make what she wants, in the way she wants to make it.

In this context it would be interesting to quote a preschool teacher. This teacher had put up a statement on the wall of the children’s room which said: “Let children be free to choose.” What do you have to comment about this statement?

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26.3 DRAWING

Every child’s self-expression, whether in art, music or dance, is based on developmental stages. This expression follows steps which are related to the level of growth and development achieved in other areas of development.

You have been introduced to the early stages in the development of drawing in Block 3. Do you remember reading about scribbing which emerges around 1½ years of age?

In the beginning, the child makes straight up and down lines vigorously. She holds the pencil or crayon so tightly that after a while, the tight grip is loosened due to fatigue. At this stage, children require large sheets of paper and floor space, as they make sweeping arm movements. This scribbling stage continues till about 2 or 2½ years of age. In the next stage of controlled scribbling, the lines become semi-circular. This implies greater control over the movement of the wrist. Now, curves, loops and intricate patterns begin to appear. The lines now do not always go out of the paper. The naming of what has been drawn is the next stage which appears after three years of age. One of the first representations is a closed form that denotes a human or animal head. This may be given a name by the child. The child begins to see similarities between her creation and real objects and events. However, you will still have difficulty in recognizing these forms.

The child, after four years of age, may make her drawings look more real. Most major features are included but some are emphasized while others are left out. You can see in the drawing of a man, a large head with many details and a body represented only by a line or two. Gradually, around nine years of age, the child develops more skill and she is able to draw body parts and other details in realistic proportions.
Play Activities for Preschoolers - 2

26.4 PAINTING

Painting as an activity provides greater opportunity for experimenting than drawing. The manner in which the flat broad brush is placed on the paper and pulled across, the variation in colour, watching the paint drip from the brush and excess paint running down the vertical paper—all these situations are available for exploring.

A painting session requires prior preparation by the teacher. You have to mix the paints and keep them ready, organize the work area in terms of providing sufficient space to each child and tie an apron for each child, if it is available. Later on, cleaning the brushes and the work area will take up some time. Painting can become enjoyable for children and not a cause for worry for teachers, if the latter have the creative process in mind and are not rigid about order and cleanliness.

26.4.1 Some Variations in Painting

Besides painting with a brush, you can introduce children to spray painting, sand painting, thread painting, blow painting, hand and finger painting, marbling, leaf and flower painting and floor painting.

In spray painting colour is sprayed by dipping an old tooth brush in paint and scraping in on the surface to be painted. The entire surface can thus be coloured. If you place objects or cutouts on paper before spraying, you get a pattern similar to their shape, after these are lifted off the paper. You can do multicolour spray painting by using several colours, one at a time.

To sand paint a surface, apply glue or any adhesive over an area. Then cover it with sand. Like spray painting, patterns can be made by covering the paper with a cutout, applying glue to the remaining area and then covering it with sand. If you want to colour the sand before painting, then mix one part of colour powder to four parts of sand in a bowl and leave it to dry. Use this to paint.

For thread painting, thoroughly soak a thick-cotton thread or twine in paint. Allow the extra paint to drip off. Now place the thread on a sheet of paper to form a pattern. Both the ends of the thread should protrude out of the paper together. Make sure that the sheet is placed on a flat hard surface. Cover the sheet with the thread, with another sheet. Press down the top sheet firmly with one hand. With the other, hold the two ends of the thread together and pull the thread away. In case you pull only one end, a different pattern will result. Now if you dip a second thread in another colour, and repeat the process on the same sheet, the pattern will become more complex and multi coloured. During spray painting and thread painting, a three year old will need help initially.

Marbling requires a wide mouthed container like a tub or a bucket filled with water. Mix a little kerosene in the paint and then sprinkle this on the water in the tub or the bucket. The paint, mixed with kerosene, will float on water. Gently place a sheet of paper, smaller than the water surface and let it touch the water. Lift it, dragging the paper over the water surface. You will see a streaky pattern on the sheet. To dry the painting, clip it on a string using pins. This activity requires close supervision, lest the child put the colour in her mouth or eyes. Several colours may be used for a painting.

In each of these activities, it is best to tell the child at each step what is to be done. You cannot give the instructions for the complete activity at one time, as children will not be able to remember a long string of instructions.

Show children how to blow paint across a sheet of paper. Drop paint on a sheet using a paint brush and blow at the paint through a straw or a tube. The paint will spread out in thin streams in different directions on the paper, forming interesting patterns. The children can paint on used papers and newspapers too. There is no need for fresh paper.
For **hand painting** spoon out home made paste of flour (made by mixing flour in water and cooking it until thick) on a sheet. Add colour powder. Encourage the child to mix the two together with her hand. Then moving the palm in different ways, the child can create a variety of patterns. Dry the sheet by either hanging it or placing it on a table. This activity provides tactile stimulation. You must ensure that hands are washed clean at the end of the activity.

Another form of painting where no colour powder or paint is used is **leaf and flower painting**. Crush leaves and petals of flowers between fingers and then rub it on paper. You will find that the juice brings colours to the paper. This can be used for painting surfaces.

Children can **create patterns on the floor**, both with liquid paint and dry powder. Dry powder colours of 'holi', turmeric powder, coloured sawdust and sand can be used. Apart from liquid paint, rice powder and 'geru' can be used for variation.

It would be interesting to try out some of these activities with children. Note down children's response to the activity and your comments about it in the space below.

Perhaps you are aware of some other variations in painting. You can try these out as well. It would be useful to have a discussion regarding this with other learners in the Study Centre.

### 26.5 PRINTING

Yes, the preschooler can also do block printing! There is a rich tradition of block printing in our country. However, the blocks we are asking you to make for preschoolers are not so intricate. These can be easily made at a low cost.

To make a block, cut horizontal sections of vegetables such as potatoes, onions, ladyfinger and lotus stem. On the cross section of potato, you can carve a pattern with a knife. The cross section of many vegetables like ladyfinger and lotus stem have their own patterns. Take a bowl of paint and keep a layer of cloth or a thin piece of sponge in it. Touch the block on the sponge or layer of cloth so that only a limited amount of paint adheres to the block. Print on paper, floor, cloth and on palms too! Leaves too can be used as blocks. Cover with paint that surface of the leaf where the veins are prominent. Place it on paper and press it down to get a print. Can you think of some other vegetables or objects that can be used as blocks for printing?
Each finger can also be used to dab paint. This activity gives an opportunity for seriation as each finger tip is of a different size. Placing one finger at a time while the others are held back, also helps develop finger control.

Bits of cotton, wool, crumpled paper and cloth can be used for block printing. Thread dipped in paint and wrapped diagonally on the surface of a pencil is another easy way to make a block. Roll this on paper to get a design. You can create a new pattern by wrapping a second thread dipped in a different colour in the opposite direction on the pencil and rolling it on the earlier pattern or on another paper.

### 26.6 MATERIALS FOR DRAWING, PAINTING AND PRINTING

#### 26.6.1 The Tools

For a child under four years of age, chalk and crayons are more appropriate. They are easily available in the market. You can give pencils to children whose fine motor coordination is more developed, as pencils are thinner and require a good hold. Felt pens are also available. But these are expensive and have a tendency to dry up soon.

Chalk and crayons can be used in many different ways. You can wet the chalk before use. Children can work with chalk on the floor. It can be wiped easily by the children. This forms a new activity for them. Four and five year old children, who have a better grip, can also use charcoal and pieces of broken brick for working on floors.

For painting, long handled brushes are easy to use. Brushes need not always be bought from a shop. They can be made by wrapping a swab of cotton, cloth or a layer of sponge on one end of a stick.

#### 26.6.2 Surfaces

Old newspapers, brown paper, used envelopes, used paper, used computer sheets and notebooks can be collected for painting and drawing. You can involve the parents as well in collecting these. Painting can also be done on the floor and walls. These can be cleaned by mopping or plastering with a solution of mud.

Whether working on paper, floors or walls, ensure that children have enough space to work so that they do not push each other. If the children are unable to move freely, it is likely to disrupt their activity, prevent sharing materials as well as hinder social interaction. Adequate workspace makes it easy for the teacher to supervise and, later on, wind up the activity.

When using a table, cover it with newspaper to prevent it from getting dirty.

#### 26.6.3 Paints

Poster colours are easily available and ready for use but they are expensive. Water colours are available in powder form, which if bought in bulk, can be quite cheap. Colours used in cooking are also useful for painting: they are available at stores which sell foodstuff. Some flowers, boiled in water, provide good colour. Broken pieces of crayons can also be boiled for colour but it is often not usable for painting. Glue or gum added to paint helps to thicken it. ‘Geru’ and rice paste can also be used for painting.

Paints should be prepared in adequate quantity and provided in small containers for use, so as to prevent a mess or wastage. For easel painting, small tumblers are ideal as they can be placed in the place intended for paints, at the base of the easel. Besides the paints handed out to every child or group of children, some more should be kept ready so as to save time and confusion if some group needs extra paints.
The caregiver should have a safe and easily accessible place for storage of paints. At the end of the day or at the end of each activity, get the children to collect left-over paints and put them away for the next time. Washing of empty containers and brushes and all other materials used will ensure that they are ready for the next time. Every child must assist in winding-up. In hot, dry weather, left-over paints tend to dry up. It requires extra time to dissolve the dried up portion. Paint is best stored in jars or bottles with wide mouths. It is necessary that soiled floors be mopped immediately and all soiled surfaces be cleaned with cloth or a sponge which must be washed.

A large plastic apron or a set of old clothes, cut down to size, fastened at the back protects children’s clothing. This precaution is necessary when using paint, glue, clay or water.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1) A parent, whose three-and-a-half year old child is in the preschool, complains to the teacher who is in charge of the child: “My child paints a lot, but he does not make anything. The paper is full of lines and circles. He does not make any figure or object. When I give him something to copy, he ignores it.”

If you were the teacher, how would you respond?

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2) What are the stages in the development of drawing?

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3) Imagine that you are a preschool worker, in charge of 15 children. You had organized a painting activity and had provided paper and water colours to children. However, you find that you have a limited amount of paper and water colours. You do not have colour powder to make water colours. Some children do not get paper, while some do not get the colour. All the children now want to do painting. What would you do in such a situation?

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Clay gives an opportunity to create in three dimensions i.e., objects made of clay have length, breadth and height.

When you give a three year old clay, plasticine or dough for the first time, the child will spend her time exploring the lump. She will pull, throw, drop, pinch and roll it in many ways. Handling the lump of clay is a sensory experience which will further develop the ability to learn by feeling. It will also improve fine motor coordination.

When the child becomes familiar with clay, she starts using it to represent objects. She begins by making small balls or coils. Naming of these objects comes later. You will see recognizable forms in the models of four year olds. They start putting together coils and balls to make patterns. You may find that the child has taken a ball and made holes to denote eyes, nose and mouth.

Other things can be used in combination with clay to make the activity more interesting. You can give children a stick to put together the balls that they have made. Make a hole in the centre of each of the balls and pass the stick through it. Later on you can remove the stick and string these ‘beads’ to make a ‘necklace’. Leaves, pulses, rice and twigs can be used to decorate and add on to the clay figure. For example, to make eyes stick pulse or rice on the clay figure.

Preparing Clay for Work

Clay ready for use is available with the local potter. It is prepared by crushing the mud and keeping it submerged in water for a few days. Later the water is drained; the major portion will by then have been absorbed by clay. Then the clay is pounded well with the feet or a flat-based pounder. It is then ready for use. The consistency should be such that it can be twisted or broken off. Store the clay in a container, completely covered with a damp gunny bag. In cold weather, clay will last longer. Dough made from wheat flour and colour is also good for making models. Add salt to this dough to preserve it. Plasticine which can also be used for making models, is not expensive if purchased in bulk. The dough and the plasticine require smoothening over with oil so that the texture is retained. Keep them tightly wrapped in polythene when not in use.

TEARING AND PASTING

Provide the children with pictures from old magazines and newspapers. Ask the child to tear the pictures from them. Have some home made glue and sheets of paper ready on which the children will paste the pictures they have torn off. You may have to demonstrate how to stick the pictures on the paper of the first time. Children can also use their earlier drawings for this. Initially the children may cover the entire surface with pictures. Later the children can draw some figure on the paper and then cover this by sticking pictures. When children are able to paste the pictures, ask them to do the same activity using small bits of paper. The children will first have to tear off bits of paper. Applying glue to small bits of paper gives practice in fine motor coordination. This activity is relevant for older preschoolers.

Children can make three dimensional objects with paper. Tear bits of paper and wet them. Apply a layer of these pieces on a bowl. Then paste 7-8 layers of these pieces using glue. Leave it to dry for a few days. When dry remove the bowl. It is easy to remove the bowl as the first layer is stuck only with water.
26.9 PAPER FOLDING

The older preschoolers may like to make objects by folding paper in various ways.

You can show children how to make a fan, a boat or a bag from paper. However, before the children can do this, they will need opportunities to fold paper. You will find that initially the children cannot overlap one fold over the other completely. You will need to sit next to the child and show how, while giving verbal instructions. The child will observe what you are doing and may need help. Later, concepts of half, quarter, square and triangle can be introduced through paper folding.

Objects made from paper can be hung from strings and used as streamers for decoration, as well as teaching aids.

26.10 PAPER CUTTING

Paper cutting is an activity which requires fine motor control. Always use round tipped scissors when introducing this activity to children. Three year olds cannot cut using the scissors but, in the process of experimenting, they may be able to coordinate the movement of the blades and manage to cut some paper. The cut will be jagged. Only after considerable control of the finger muscles has been achieved can children cut paper well. Then they will be able to cut what they want to and also to follow instructions.

What material can you provide for cutting? Initially, firm but not very thick paper is suitable. At this stage, the focus is on cutting, rather than on cutting something particular, like an outline of a figure. The size of the paper should be such that it can be conveniently held by the other hand.

Around the age of four years, children can cut out pictures somewhat roughly. Now you can give them thinner and smaller pieces of paper and pointed scissors, as the child by now has attained control over the tool. Between five and six years of age, they can cut fairly intricate details of a picture, like the ears of a rabbit, the leaves of a plant or the outline of a hand. These cutouts can be used in collage work. The children will find cutting more enjoyable when they can use cutouts to create something.

Cutting can be used in combination with paper folding. The following activity through which one can make a chain of dolls holding hands, is interesting for children. Cut a strip of paper about 30 cms long and 10 cms wide. Fold it in half as shown below. Then fold it into half again.

![Diagram of paper folding and cutting process]
Now draw the doll as in the following drawing:

[Diagram of a doll]

Hold the folds together and cut the doll. Do not cut where the doll's hands touch the edges. Open the folded paper and you have four dolls in a row, holding hands!

26.11 COLLAGE

Collage is a kind of a design which is made by pasting together a variety of materials on a surface to depict something. To make a collage, collect any material that will stick with adhesive. Used bottle tops, straws, string, thread, sand, sawdust, wrappers, cloth, small cartons, pencil shavings, seeds—the list is endless. For light materials like wrappers, thin cloth and small cartons, home made glue can be used. When objects like beads, bottle tops, buttons are used, commercially available adhesive or gum is needed. These may be pasted on a sheet of paper or a large piece of cloth or a gunny bag.

Working together on a collage is great fun. Two to three children can work on one paper or cloth base. Before beginning a collage, discuss the theme with the children. Encourage each child to give suggestions. Help children to decide who is going to do what. Suppose the children want to depict their visit to the zoo. Some children can be involved in making animals, others in making their homes; some can create the vegetation while others can draw the visitors and so on. You may divide the children into five or six groups depending on the total number of children in the class. Three to four children can work together on one paper base to put together what they have thought.

26.12 MAKING PICTURE BOOKS

To introduce children to books, help them 'see' that pictures convey a meaning, that symbols are used to communicate, that books are a source of information. Every time
Spray Painting

Leaf and Flower Painting

Parvinder, 3½ years
Saurabh
3½ years

Thread
Painting

Hand
Painting

Dhanraj
4 years
Blow Painting

Sanyogita
3½ years
This and the matching are the first two in the series made by Mukesh. He is depicting a story as created by him and a group of children. The group decided to make a story about a monkey and his friend. Hamnu, the monkey, they decided, had a black face and a black tail, and he lived on a tree. This has been depicted by Mukesh in this drawing. The first figure shows the monkey and the second figure shows the same monkey on a tree.
Mukesh
4 years

This drawing shows Ramu and his house, and the monkey who has come to visit him. This series of drawings when put together would make the child's picture book.
Depiction of the human figure by three children of varying ages. The developmental stages in depiction are clearly visible.
Mukesh 4 years

A fine example of tearing and pasting. Mukesh first decided what he wanted to depict. He then drew the figure of a man on the paper and searched for relevant parts of the body in old magazines. Each part in the figure above—the head, the arms, the legs and the trunk—has been torn off from different pictures from magazines and pasted together here.
Sunita
5 years
you want to introduce a concept, you need not pay a visit to the bookshop or to the library! Make a book to convey what you want; even the child can make a book. The thrill of making one's "very own book" is tremendous.

Cut out a few relevant pictures, draw some, get some drawn by the child and cut out by her or an older child. Wherever possible, get the child to colour the pictures. Use these pictures to develop stories with children. They will enjoy making stories about the pictures which they have made or cut. Stick the pictures on different pages in a sequence to tell a story. Your story book is ready!

The first book of even four pages for your three year old is adequate; as many as 16 pages for a six year old are more than enough. The effort involved in planning and conducting the activity may be considerable. However, the number of pages are not important. What makes the activity interesting for the child is creating the book.

Captions varying from one word per page to 2-3 lines in bold, neat writing can accompany each page of the book. The four to five year old will want you to read what has been written. She may point to letters of the alphabet that she recognizes. This is the beginning of reading. She is aware that words (symbols) carry meaning and that one can use symbols to communicate. Give her an opportunity and she will be seen 'reading' by herself—following the line by a finger or merely by the eyes, simultaneously 'reading' it aloud. Observe her carefully—she will have started making marks on paper or books to denote writing. These notings tend to resemble shorthand script.

If there is a preschool child in your family, it would be enjoyable for her if you involve her in making such picture books.

### 26.13 MAKING TOYS

Toys not only bring joy into a child's life but are helpful for the child's development. It is not always possible to go out and buy them—besides the high cost, if you are on the look out for a toy based on a particular principle or for providing a specific experience, you may not be able to locate it. Since a child tires of a toy very soon, you would like to replace it with another one. You and the children can make your very own toys as and when you need them—the child will have the satisfaction of making something and it will not upset you when it falls apart.

Some very simple toys can be made with very little effort. Take a thick sheet of paper—old calendar or chart, about 15 to 20 cms long and about 10 cms wide. Roll it lengthwise into a tubular shape with 2 cms diameter. Stick it down with glue or staple at the two ends of the outer flap. Your child has a 'telescope'! After she has looked through it, take a 5 cms square piece of coloured transparent paper and paste it over one of the open ends. She will spend hours observing the change in the colour of the things around her. This improvised telescope is adequate as a toy for a three year old. For variety, remove the transparent piece of paper you have stuck and replace it with a different colour.

Movement enhances the appeal of a toy. Make a toy which moves in the following way. Take a few empty cartons. Punch one small hole in the centre of each of its breadth side, at least 4 cm above the base. Punch holes in 5 to 6 boxes exactly the same distance from the base. Connect the boxes with a thick string or rubber strip. Secure the string by tying a knot at both its ends. Tie a string about 1½ metres long to the top surface of one of the boxes. The child has her own 'train'! A 2½ to 3 year old is satisfied just pulling the coaches along. The four year old would like to paint the compartments or to paint on the free surfaces of each box. She can also be encouraged to use the different compartments for sorting, classifying and storing knickknacks—this activity can be developed into a game. Older children would like to give their train a more realistic look by attaching wheels, cutting out doors and windows with a knife or scissors and by placing clay models of humans and luggage in them.
The following toys based on science concepts are good fun as well. Take an iron sheet which is about 20 cms square, and cover the edges with strips of cloth or paper, so that children do not hurt themselves. Stick a magnet at the base of the iron sheet using cello tape. Ask the child to collect an assortment of small items and pass them over the iron sheet, just touching it, one at a time and observe what happens to the items. In this way, magnetism is introduced.

Concepts of weight can also be conveyed through play. Take two identical lids of jars or tins. Pierce 2 to 4 holes equidistant from each other in each of the two lids. Take as many lengths of thread as the number of holes you have pierced. All threads should be of equal length. The threads should be 7.5 cms to 15 cms long, depending on the size and weight of the lids. Tie one end of each thread at the holes. Take a bamboo stick or rod on measuring scale (of 15 cms to 30 cms size). Now tie all the loose ends of the threads of one lid together at one end of the stick or rod and, similarly, the threads of the second lid at the other end. Cut away the extra bit or wrap it on the stick. The toy 'balance' is ready which can be used to introduce the concepts of equal, heavier and lighter. Ask children to collect different objects, place them on the pan and see what happens.

You can facilitate the process of enquiry and generalization by providing objects of equal size and varying weights. Even balancing empty pans is quite an interesting activity.

This is only an introduction to the possibilities. There are innumerable materials that you can use to make such simple toys for children. Can you think of some other toys that you can make?

26.14 CAREGIVER'S ROLE

Level or extent of interest, enthusiasm and motivation on the part of the caregiver determines the enjoyment and learning that children derive from any activity.

Creating an Atmosphere

A clean and pleasant setting is helpful for developing habits of cleanliness, tidiness and above all, aesthetics. Every child needs to be encouraged to appreciate and enjoy beauty. This does not imply fancy decorations. Simple yet attractive, colourful things may be used to enhance the positive or pleasant features of the surroundings. It is not necessary to buy or make decorations which take up a lot of time and effort. Children's work displayed on walls, display shelves or window sills makes a warm, friendly and welcoming atmosphere, where children look forward to spending their time. When children stop looking, examining or talking about the things around them, a change in the display should be made. It is, however, not advisable to change everything at the same time. A complete change may make everything unfamiliar. Sometimes merely altering or exchanging positions of a display or objects catches children's eye.

The time you save by not getting involved in making decorations can be spent with children. A pleasant, relaxed atmosphere within a school or home helps the child relax and get involved in the activity. Be free to welcome and talk to children, particularly when they have just come in or have completed one activity. The children will have a lot to say about their recent experiences. They feel happy talking about them. It is, therefore, necessary that preparations be completed beforehand.
Of the several goals of organizing art activities for the young child, the most important is providing them fun. The children must enjoy what they are doing. Almost all art activities are meaningful for preschoolers but wrong selection of materials and a rigid organization can take the fun away. Age, previous exposure, developmental level and interests are some aspects to be kept in mind while organizing any activity.

Art activities include a process that is both educative and enjoyable and a product that is aesthetic and useful. That is why art activities must be part of the regular curriculum.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1) You have the following materials available with you
   - old newspapers and magazines
   - home made glue
   - colour powder
   - an old saree.

What art activities can you plan for children using these materials? Also state how will you use the above mentioned materials for these art activities. You should be able to list at least five art activities that can be carried out using these materials.

26.15 SUMMING UP

This Unit has suggested ways by which you can plan and organize art activities for children. Besides giving enjoyment to children, art activities are also educative. They give a chance to children to express their thoughts, ideas and feelings.

Children's art work is not likely to be a realistic depiction. But do not be critical of children's creations because of this. For the children it is the process of making something that is satisfying. They will like to experiment with the paints or colours or the brushes you have provided.

Drawing and painting are activities you will find in any centre for children. You can make these activities interesting by showing variations to children. Show children how to do blow painting, sand painting, thread painting, spray painting, marbling, hand painting and leaf and flower painting. Children can draw and paint on newspaper, chart papers, walls, floors and window panes using chalks, crayons, colour powder, paints, felt pens, geru and rice paste. This provides variety.

Children enjoy working with clay. Make available an assortment of small pebbles, twigs, rice or pulse grains which children can use to enhance the clay model.
Printing, tearing and pasting, paper cutting, paper folding, making picture books and toys are other art activities you can plan for children.

You do not have to buy expensive material for these activities. There are numerous suggestions in the Unit about how one can use material easily available at home for these activities.

Art activities require prior preparation on the part of the teacher and some amount of cleaning up at the end. You must not be too rigid about maintaining order and cleanliness as this can take away from children's enjoyment. Create a relaxed and a pleasant atmosphere.

26.16 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1) Your response should include the following aspects

   - the important thing is that the child should enjoy the activity.
   - what the child creates is not as important; self-expression is important.
   - the child should not be asked to copy. There is no fun in copying something.
   - whatever the child makes should be appreciated.

2) The stages in the development of drawing are

   - scribbling
   - controlled scribbling
   - naming of scribbling
   - drawings look more real
   - details are present in realistic proportions

3) In the first place, it indicates faulty planning. Sufficient amounts of materials or their substitutes, if necessary, should have been arranged for beforehand. However, in the given situation children who have not got paper can be asked to paint on the floor or window panes. If there is a house nearby, you can send your helper to request the family to give you old newspapers and used envelopes which can be used for painting.

   For those who do not have colour, you can ask them to collect leaves and flowers from the open, and use them to paint. If you have some turmeric powder or rice paste, you can give this to children. You can also ask for these things from the neighbourhood. If you mix these in water, you will get colour. Alternatively, children can use turmeric powder, in its dry form, to create designs on the floor.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1) a) Tearing and pasting—pictures from old newspapers and magazines can be torn and pasted on paper to make a collage. Collage can be made on the old piece of saree.
   b) Painting on paper—using colour powder and old newspapers. Paint brush made from a cloth swab from the saree.
   c) Paper folding
   d) Painting on the floor
   e) Hand printing—using fingers, dipped in colour, to make prints on floor or paper.