

Working With Children And Their Drawings

By Rebecca Stolley

University of Wisconsin - Superior

Abstract

Understanding children's drawings is a very complex task as it involves a lot of steps and practice. Also the relationship between the child and art therapist plays a roll into how accurate the understanding of the image is, this includes knowing body language along with creative expression. While doing my research I found some of the key points in starting to understand children's drawings and how to know what we should look at while trying to interpret an image. I started my research at the developmental stages of creative expression and looked at different researchers that I found helpful that include: Malchiodi, Betensky, Rubin, and DiLeo. These theories include the use of color, line, shape and size of the images within the drawing.

Keywords: Art Therapy, Child, Children's, Drawings, Color Theory, and Expression

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTERS:

1: DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

A. EARLY CHILDHOOD THEORIES IN PSYCHOLOGY

B. DEVELOPMENT OF ART

2: THE USE OF COLOR AND LINE

3: EXPRESSION AND RED FLAGS

4: EXPERIENCES THROUGH PRACTICUM

CONCLUSION

REFERENCES CITED

INTRODUCTION

What is in a drawing? We draw many things. We draw things that we know or places that we imagine. Children draw very freely and with no limits. Children show us through their art that they are learning and developing. For example, as they move from scribbles to more controlled scribbles this may show us that they are developing control over their fine motor skills. The children will also tell us when something is not going well in their life, whatever it may be. They may show us red flags in their drawings, regression and through their behavior. This is a very complex topic and there are a lot of theories within it.

I will begin by discussing the development of a child and the theories of what they are going through during each age. Children go through a lot of developmental stages as they grow and I will briefly describe the stages according to the theorists: Erickson, Piaget and Freud. I will also include the coordinating theory of art development according to the theorists: Kramer, Lowenfeld, and Malchiodi.

Through the use of line and color children may tell use many things, however these are only theories. I will be discussing the theories of color and line according to Betensky. The use of lines and color can also be influenced by the culture of the child. I will also discuss the theories about red flags to watch for in an image and what they could possibly mean. Finally, I will go through some of my experiences from my internship sites.

CHAPTER ONE: DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

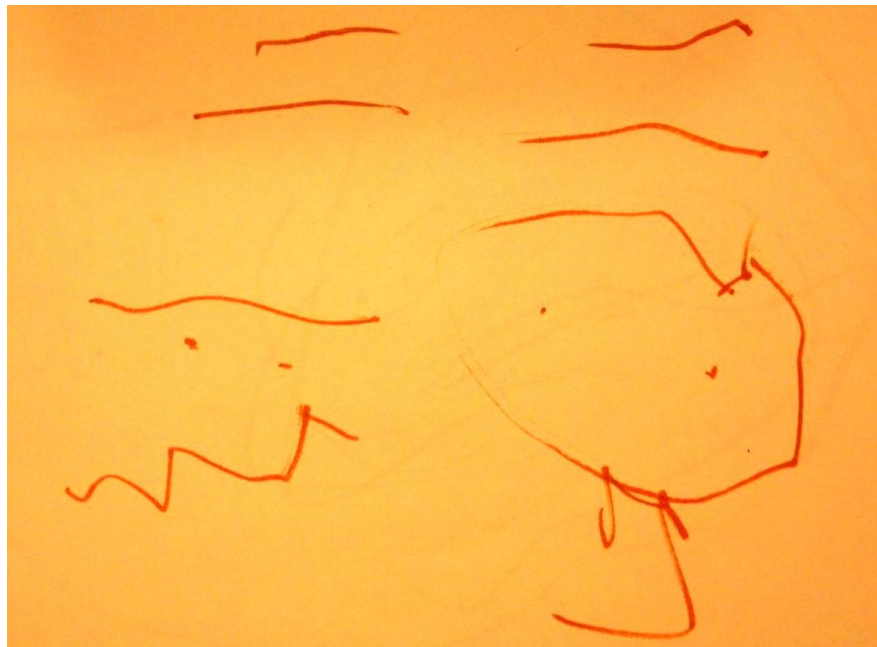
When looking at the development of children's drawings, there are many opinions on the stages children go through. Some theories do not include infants as being able to make marks, however we all start off as infants and the exploring marks are important. Moving on to more developed scribbles children start to create more recognizable shapes around the age of three or four years old.

STAGE ONE: BIRTH TO EIGHTEEN MONTHS

Stage one is from birth to around a year and a half. In this stage infants are learning about self and are in Eric Erickson's trust vs. mistrust phase of development (Berk, 2008). Young children are learning who they can trust and exploring their environment. They are also learning from their environment on simple laws, for example cause and effect. This age would be in Lowenfeld's first stage of scribbles with no control and there is a lot of oral exploration (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987). This should be considered while planning activities for them; edible or nontoxic mediums are ideal and choking hazards should also be thought about (Williams and Wood, 1977).

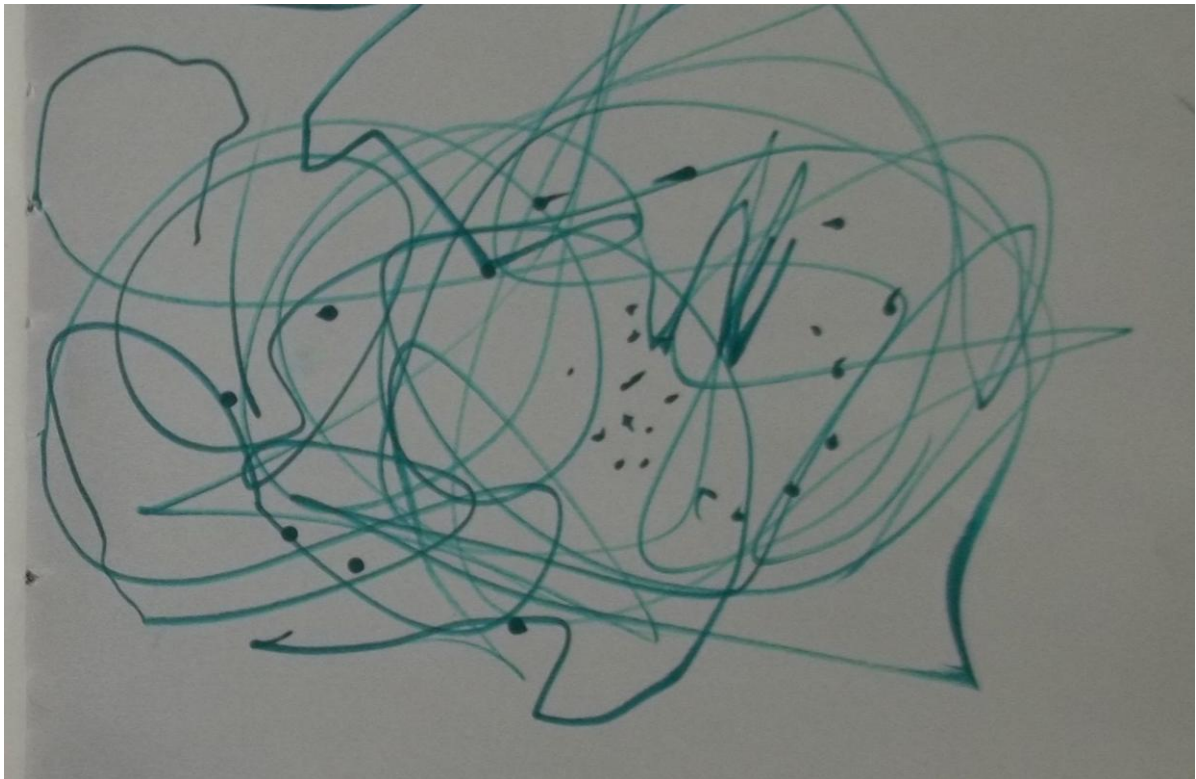
STAGE TWO: EIGHTEEN MONTHS TO FOUR YEARS

The next stage is from approximately a year and a half to four years of age. During this stage according to Freud, the children will be in the anal stage and later move to phallic stage, where Ericson categorizes their development to autonomy vs. shame and doubt for children age's two to three. In this stage the children are learning how to obtain self-control and explore their independence. Later from three to five the children are dealing with initiative vs. guilt, where they start to assert their new power and control. They are also dealing with feelings of purpose and belonging (Berk, 2008). Lowenfeld separated this into four subcategories of scribbles; the first three have to do with kinesthetic experiences and later getting into imaginative thinking. The first subcategory of scribbles would be having no control; the art appears to be chaotic and very disorganized.



Two-year-old boy in stage two of Lowenfeld's scribbles

The second would be scribbles that appear longitudinal and have a lot of repeated motions; this shows the child is gaining more control. Circular movements define the third subcategory and suggest the child is gaining more fine motor control (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987).

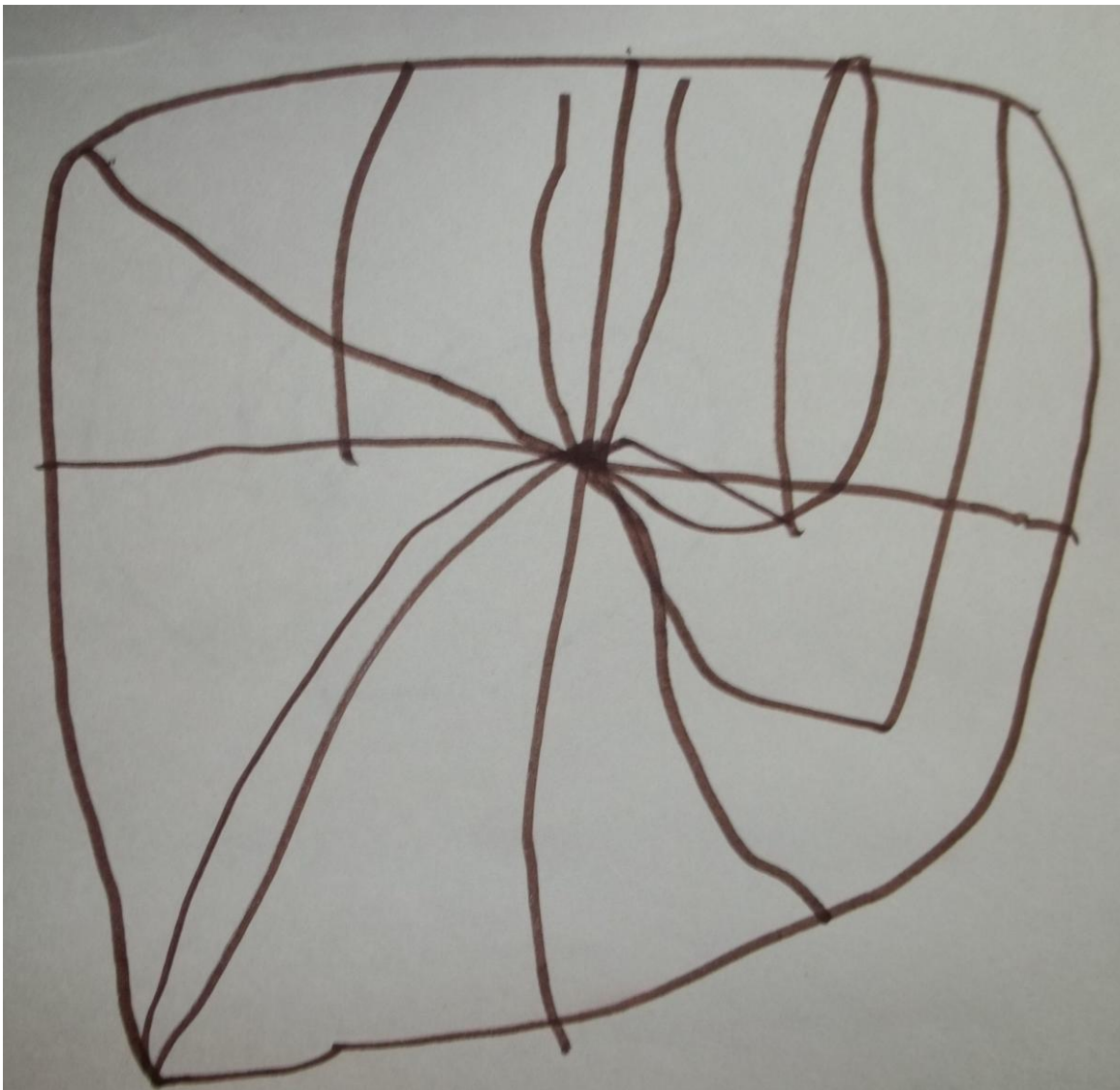


Three-year-old boy in stage four of Lowenfeld's scribbles

(He stated it was a spider web and the dots are spiders)

The fourth stage is naming the scribbles. When a child starts to name their scribbles it opens up to allowing them to tell stories that may lead to insight to conflicts or trauma in the child's life. The child usually has a limited vocabulary that may limit their stories (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987). Children in this stage are learning to become more social and have more conversations with their peers.

We also start to observe problem solving and other cognitive capabilities (Williams and Wood, 1977). Gardner believes that children in this stage focus on patterns that they create with basic shapes; circles, squares and rectangles. Kellogg added the thought that children were lead to make Mandala like figures in this stage; calling them Mandala's gave the children a safe place to create art within a protective walls.



Mandala like figure drawn by a 4-year-old girl on her own.



Mandala like figure drawn by five-year-old girl on her own.

Malchiodi disputed this theory when observing one hundred preschool children ages three to four in a preschool setting; she only observed two children whose art could be classified as Mandela's (Malchiodi, 1998). The art therapy benefit for these children would be to learn more about themselves and would be very individualized based on the child's needs.

THIRD STAGE: FOUR TO SIX YEARS OF AGE

The third stage would be from ages four to six years old. In this stage the children are in Freud's phallic stage where they are learning that their gender is not changing. They are forming the gender permanence and becoming aware of differences between being male and female. Erikson believes they are still in the initiative vs. guilt stage (Berk, 2008). The children in this stage are developing more fantasy and playing out inner conflicts and fears through imaginative play. Children at this stage have anxiety, but do not know how to express it, and through imaginative play they are given that outlet. Through the imaginative play they get to try the things they are scared of not completing and therefore have "someone" to blame if it is not the desired outcome. Imaginary friends, whoever they may be also allow the feelings to be experienced vicariously. They are gaining more communication skills through more vocabulary. This opens up more development in problem solving skills. Physical aggression also begins to solve some social issues and play becomes more interactive, and the concept of best friends forms (Williams and Wood 1977).

In the this stage they are also developing in many ways. They are learning to be more independent and are having success with fine motor skills. They are able to dress themselves and are able to button buttons. This also allows them more expression with more control in coloring, the ability to copy symbols, and they are able to draw more details (Williams and Wood, 1977). Lowenfeld's theory states that children in this stage draw human figures like "tadpoles" with a circle for a head and two lines for legs; rarely

do they have arms which are represented by two lines from either side of the head (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987).



Tadpole like figure drawn by a 4-year-old girl

The children in this stage are observing their environment and learning new ways to represent it. They may look at a tadpole figure that they just drew and be able to tell you, for example, this is my mom and this is her head, legs, feet, arms, hands and belly button (Rubin, 2005). Another person may not visually see these things, but the child feels they are there and acknowledges them even though they were omitted from the drawing itself. The children in this stage have a tendency to draw things that are important to them: friends, family and pets. Colors may be present for different things, but do not necessarily represent objects in the realistic color. A tree may be blue and

the sun green. In this stage there are no rules for the use of color, which allows more expression (Malchiodi, 1998).

This stage shows a lack of preoperational thinking, which is the understanding of space. It is not unusual for a child to have floating figures, or no ground for their figures. If they do have a ground, the figures might not be on it. The images may appear random in their placement, but may have an emotional content that the child is expressing. It is good to talk to the child about their work, because their explanation will give you more information about it and might be more accurate than your initial reaction. Towards the end of the stage, gradually the forms become more detailed from the tadpole, adding a body with a head on top of it, legs, arms, hands with fingers, feet with toes, ears and hair (Malchiodi, 1998).

SCHOOL AGE STAGES

The next stages have a lot in common and have a lot of overlap with some children. According to Freud, the children are in the Latent Period where children are focusing on success in school and peer relationships. In this stage they are developing of self-esteem. Erikson's theory states that the children are in industry vs. inferiority, which is a lot like Freud's theory. The children are focusing on how to cope with the new demands of school and peers. The success they feel leads to self-confidence where failure may make them experience feelings of inferiority (Berk, 2008). These theories affect the next two stages equally from ages six or seven to eleven years old.

In stage four children have a lot of issues that they are overcoming in school; they are learning to work in groups, conforming to rules, taking turns and social cooperation. Knowledge gained in school allows for growth in learning to express feelings in acceptable ways in both verbal communication, and also in artwork. These children are learning to regulate self-control and the difference between right and wrong. Self-esteem is based on how they feel their peers view them (Williams and Wood, 1977). According to Lowenfeld, the Schematic stage and is approximately from age seven to nine and where children are learning the concept of space. Concept of space allows them to depict their environment more effectively and realistically (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987). According to Piaget, in stage five the child are developing abilities of the child, and forms a visual schema. Malchiodi relates this theory to art:

The development of visual schema for art expression reflects the child's cognitive abilities at the latter part of the preoperational period and the beginning of concrete operations. Children are able to understand concepts of conversation and weight, they arrange items in a series, and are beginning to be able to organize conceptually. (Malchiodi 1998 pg. 85).

Here children are learning to fully represent people with a head, body, legs, feet, toes, arms, hands, fingers, ears and hair, along with other characteristics that express things that mean something to the child. Houses may be depicted in an x-ray manor where you can see the inside, stairs and things in the rooms.

Their drawings may also depict a sequence or movement within one image; for example, a child throws a ball and another hits it out of the park. This may be depicted

by lines or just by verbal communication or even several balls. In this stage acknowledgement of colors emerges and objects may be represented by the color they are in real life. For example, trees have brown trunks and green leaves and a yellow circle represents the sun. In this stage, pictures become grounded but show no attempt to depict things in a three dimensional manor. These images may have more than one ground line in an attempt to show depth. A single blue line may depict the sky and a single green line may depict the grass or ground (Malchiodi, 1998). The size of objects should also be considered:

These exaggerations or emphasized elements or omissions in images are important when looking at children's drawings for usual characteristics, for at this particular developmental stage, it is difficult to say if enlargements, dramatic emphasis, or even obvious omissions of details are unusual and of concern. In many cases, these characteristics are part of the normal developmental process of a particular child. (Malchiodi, 1998, pg. 89)

Stage five continues with the issues of coping with the demands of school and peer relationships. Working in groups continues to evolve and they start to take pride in the group activity and the success as a group. The children are becoming aware of other people having feelings and values and how to accept them even if they are not shared values. They are becoming aware of the idea of an ideal self and learning to value their actual self (Williams and Wood 1977). Lowenfeld classifies this stage approximately from age nine to eleven and categorizes it as learning to draw realism. In this stage children are starting to draw more realistically, but are very critical of

themselves. The realism they are depicting focuses on what the child sees as their reality; that may be different from others because of experiences. They also start to experiment with a new understanding of perspective and distance between subjects, with the use of shading and color combinations. Images start to take form and become more planned (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987).

During stage five in a child's artistic development, they are continuing to move from egocentric thinking and more towards concrete operations. They observe the world around them and find new ways to express the new observations. Again it is important to remember that realism is personal and it depicts what is real to the artist. Drawings in this stage become very detailed and they start to demonstrate new attempts to depict perspective. The children move away from using baselines, but the sky and ground meet at a horizon to give the image more depth. Also in this stage we see an increased use and understanding of color. Before the leaves of trees were green, now they may involve many different shades of green and may even add more colors like reds, yellows and oranges. The people that they draw become very detailed; they wear clothes with different things like words, numbers, and buttons and maybe even have pockets. We start to see that the people in drawings have gender by the clothes they are wearing or their hairstyle (Malchiodi, 1998).

With an emphasis on realism and composition at this age, the children may get discouraged. When a child draws realistically they may feel if they do not do it perfect that they can not do it at all. "Everything is seen from a literal viewpoint, and children believe that the more accurately one can depict an object, person or environment, the

better art expression” (Malchiodi, 1998). They easily become discouraged when their effort to be perfect is not met with a perfect work. If they are not given encouragement, they are likely to give up and say that they are not capable. At this point in development the child is very sensitive to criticism, even a laugh or comment from peer or adult may discourage them from continuing to express themselves visually, they may move more towards words to express themselves. However if they do have a source of encouragement, for example a parent, they can overcome that obstacle and continue to express themselves creatively (Malchiodi, 1998).

It is observed that they do protect themselves from failure, for example, drawing a figure with his or her hands behind their back because hands are very difficult to draw and then they will avoid the anxiety associated with the possibility of failing. Another technique to alleviate anxiety is to draw in a nonthreatening way, with cartoons or characters that do not need to be perfect. However, by doing so they may give up creativity and instead concentrate on stereotypes. It may also be that it is just easier to express themselves using words. (Malchiodi, 1998)

No matter the population that one is working with for art therapy, it is important to remember that there may be resistance to work because of a negative experience. This would also emphasize the need to be supportive and not criticize work as that may only move the relationship between therapist and artist backwards. It is also important to remember that anyone can be at any stage in drawing and some children may take longer in one area than their peers. All art is individual and is an experience by the artist; it can however, give us a clue to developmental delays or trauma to the child.

Drawings are not black and white, but mostly gray and their meanings can be taken in many different ways. As an art therapist it is our job to find the information that is accurate.

CHAPTER 2: THE USE OF COLOR AND LINE

Now we know what the artistic development for each age is and we know what the children are developmentally going through. How can we continue to understand more about a drawing? This may be a thing that they are unaware of or hiding in the subconscious. An artist has an advantage as artists know how to read an image and are trained to see things others may miss. There are many different theories to understand children's drawings and some will be discussed now. It is important to state that these are theories and have not been proven based on validity. It is also important to understand that children may choose a color based on a reaction: it was the closest to them or another child wanted it. It is also important to understand that they are only theories and knowing a child will give you more information than just viewing their art.

One theory is Betensky's Phenomenology of Therapeutic Art Expression. The term phenomenology can be briefly defined as the use of all senses to interpret a deeper or hidden meaning. Betensky has developed the Phenomenological Method of Art that is a sequence of four steps (Betensky, 1995). Sequence one is the exploration of materials; the important part in this step is to allow the artist to become familiar to all of the materials and become comfortable in the space and with the materials. During this time it will allow the artist and therapist to become comfortable with one another, help to build a rapport and be able to trust one another. When the trust is formed there is a safe environment that is created that will allow the artist to create art and work on the conflicts that have brought them to therapy. The second sequence is the process; this is

when the artist creates art. The therapist's only role in this sequence is to allow the artist to overcome obstacles but be there for support and if they get stuck. This should be an easy and comfortable situation for the artist and personal growth is encouraged. The artist may choose to talk during this process and then it is the therapist's job to listen and be nonjudgmental. The third sequence is to allow the artist to take a step back and look at their creation. What do they see? What is the story that is being told? This allows the art to become its own phenomenon and take on its own meaning. When you take a step back it allows space to distance the artist from the piece allowing it to be less personal and more about the work. They may also express verbally how they felt during this process and what was on their mind while creating the art. Sequence four happens while the therapist and artist are looking at the work. It is Betensky's "What-Do-You-See?" Procedure. The first part of this is to look at the work and give it a phenomenological description, allowing the artist to tell the therapist what they see or explain what they were trying to express. This allows the artist to be heard and gives a sense of belonging. The second part of this sequence is for the therapist and artist to study the structure of the piece. This is when the therapist may bring up things that the artist may have dismissed or had not realized. Finally there is a phenomenological connecting where the artist and therapist piece together the image and what they have discovered to perhaps give a clue to a larger picture. It is important to remember that not all images will lead to a breakthrough and art can be just about the process (Betensky, 1995).

Expression is a very important element to tell us about the creator and what the images are trying to depict. Artists focus on composition and to evoke emotions that

may not be personal to the artist. Art therapy does not require the art to be well organized in an aesthetic manner, and it encourages more personal expression. Even an image that seems to have no organization to the viewer can tell an art therapist a lot about the creator (Betensky, 1995).

While expression in art portrays something of the universal human experience, which may or may not include the artist's emotions, expression in art therapy most of the time represents the personal feelings and emotions of the client art maker. As in art, so in art therapy, aspects of universal or subjective human experience find their expression in lines expressive of moods, in colors express emotions, in shapes express the weight, which also symbolizes the world; and emotion, stance or gesture expressive of vitality and feeling about self, and aliveness (Betensky, 1995 pg. 29-30).

Everything works together to make the expression understood. Lines may give suggestion to emotions. For example, a flowing wavy line may depict love, grace and beauty where a sharp, zigzag line may depict violence, agitation or unpredictability. "Heavy line pressure is often associated with aggressive, forceful, high-energy individuals. Light line pressure may be indicative of low energy, inhibition, and shyness. Generally, boys tend to use heavier pressure than girls" (Folks-Appleman, 2007, p. 46). The context the lines are given need to be taken into consideration. Was there an emotion that was evoked while creating this image? It may be based on a personal or cultural understanding from the creator or the art therapist. Along with lines, shapes can also tell us about the creator and work with the lines to create the image. Geometric

shapes allow the creator a non-threatening way of expression but may be signs of symbolic thinking that is a personal or a cultural norm. However, the more organic shapes allow free expression and play heavily on the lines used to form them. The therapist takes in to consideration the emotions the shape was given or evoked during the time of creation. The same principle theory can be applied to the understanding of colors. Colors may be used in a way that is culturally accepted or because that is the color what is being depicted actually is, for example the grass is green and the sun is yellow. However they can help to depict emotion or be given something to hide behind. Here are some examples of what colors may depict but it weighs heavily on the context (Betensky, 1995).

Colors can mean a lot of different things depending on culture, environment and personal preference. I will go through the main colors and what they may be paired with. It is important to state again that these are only theories and they do not have the validity to be stated as anything else. The first color is white; it is associated with religion, goodness, purity, cleanliness, safety, purity and virginity (Qsx Software Group, 2005). White can also symbolize, peace, purification, isolation and spaciousness (Zelanski & Fisher, 2003). The opposite of white is black; it can symbolize femininity, protection and restriction (Zelanski & Fisher, 2003). It can also be a symbol of power, elegance, death, mystery, or evil. (Qsx Software Group, 2005). Black can also be used to control reactions, symbolize compulsiveness, or suggest an intellectual (Klepsch & Logie, 1982).

Gray may represent independence, loneliness, self-criticism and separation. Silver can depict change, femininity, sensitivity and balance. Gold shows idealism, wisdom and abundance (Zelanski & Fisher, 2003).

We associate colors of fire- reds, yellows, oranges- with warmth. This is not just an abstract notion, for physiological research indicates that under red lighting our bodies secrete more adrenalin, increasing out blood pressure and our rate of breathing, and actually raising out temperature slightly. (Zelanski & Fisher, 2003, p. 35)

Red can be a symbol of strength, warmth, anger, impatience, assertion, vitality or sensuality (Zelanski & Fisher, 2003). Red may also be related to excessive emotion or violence: “It has also been associated with cheerfulness; nursery level children who emphasized it are happier, well-adjusted, more emotional in their personal reactions” (Klepsch & Logie, 1982, p. 35). Red can be an emotionally intense color associated with war, danger, strength, energy, passion, desire and love. There are other colors within the color red. Light red can represent, joy, passion, love, sensitivity or sexuality. Where pink signifies more love, romance or friendship. A dark red represents willpower, leadership, courage, anger or rage (Qsx Software Group, 2005). Pink has also been associated with calmness, kindness, love, nurturance and being unselfish (Zelanski & Fisher, 2003).

Orange represents, joy, creativity, security and stimulation (Zelanski & Fisher, 2003). Orange “often suggests a good relationship with surroundings; may suggest areas of discomfort” (Klepsch & Logie, 1982, p. 35). “Orange combines the energy of red

and the happiness of yellow. It is associated with joy, sunshine, and the tropics. Orange represents enthusiasm, fascination, happiness, creativity, determination, attraction, success, encouragement, and stimulation” (QsX Software Group, 2005). However there are more colors within the color orange. Dark orange may depict more distrust where a red-orange is associated with desire, pleasure, domination or aggression. If the color is more of a gold it may correspond better with the symbol of quality (royalty) wisdom, wealth and prestige (QsX Software Group, 2005).

Yellow is associated with mental stimulation, optimism, happiness and fear (Zelanski & Fisher, 2003). Yellow is “suggestive of hostility dependency, and infantile behavior. Yellow used with green to depict grass or a landscape is normal” (Klepsch & Logie, 1982, p. 35). Yellow can also depict energy, joy and intellect. There is also a dull yellow, which can represent decay, sickness, caution or jealousy. A light yellow is often associated with freshness, joy and intellect (QsX Software Group, 2005). “We associate blues and greens with cooling qualities of water and trees, and psychological research shows that green or blue lights will slow our heartbeat, decrease our temperature, and relax our muscles” (Zelanski & Fisher, 2003, p. 35).

Green is often associated with relaxation, peace, contentment, generosity, relaxation and sincerity (Zelanski & Fisher, 2003). Another point of view is that green is a symbol of nature that expresses growth, fertility and harmony. Dark green is more greed and jealousy. A yellow-green can be associated with sickness, jealousy and discord. Aqua provides a feeling of emotional healing and protection. Olive green is a color that traditionally symbolizes peace (QsX Software Group, 2005).

Blue depicts controlled reactions and the presence of self-restraint. "Blue and green are similar and represent controlled behavior. If much blue and green are used together, it indicates that the child feels secure as long as he is able to maintain control" (Klepsch & Logie, 1982, p. 35). Blue also provides a sense of hope, faith, acceptance, spaciousness and flexibility (Zelanski & Fisher, 2003). Blue being the color of the sky and sea is often thought to be associated with stability and depth. Blue may also symbolize the trust, wisdom, confidence, intelligence, loyalty, faith and even heaven. Dark blue is associated with knowledge, seriousness, power and integrity. Light blue is more representative of health, understanding, softness and tranquility (QsX Software Group, 2005).

Violet or purple is associated with royalty and conveys extravagance and wealth. Purple can represent independence creativity, magic, mystery, dignity and wisdom. Light purple is associated with romance while dark purple is associated with sad and gloomy feelings (QsX Software Group, 2005). Violet or indigo can represent spirituality, inspiration, purification, contemplation and intuition (Klepsch & Logie, 1982).

Brown is a color that shows timidity, and may represent regression. When it is used with black in excess it may depict anxiety or depression (Kramer, 1977). Brown may also be evidence of nurturance, narrow-mindedness, retreat and earthiness (Zelanski & Fisher, 2003).

These are only theories and do not have enough validity to be anything else. Meanings may be different based on thoughts and preferences of the individuals. Colors may be personal to the viewer and do not always fit into these categories. This is where

the observation of the individual is going to be the most helpful in allowing them to answer what they see during a reflection time.

CHAPTER 3: EXPRESSION AND RED FLAGS

For children art is an essential part of expressing emotions. They may not have the vocabulary to express these complex emotions accurately. It is the job of the therapist to acknowledge these emotions and allow the child to cope with them. Art has been used for many years (starting in the early 1900's) in a psychiatric setting when people started to notice patient drawings and the insight the drawings presented. Individuals have complex emotions and there are reasons that make us feel the way we do. Children are no different and they should be respected in that manner. Their art may be the only way that they can find to accurately express those complex emotions and it should be encouraged. A difficult obstacle for therapist is to now allow their own emotions to transfer onto the child's work and step back to see what they are saying, not what we think they are saying. Malchiodi (1998) also suggests the importance of line, shape, color and size (weight as explained by Betensky) of the image. When using colors in analysis of a drawing it is important to remember that children may use colors according to their stage in artistic development. Colors do have a lot of meaning behind them and do suggest emotions. A lot of those colors have to do with culture and if the child understands those rules is questionable. They may use only red because it is the color that was closest, or because it is their favorite color. This is where observation will tell you a lot about the image and if the color is significant, knowing the child is also going to benefit at understanding what is going on in the drawing. (Malchiodi, 1998). It is important to remember that the artistic development is composed of "guidelines for

children's use of color from a developmental model, and there may be some variation in color use at any age or stage, depending upon the child and his or her experiences" (Malchiodi, 1998, p. 114). The activity the child is being asked to complete or the environment can also influence the color the child chooses.

Size of the objects within the image also holds a key to understanding the image as a whole. The size of a person can give us a clue into the self-esteem a child sees within themselves assuming that the child is repressing themselves symbolically (Malchiodi, 1998). Size also can be interpreted in a different manner. A child with poor self-control may draw large drawings that take up an entire page. These children may be overactive and have less understanding of boundaries. The figure is so large that parts are left out because the paper is not large enough. Or the opposite would be a child that is very shy may draw a very large figure to express the desire to be more noticeable (Folks-Appleman, 2007). A timid or shy individual may draw small drawings varying from one to three inches in height; this may indicate self-esteem issues or feeling insecure in their body or surroundings. Children that appear to be outgoing and aggressive may draw small figures depicting anxiety and poor self-esteem (Folks-Appleman, 2007).

What the child emphasizes in their art can also play an important role in understanding what they are trying to express. If something is of concern to a child it will be overemphasized and "may be seen through enlarging body parts, providing excessive detail of a body part, making the body part with a heavy line, etc." (Folks-Appleman, 2007, p. 43). The child may feel the need to underemphasize a body part by

“making a body part smaller relative to other parts, lack of detail given to a part, or making a part with faint or sketchy lines” (Folks-Appleman, 2007, p. 43). If a child is feeling inadequate they may draw a head either larger or smaller than the rest of the body. However large heads are often seen in children who want to be better at something, for example school. The mouth suggests that the child may be overly dependent or that they have concern about a handicap or problem with language. Eyes may indicate “visual processing learning problems” (Folks-Appleman, 2007, p. 44). Arms may express a need or desire for control or the desire for power. Small arms may express that the child has a fear of power or they see themselves as inadequate. An emphasis of large feet show that the child wants to feel more secure, while a nose may show that the child is suffering from a respiratory problem. Children who have hearing impairments may draw larger ears, or show that they feel singled out by their peers and that they are talking about them (Folks-Appleman, 2007).

Another concern would be if a child chose to leave out a part of the body. This may show anxiety and this can be classified very similar to underemphasizing a body part. The hands suggest that the child feels insecure in their environment whether it is home, school, or the people they are around. “When arms are omitted, the child feels inadequate and ineffective. Since arms represent power and strength, their omission represents a perceived lack of power and strength” (Folks-Appleman, 2007, p. 44). Legs are an important part of a body, and they provide support to the body. When they are left out of an image it may show that the child feels immobile or that they have no support either from self or others. The feet are along the same lines and when they are left out it may show that the child feels helpless. “The nose is often viewed as a symbol

of power-striving and, if it is omitted, the child may feel powerless. Asthmatics may also omit the nose" (Folks-Appleman, 2007, p. 44). The mouth is what allows a majority of individuals to communicate with one another. When it is left off of a figure it may indicate that a child feels it is very difficult to relate to others. Teeth are an indication of aggression, some is okay, however it can be excessive or abnormal, and it is normal for a child to omit teeth (Folks-Appleman, 2007).

When sex organs are drawn, they may be considered indicators of aggressiveness. Actually, we have often noticed genitals in the drawings of four- to six-year-old children whose parents have walked around the house nude or help their offspring develop a health attitude toward their bodies. However, Koppiz (1968), who often found genitals in the drawings of severely disturbed children, relates genitals to acute body anxiety and poor impulse control. (Folks-Appleman, 2007, p. 45)

Belly buttons may represent a need for being dependent however it is normal for a child to draw them in preschool especially during the x-ray stage of drawings. However when a child is in school and still drawing the belly button it may show that they are too dependent on their primary caregiver. Adding a sun to an image may show that a child is loved and supported by their primary caregiver. Their parents are warm and nurturing. The opposite may be indicated when there are clouds that are hiding the sun (Folks-Appleman, 2007).

Children may also draw figures in unusual ways. Children, who try not to reveal themselves, want to be safe and do not want to take risks, will draw stick figures. Some

children draw cowboys to depict the aspiration of being a tough-guy or to show their masculinity. Clowns, on the other hand, show a child's poor self-esteem or self-concept. Monsters and witches "are drawn by children with very poor self-concepts and feelings of depersonalization" (Folks-Appleman, 2007, p. 45). When the body is not connected to limbs it shows that the child may have a learning disability or that they feel they are doing poorly at something, an example being school (Folks-Appleman, 2007).



Witch drawn by four-year-old girl.

Other indicators are how a child uses the drawing materials and erasing is a normal part of a process; however excessive erasing may indicate anxiety. Another indicator of anxiety according to Foks-Appleman (2007) is shading, and where the shading is located is specifically related to the anxiety. Children who feel the need for more support will draw a baseline, a line on the bottom grass or what the figure is standing on. The figure may also be standing on the bottom edge of the paper providing the same support. A child that feels like they do not have a secure place to stand may draw their figure drawing to a slant (greater than fifteen degrees) and would give the look of the figure falling over because they do not have a secure place to stand.

Where a child places his figure may be significant. Placement near the top or high on a page suggests that the drawer may use fantasy to achieve goals or may, in fact, be striving for achievement or finding it difficult to reach goals. Placement near the bottom or low on the page may indicate insecurity or a person who is reality-oriented. Left-side placement suggests an orientation towards the past, while right-side placement is more future-oriented. (Folks-Appleman, 2007, p. 46)



Drawing of a princess by a four-year-old girl.

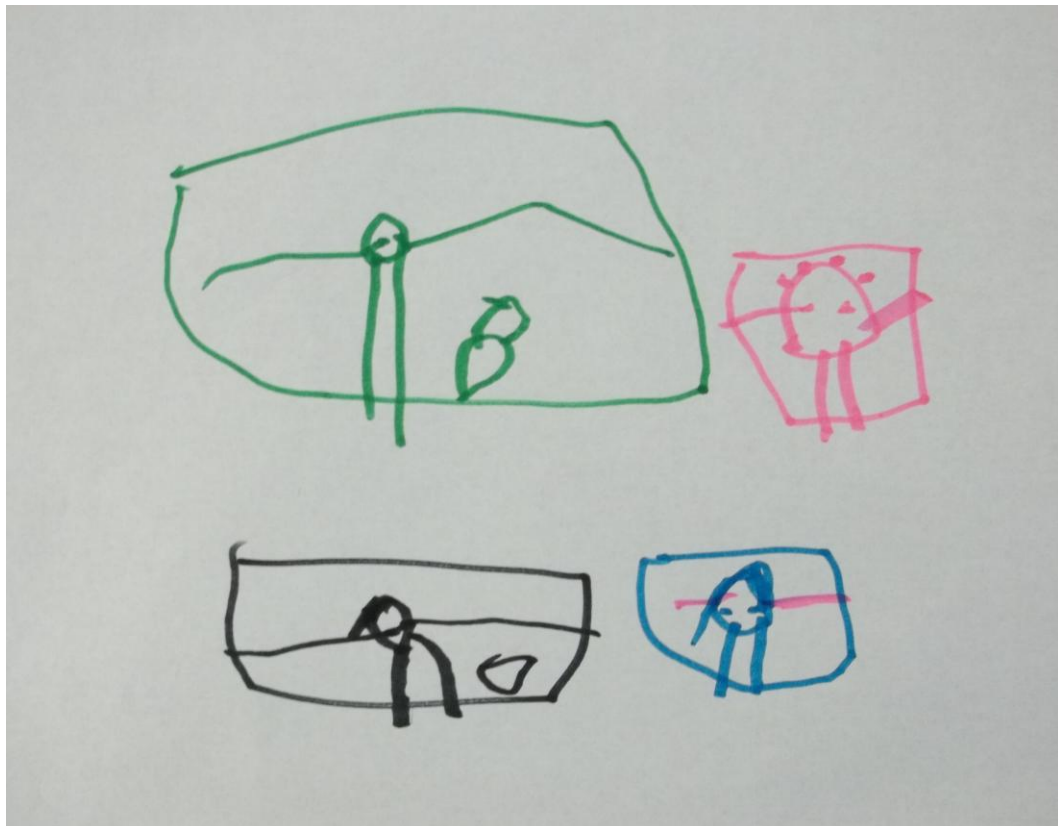
There are many ways to interpret things that a child uses or omits from their drawing. It is important to understand that it takes knowing the individual to really understand what is going on. Malchiodi (1998) also encourages the therapist to observe the artist while they are creating art, as their behaviors will give more insight to the emotional content, perhaps even more than the finished image itself. When observing, the therapist should watch for how the child reacts to his or her own work along with how they interact with the materials along side the finished work. When observing a child doing art there are things that would stand out. For example, a child that is abused at home may become afraid if they make a mistake, this anxiety is a clue also. A child

who is suffering from depression may appear to be withdrawn and sad. A child who is sexually abused will likely shut down when it is time to discuss their work, as they will have anxiety about the perpetrator finding out. There may also be a great amount of phallic detail with children whom are sexually abused (Malchiodi, 1998). It is important to rule out other things before accusing someone of sexual abuse but should be done in a very timely manner to not harm a child even more.

While looking at a child's drawing it is also critical to understand how the different characters in the drawing are interacting with one another. Drawings of a family done by a child can give clues into how the child views the family dynamics and personalities. The Kinetic Family Drawing Test came out in 1973 and an emphasis has been placed on the symbols and signs that appear in the family drawings. Children cannot draw the families as we wish and either rush through the drawing or do things to be "funny." This would occur when they really do not want to do what we are asking of them. The best time to get a drawing of a child's family is when they initiate it on their own and to collect samples of them drawing their family over time. Then there will be a sequence. It will be easier to determine if a child is having true issues and if one comes up because there will be a baseline. It is a good way to keep in touch with a child if they are willing to do so. There are other things that will cause a child to not want to participate in this activity, such as if they are having family problems, for example going through a divorce. Another issue that would make a child not want to draw their family is anxiety of the amount of work it will be, for example if they have a large family and they are asked to draw each one. They may become discouraged and draw stick figures that will not allow us as much information as other images.



Picture of a Five-year-old Girl's Family



Picture of a Four-year-old Boy's family

CHAPTER 4: EXPERIENCES THOUGH PRACTICUM

I have worked for three semesters with children in two different settings, clinical and educational. The first was a speech therapy clinic; the other a preschool based on the Montessori philosophy.

While volunteering at the speech clinic as an art therapy intern, I was interested in how the children processed and reacted to the different situations. I was very limited in what I was able to do with the children, and there is a larger difference between art therapy and speech therapy than I anticipated. I wanted to give the children who were using the services of the speech therapy clinic a chance to grow and be able to communicate visually and perhaps bring more to light than what they were doing in their speech therapy. This however was not accepted by the speech therapists; the speech therapists wanted the children to only communicate verbally and became frustrated when I chose to do more visual things. It was a learning situation for me, and I learned how to defend art therapy. I took the opportunity to teach people how it can be beneficial for children who do not speak and what we can learn from their artwork. There were some speech therapists that were very interested in what I had to offer, and they in turn taught me a lot too.

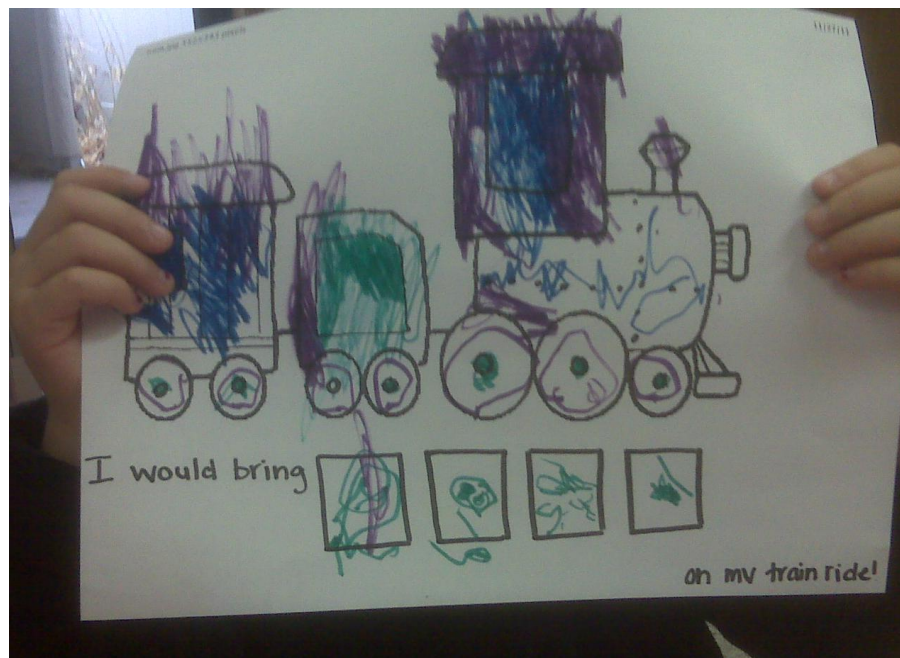
Train Coloring Sheet

Procedure: The children were provided a coloring sheet with a train and then four boxes under the train, so they could color what they would bring with them, if they were to go on a train ride.

Materials: Coloring sheet of the train; crayons and markers. Adaptive crayons available to children who needed them including Crayola Jumbo Crayons and Alex's Finger Crayons.

Objective: Allow the children to practice hand-eye coordination, self expression and to see what they would bring with them giving me the chance to assess their abilities to plan and to think of things they may need.

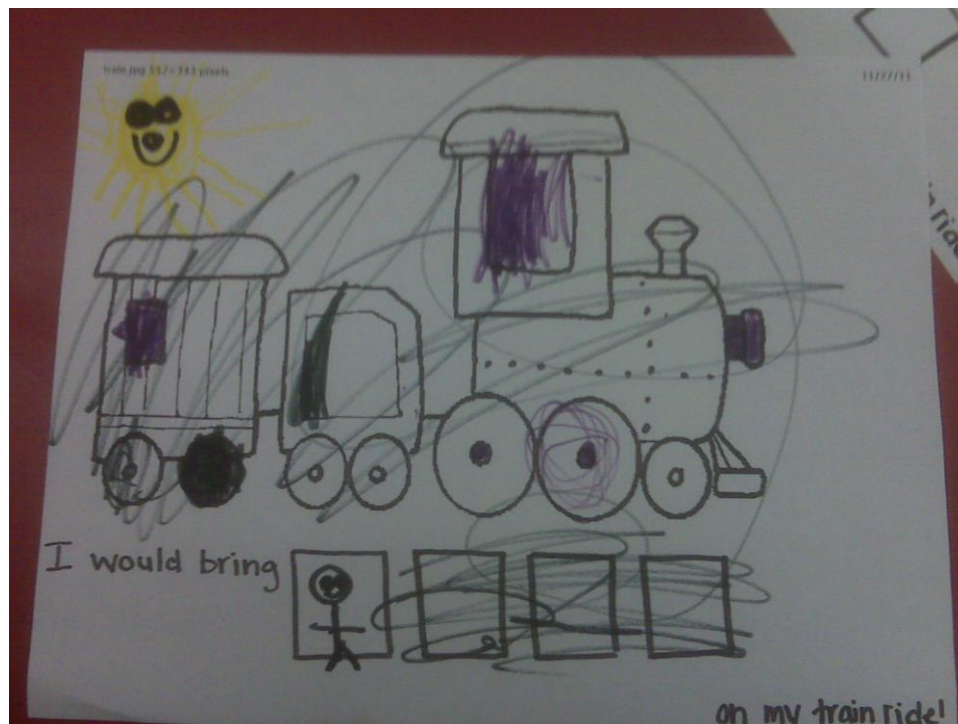
Process:



Conclusion: It was very interesting to hear what they would bring with them if they were to go on a train ride: security objects, like blankets, teddy bears or dolls. One child

(a five year old male) chose to bring water, snacks, his blanket and his friend, because he didn't want to go without him. This showed me that he was very observant of his surroundings, and understood what he would need for a trip on a train, like a car. He made the connection that it would be fun and he wouldn't want to leave his friend out of the fun. He started carefully by coloring in the lines and would go outside the lines a bit. Then he suddenly became anxious and started fidgeting and then started to draw very fast and covered much of the paper at a time. This indicated to me that he felt he was not able to complete the task by staying all the way in the lines and gave up. The drawing fast did appear to calm him down and when he was done he did appear proud of his accomplishment but was eager to go back to his speech therapy room.

Most of the children made marks on the page and chose not to fill in what they would bring because they could not communicate or because it was an abstract idea.



Paper Bag Puppets

Procedure: Each lunch sized paper bag was prepared by folding the bottom corners of the flap and gluing the folds in place to create a jaw line. Materials to decorate the puppet were then glued on by the child or with help.

Materials: Lunch sized paper bags, wiggle eyes, feathers, gems, buttons, foam shapes, leaves, pom-poms, construction paper, scissors and glue.

Objective: Increase self-expression, independence, self-esteem, hand eye coordination and imagination.

Process: Examples



Conclusion: Autism Spectrum Disorder affects some children that are served through the speech clinic and imagination and abstract ideas are hard for them to comprehend. That is why I chose to create a lot of things for them to have to think a little more abstract and model that concept. It was very interesting to see the difference between how each child took the project.

Case Study: Nathan

I was volunteering at the speech therapy clinic. I found that I had to alter a lot of the projects to meet one little boy's needs. His name is Nathan and he was four years old when I had the opportunity to work with him. He was formally diagnosed with being on the Autism Spectrum Disorder. Every project that I chose to do had different textures to use. When working with the puppets the contrast between the feathers, buttons and paper gave texture stimulation that has been thought to engage and relate to children affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder. This particular child had difficulty with glue, and when he would work with glue he would have extreme behaviors and would not be able to continue, also making it challenging to get him to move on to more speech therapy exercises. After working with him once I had to make exceptions for him and when it was his time I had to move all the glue out of sight. To accommodate him I provided contact paper, which gave the same stimulation of the glue without the behaviors caused by not being allowed to eat the glue. This worked out very well for him and I used it for a month before introducing glue again, and it did work. He was

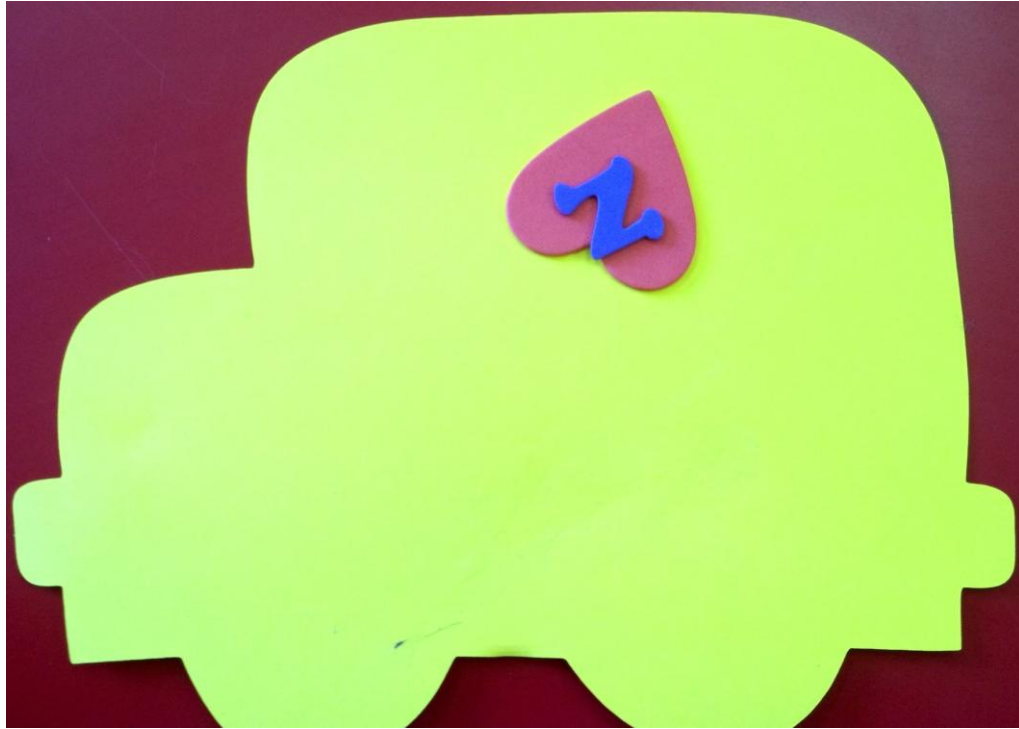
able to use the glue by the end of my time with him, and he was able to use glue when it was controlled from taking it away to only having one on the table during his time.

Bus Collage

Procedure: Each child was given a precut school bus and was given many different textures to put onto the school bus to make it their own. The directive was: if you could have your own school bus what would it look like?

Materials: Precut school busses out of yellow card stock, foam letters, foam shapes (including animals, bugs, flowers and basic shapes), buttons, gems, crayons, and glue (purple dispensing so the children would see what they were gluing but would dry clear).

Objective: First time meeting each child, so I was assessing the situation and seeing what would work with each child and gathering basic physical abilities. Allowing the children to express themselves while engaging in a project with others.



Conclusion: Nathan sat down and picked out two things to put on the bus and then he saw the glue stick that was on the table and reached for it. His mother stopped him and he arched his back, slipping out of his chair and rolling around on the floor, trying to get away from his mother. He would calm down, sit up, see the glue and it would start again. Nathan was brought to his speech therapy room but it took half the session to get him to a place that he was able to work.

Procedure: The children were asked to create a collage of things that they liked. I was still getting to know them and their abilities. Their materials were set on the table in front of them mixed together to encourage the use of many different textures.

Materials: Pre-cut images from magazines (animals, babies, people, food, things) and to increase the sensory, buttons, gems, feathers, wiggle eyes and contact paper

substituted for glue for Nathan. The contact paper was laid sticky side up so Nathan could put what he wanted on it.

Objective: Self-expression, hand eye coordination and still getting to know the children.

Process:



Conclusion: Nathan did a great job and actually did the project on his own with little hand over hand direction. This allowed for the full self-expression that he was unable to do before. He did put his hand down and feel the paper and smiled at how it was so sticky. Nathan chose everything himself and put most stuff right side up and a few things were upside down but he didn't appear to mind. One did stick to the page just by the paper moving when it touched the side of it.

Wishing Tree

Procedure: I taped the contact paper upside down so the sticky side was up that was the same size as the drawing paper. Then children were given the choice of writing (with help) of things that they wish they had. Then they placed them upside down on the contact paper so when I put the paper on it and turned it around one could read the leaf. Children had the option to add construction paper to make the trees look like they had trunks and branches in the background. Add the paper in the background and flip over to see final piece.

Materials: Contact paper, fabric leaves in fall colors, foam leaves in fall colors, tape, scissors, drawing paper, construction paper cut into strips and markers to write down wishes.

Objective: For the children to learn the word wish and what it means, for them to take an abstract idea and to put it down.

Process:



Conclusion: Nathan did not choose to write on his leaves, but he is also mainly nonverbal. It would have been people saying words for him, and I didn't want that to happen. Nathan chose to put only leaves on his work and they didn't do much overlapping and are spaced to take up the entire paper. This is typical for a child affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder. The fact that he didn't make a tree with the leaves suggests to me that the idea of making a tree from leaves and construction paper was too abstract for him to understand.

Thankful Turkey

Procedure: I made a poster of how to make a turkey for a visual storyboard for the children that benefit from using storyboards.



There were two options for the children, precut hands (store bought die cuts) or for them to trace their hand and cut it out. I gave the two options based on sensory preferences and ability of the child. Then the child was asked what they were thankful for and that was written for them on the fingers and covered with feathers. There were also markers to color on hands and wiggle eyes for the turkey's eyes.

Materials: Die cut hands, construction paper, scissors, markers, wiggle eyes, feathers and feathers precut out of construction paper for variety and purple dispensing glue sticks.

Objective: Self-expression, hand eye-coordination, the term thankful and what it means to be thankful, thinking about what they enjoy in their life.

Process: Nathan chose the precut hand when given the choice by holding up a piece of construction paper and the die cut hand. All glue sticks were hidden before he came and only one was brought out at the very end after he had already picked out the feathers he was going to use. Hand over hand was used to apply the glue. The glue stick then disappeared and he applied the feathers. There were no behaviors with the glue, which was a great accomplishment for Nathan.



Conclusion: Nathan didn't have any behaviors with the glue when it was in a controlled setting, and I was very proud of him for overcoming his obsession with eating the glue.

Apple Painting

Procedure: The children were given one sheet of paper with three 4x6 inch sheets of watercolor paper taped on it, and the children were asked to paint with water what they think it would look like. This would allow the paint to bleed and create more interesting patterns. Then the children were given the option between colors and not given directions on how to use the apples so they had the choice to use it as a stamp or more as a brush. I also provided a picture frame with all three picture examples in it showing the parents and speech therapists that just because they are children their art is beautiful and when framed looks very nice.



Materials: Precut paper in 4x6 inches taped onto larger paper along all edges also premade. Apples, I cut in them in half (I used different colors and the yellow apple was in yellow paint, green in green and red in red. I also cut the apples different, half the length ways, the width ways and a diagonal for different patterns.) Knife and cutting

board, used by me before the children arrived. Forks to put in the apples making them easy to handle without getting messy, plates to put the apples on, water color paints, water to mix with the paint, water for pre painting with paint brush.

Objective: Learning and experimenting with self-expression, sensory stimulation, cause and effect

Process: When Nathan sat down at the table he was always very quiet, and would grab for some things but for the most part was quiet until he was ready to be done with the activity. That day he was smiling and giggling the entire time. He reached for apples and painted with two at a time and when he was done he put them on the plates where he found them and then took a very large bite out of the apple that was given to him to eat.





Conclusion: An accommodation that I was able to make for Nathan and a lot of the other children affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder was to put forks in the apples so they didn't have to touch the apples covered in paint because they were very juicy and sticky. Another problem for Nathan was that he had just started to eat apples again, and there was apprehension about not allowing him to eat the apples we were working with. He was provided with a fresh apple before he was brought to the art table. He was shown the fresh apple and was told "to eat" and shown the painting apples and was told "to paint." Both were shown and said about three times. It was a huge step for him. He understood what was expected from him and embraced it.

I didn't have Nathan draw a lot because he was unable to make the marks that would allow me to understand more than just observing him do the art, and how he changed throughout the semester as he became more expressive and involved in the art. This taught me that we need to give everyone the same chance to express themselves, even

children affected by a disorder can still express themselves and grow when allowed to participate in art.

Case Study: Sally

While volunteering at the preschool as an art therapy intern I worked very closely with a little girl, Sally. She was five years old. Sally was born with some heart complications and was facing her third open-heart surgery. However, this is the only one where she was old enough to understand what was going on. The adults that were around her love her very much, and they were very worried about her surgery. It was interesting how she took it out in her art.

Storytelling

Procedure: This project was two sessions. The first was painting the story with a beginning middle and end on watercolor paper cut into three pieces and taped onto a larger piece of paper. The second session they were asked if they wanted to enhance their paintings with colored pencil and asked to tell the story they had created.

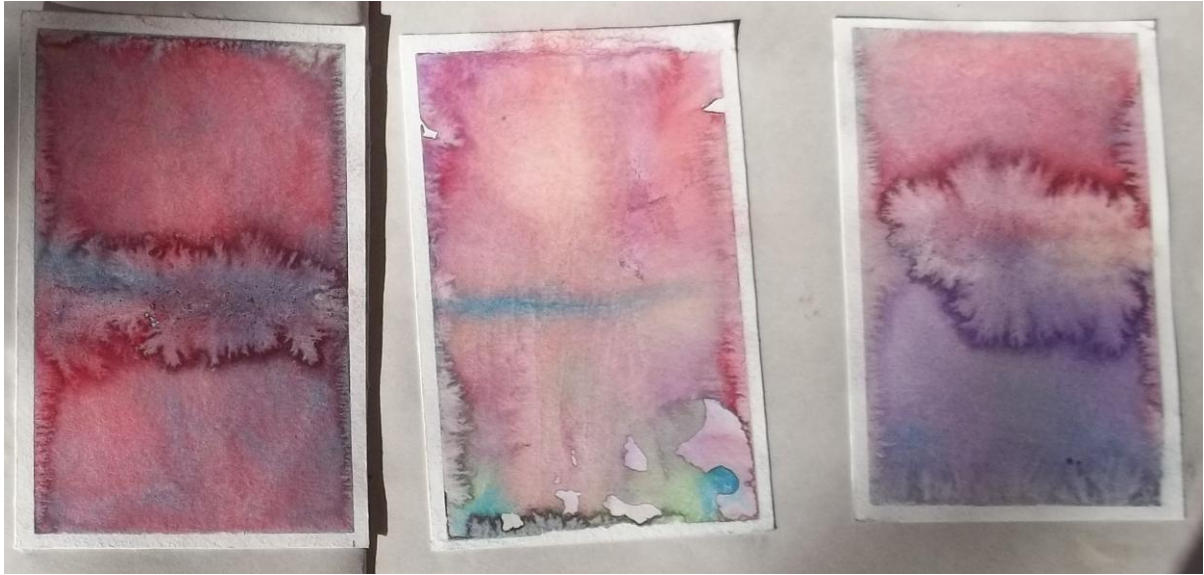
Materials: Three pieces of watercolor paper cut into 4x6 pieces and taped along all sides to a larger piece of paper, water color paint (I used the assortment from the tube), water, assortment of paintbrushes (Melisa and Doug Jumbo Paint Brushes and Alex's Funky Paint Brushes), paint trays, paint shirts, colored pencils, purple dispensing glue sticks, and a computer for typing stories (I used spell check before I hand wrote them into their books.)

Objective: To allow the children to express themselves freely and then to tell a story that will give deeper meaning to their work. Also it was a sense of accomplishment by putting their work into their art journals.

Process: Sally chose not to draw more on top of her painting. She stated it look just how she wanted it. Here is the story that she told me:

“It is the sun and it is so bright that you can not really see anything because it is so bright. Somebody was coming out but they couldn’t see so they bonked into a log and tripped. Then she had to go to the hospital. She needed her brain to be cut open and then they sewed her back up. It was all fixed and then she went home and it was so dark she bumped her foot on the stairs. Then she needed to go to the hospital again and she needed her foot cut open. They put stuff out and put it back in the right place and sewed her back up. She then went back home and was closing the door and slammed her hand in the car door. She went back to the hospital. They cut open her hand and put things back in the right place. She went back home and was watching TV and she scratched her back really hard and had to go back to the hospital again. Then she had breakfast, watched TV, had lunch, watched TV and then had supper, and then went to bed. She watched TV for a long time. She watched The Little’s and The Little. She watched them get animals to get a zoo. Then she watched another thing and another thing and another thing and another thing and another thing. And then after she watched TV she had a lot of breakfast: French toast, cinnamon toast, applesauce and then she had a yogurt and then she had some chocolate pudding then a bar. Then she went somewhere and went swimming. She went back and ate everything in the cabinet, fridge and toaster. She

licked everything clean because she was so hungry. She went back to bed. In the morning someone knocked on the door and it was a bear named Pooh Bear. He was there to see if she had any honey. She said, "Nope we do not have any honey. And then Pooh Bear came in and checked and found the honey and took it and ran away. He ate it in a second. She went to the store and got 250 bottles of honey and she gave one to Pooh. Pooh says, "Actually you can have that" and snuck into the cabinet and took all the bottles and went away in a secret part and he ate it all up in seconds. She went back to the store and it was all gone so she had to make her own honey. Then Pooh Bear had to make homemade honey too and when the girl tried and she burned her tongue and she had to go to the doctor. At the doctor they poured really really cold water on it and then medium water and the burn started to go away and then the cold started to go away. She went home and had her honey and it was perfect and she ate it in more than a second, it took her 16 hours. She wasn't that hungry after all. She gave all of her food away to Pooh Bear and then she was starving. She couldn't get anything at the store because Pooh Bear took it all. She went home and starved and the ambulance came and gave her lots of food. She ate all the food. It turns out that Pooh Bear was a bad bear and stole food and the police put him in jail and they thought he was good so they let him go. He went and stole all the food from everyone and ate it up in less than a second. Then they knew he was bad and he went back to jail. The End."



Conclusion: I learned from this that Sally was very optimistic about her surgery and was not worried about it. She was anxious about having to go through it but she knew everything would be okay in the end. They were waiting as long as they could and after this surgery she will be faced with one more at about 16 when she will be her full size. She knows all of this and understands she is special and strong. Sally is a very strong little girl who supports everyone around her.

Worry Doll

Procedure: Predawn person outline on felt, that was cut out, choose what the doll was going to look like, draw with fabric markers the doll's face and anything else that needed to be added. Iron the fabric markers to set it, cut the clothing to fit, sew the pieces together and add accessories, for example hair.

Materials: Felt, fabric scraps, yarn, Crayola Fabric Markers, yarn needle, scissors, iron and fiber fill.

Objective: To give a positive outlet for anxiety about upcoming events, teaching coping skills and self-soothing techniques.

Process: We sat down together and cut out two pieces of felt for the body and went through a lot of fabric to find ones that appealed to Sally. We had about 20 different kinds of fabric and she slowly narrowed it down to two, one for the front and one for the back. Sally used markers to create faces on each side of the doll and asked for blue hair that would be flipped depending on which doll she was using at that time. The first side was of her doll in “awake” clothes and the second of her in “sleep” clothes, with a blanket so the doll wouldn’t get cold. Sally also sleeps with a special blanket and plans on bringing it to the hospital with her. On the sleeping side she drew a rainbow on one hand and colored the other one red. She did not explain why she wanted the one side colored red but she did want it to be the hand that the blanket was sewn to.

Awake:



Sleep:



Conclusion: I had asked her to complete this special project with me that she could take with her to the hospital, to help support her during this journey. Sally and I created the worry doll. I explained to her if anything was scary to just to tell it to the doll and she would take care of it. Then Sally didn't have to worry about it.

When looking back at this project it is easy to see that Sally is a very positive little girl, and she is currently doing very well in kindergarten after a second surgery to fix something that was found during the open-heart surgery. She took her worry doll to both surgeries. Both sides of the doll have a smile on their face. They are bright and cheerful fabrics with flowers, giving the doll a very comfortable look and very Sally. When Sally went to her pre-op appointment right after she got the doll done she ran down the stairs of the school to show her mother her worry doll. She told her all about it, and she appeared to be very happy with it.

I had to learn that when Sally was facing these things that she was comfortable. She was a little anxious about having to have surgery but not about the outcome. I felt she needed to stay strong for her family and I got the feeling she had too much pressure on her to stay strong because her friends and family were very upset about the situation. However it was a learning experience and I was instructed to look back at what she was doing, her story and how positive it was. Her doll was smiling and a happy looking doll. She obviously was dealing with it very well and I had to accept that it was okay for her to deal with it well. In fact it was a good thing. All the children at the preschool had to deal with this experience, we talked about it often and they were updated via the Internet on their friend Sally's condition regularly. It was very

interesting to watch them play while all of it was unfolding. They played doctor and opened their classmates up to do surgery, and put them back together and then would say “all better now.” It is a great lesson that they cope in different ways and process through their play but a lot through art also.

Case Study: Molly

Molly is a four-year-old girl and one of Sally’s best friends; they are always together at the preschool. Molly is over all a very shy little girl and it took her a few days before she would speak to me. She covers her face with her hands a lot and bites her nails when she is being shy or feeling uncomfortable. While Sally was having surgery, Molly had to find different children to play with because Sally was gone. Then she was use to and she also spent a lot more time doing art with me when I would come. I wanted to do a project that would allow me to see if Molly was doing ok through her friend’s surgery.

Rorschach inkblots

Procedure: The first step was to create the inkblot, children were provided with paint and different paintbrushes and asked to paint on the paper, and then it was folded in half to make it symmetrical. They were then asked to cut out what they saw and put it into their art journal.

Materials: Large paper (24x36), paint, paint pans (I use TV dinner trays to hold the paint) paintbrushes, (Melisa and Doug Jumbo Paint Brushes and Alex's Funky Paint Brushes), scissors, glue sticks, and other materials they asked for (In Molly's case, yarn).

Objective: To understand a little more about what may be going on in their unconscious and to look for any red flags.

Process: The idea behind doing the inkblots was that they would tell me through what they saw if they were having any trouble with Sally being in surgery. Molly actually took a very long time cutting out everything that she saw in her picture and even used just green pieces or yellow pieces as accents to what she wanted. She made a flower with a sun and then cut out a butterfly. She made it very obvious that she did not want to glue her butterfly down to the page. She stated that she wanted it to be able to fly so after brainstorming with her she chose to use a piece of yarn to attaching it to her journal. Molly also made a pocket in her book so the butterfly would stay safe.





Conclusion: I learned a lot about Molly watching her create this work and how she behaved and what she created. She was dealing with her friend's absence and situation very well in a way that was familiar to her; she was also dealing with a lack of a 'best friend' by spending more time with me while I was there. I was more than happy to help her cope and process the events in her life.

Free Drawing

Procedure: Molly was asked to create a drawing with no directive.

Materials: Her art journal on an open page, and Crayola markers.

Objective: To give the children an opportunity to have full control over the project and to observe what they do with that freedom.

Process: Molly asked for help on how to draw a butterfly and I showed her, on a different piece of paper, how I would do it. I also told her that she could do hers different and still be correct.



Conclusion: Her drawings are always age appropriate and very detailed and delicate when it is something that she cares about. She did attempt to create the lines in the grass and the sky a solid color above the butterflies, which is age appropriate. She always takes her time to create what she wants to the best of her capability, she uses very bright happy colors that match what she projects to me.

Paper Bag Puppets

Procedure: Each lunch sized paper bag was prepared by folding the bottom corners of the flap and gluing the folds in place to create a jaw line. Materials to decorate the puppet were then glued on by the child. Then I took a picture of it and printed it for them to put it into their art journal; I also came up with a question form for their journal and asked them to draw a picture of their puppet doing something good.

The questions I asked about their puppet:

Tell me about your puppet, does it have...

A name?

Superpower?

Family?

Where does it live?

How old is it?

What does it eat?

Materials: Markers, wiggle eyes, gems, buttons, foam shapes, leaves, pom-poms, construction paper, scissors, and Mod Podge glue.

Objective: Increase self-expression, independence, self-esteem, hand eye-coordination and imagination.

Process:



Conclusion: Molly chose to call her puppet Ella and resembled Molly in a lot of ways: being an only child, no super powers, being four and a half years old, and the fact that Ella also eats just people food. Molly did not have a lot of creativity when coming up with her puppet but it fit her personality very well. She did exhibit some signs of anxiety when I asked her to draw her puppet doing something good, she bit on her finger nails and started to chew on some of her hair, all being signs that she was uncomfortable. I talked to her about what it meant to do something good, and she said that she do not know a lot. Then we talked about how it felt when someone did something good for her, and she replied that it felt good when someone was nice. Then I asked her if she could

remember a time when she felt good because someone did something nice, and she said she got a gift that she was not expecting. Molly chose to draw her puppet giving a gift and picked up a marker and then started to chew on her hair again. I asked her if she needed something and she said that she did not know how to draw a puppet, and I suggested that she draw it like she draws a person because we are pretending that she is real, and Molly said that she wanted her puppet to be drawn like she was because she was pretty that way. I drew the first one by drawing a rectangle and then a line to represent where the puppets mouth was. Molly chose to draw the rest of the puppets on the page and she drew their faces and decorated each one with patterns. She spent a long time and stayed on task for a long time but taking in to consideration of her age. When drawing the grass she started with m shapes and then just a wiggly line, showing acknowledgement of her space and a step towards realism. She did spend a very long time on the project, more than is typical for her age.

I feel that Molly got a lot out of doing art with me because she had to work out problems herself with some help from me, instead of having her friends make the choices for her which she allowed most of the time. I gave her a voice to express herself.

Case Study: Rory

Rory is a child who acts out at times. Rory is four years old and has some sensory processing issues. I also had the opportunity to work with him at the speech clinic, so I was able to watch him grow over a year. He has been informally diagnosed with being affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder and is currently seeking a second opinion. His

parents have chosen to keep him in preschool one more year before sending him to kindergarten.

Thankful Turkey

Procedure: I made a poster of how to make a turkey for a visual storyboard for the children that benefit from using storyboards. There were two options for the children, precut hands (store bought die cuts) or for them to trace their hand and cut it out. I gave the two options based on sensory preferences and ability of the child. Then the child was asked what they were thankful for and that was written for them on the fingers and covered with feathers. There were also markers to color on hands and wiggle eyes for the turkey's eyes.

Materials: Die cut hands, construction paper, scissors, markers, wiggle eyes, feathers and feathers precut out of construction paper for a variety, and purple dispensing glue sticks.

Objective: Self-expression, hand-eye-coordination, the term thankful and what it means to be thankful, thinking about what they enjoy in their life.

Process:



Conclusion: Rory's marks are very organized and planned. I find it very interesting that none of them touch. He also chose to only use the feathers that I had cut out of paper, perhaps it is because of sensory stimulation. Rory was very quiet and talked very little.

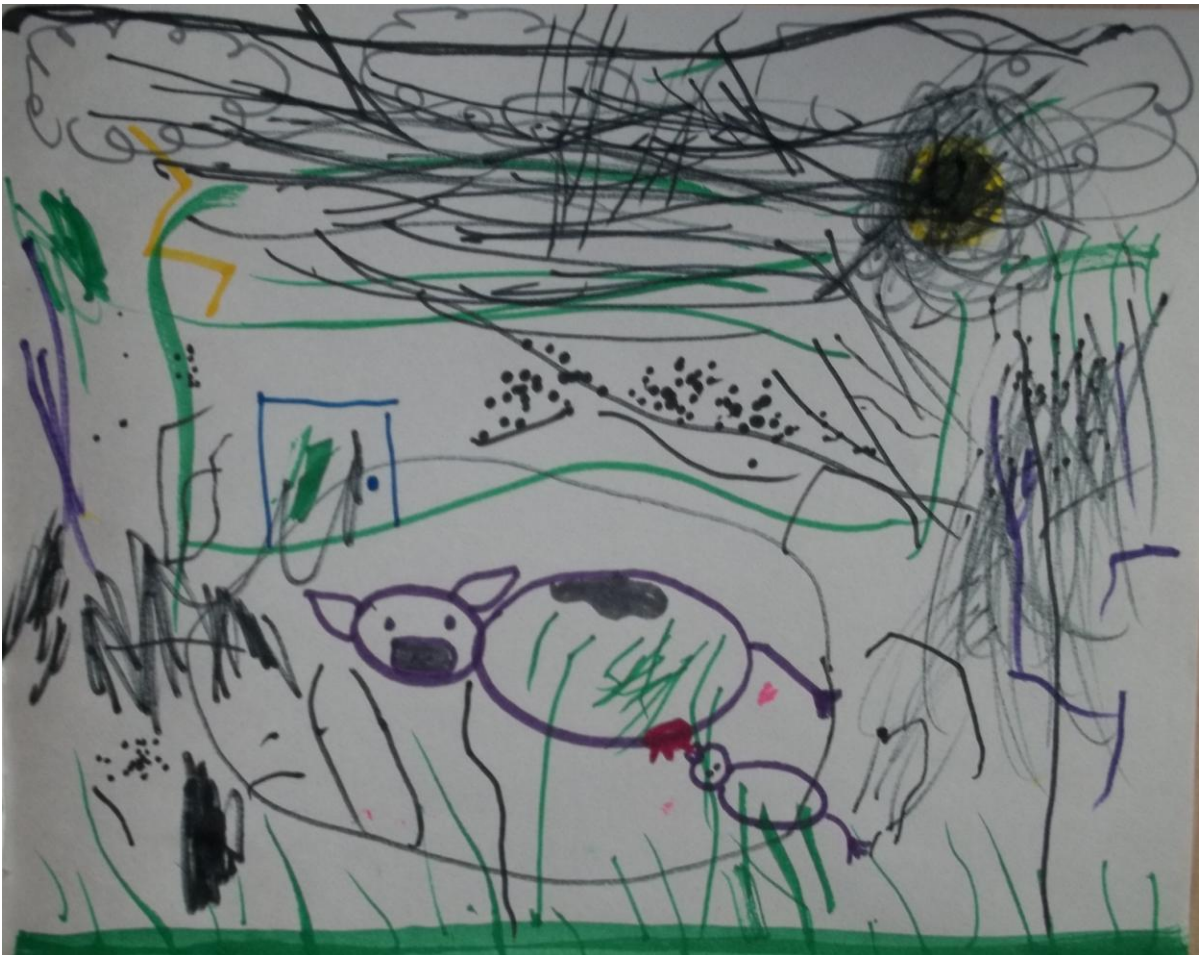
Free Drawing

Procedure: Rory was asked to create a drawing with no directive.

Materials: His art journal on an open page, and Crayola markers.

Objective: To give the children an opportunity to have full control over the project and to observe what they do with that freedom.

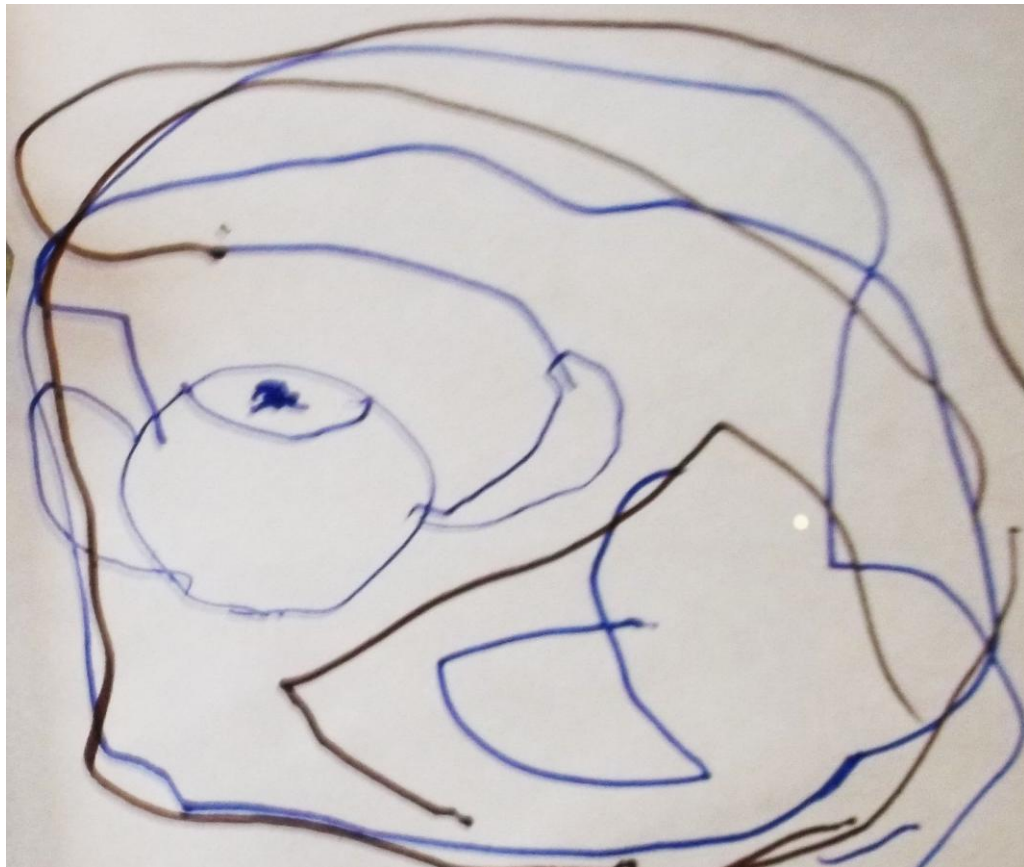
Process: Rory stated that he could not do it alone, so I tried several times to get him to do it saying, "I do not know how to draw a cow, will you show me?" He then replied, "yes you do, do it." We worked together, Rory asked me to draw a cow, so I drew the body and he drew the legs. He asked me to draw the head, and he drew clouds in the sky. We both took turns and told a story as we did it.



Conclusion: Rory told a story as we worked together, "There was a cow who ate in the field, he ate grass. He had a baby cow that drank his milk. The sun was out but then

clouds came and covered the sun. There was a barn and a fence over here. Then the clouds got darker and it started to rain.” As the story progressed, he added more and more to the picture, the raindrops and the clouds that covered the sun.

He told a story one other time. I drew the teapot and he drew the handle, spout and the tea. In the middle of the picture is teacup that the tea lands in. He asked me to draw him a teapot and he drew the tea coming out of it and told a story about it, “This is where the tea comes out. It goes up and around before it gets to the tea pot.”



Rory started to have some behavior problems and started to regress and this fall. He is now five and is starting to isolate himself and withdrawal from the children more. They have introduced a weighted vest and other sensory intervention therapies with

him, including massage and a box full of rice that he can dig through and find different objects.

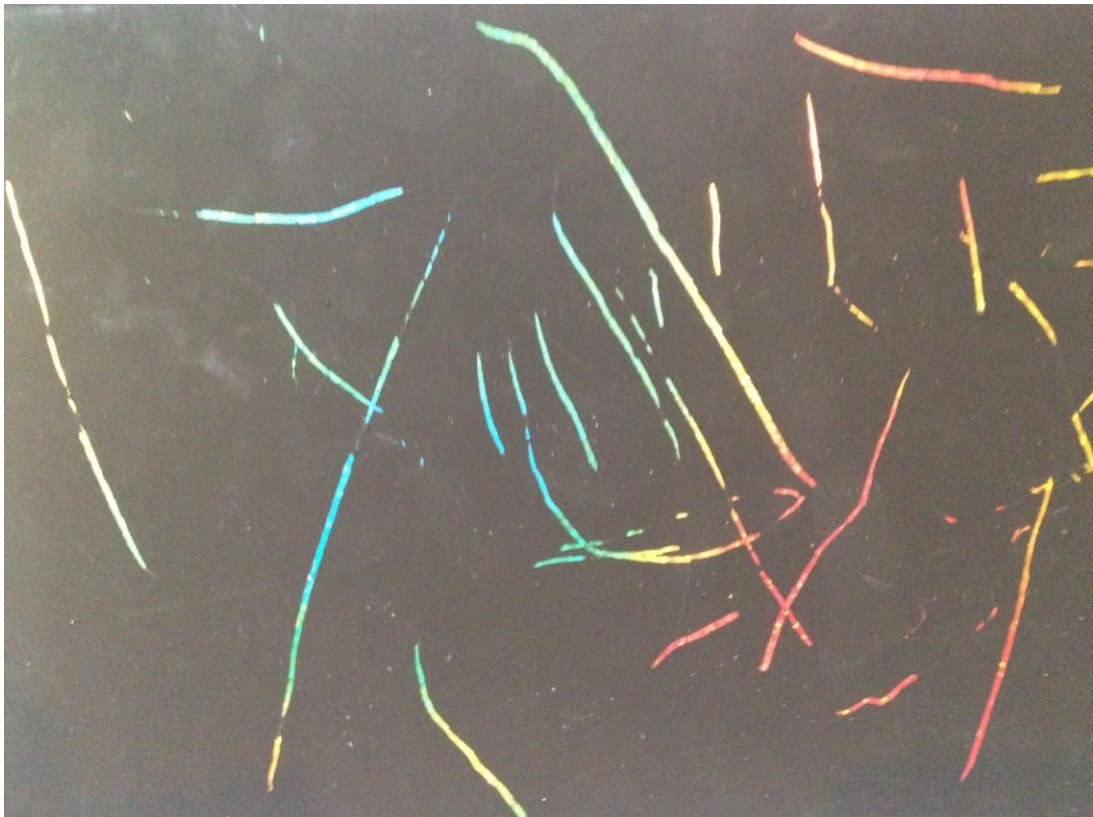
Free Drawings

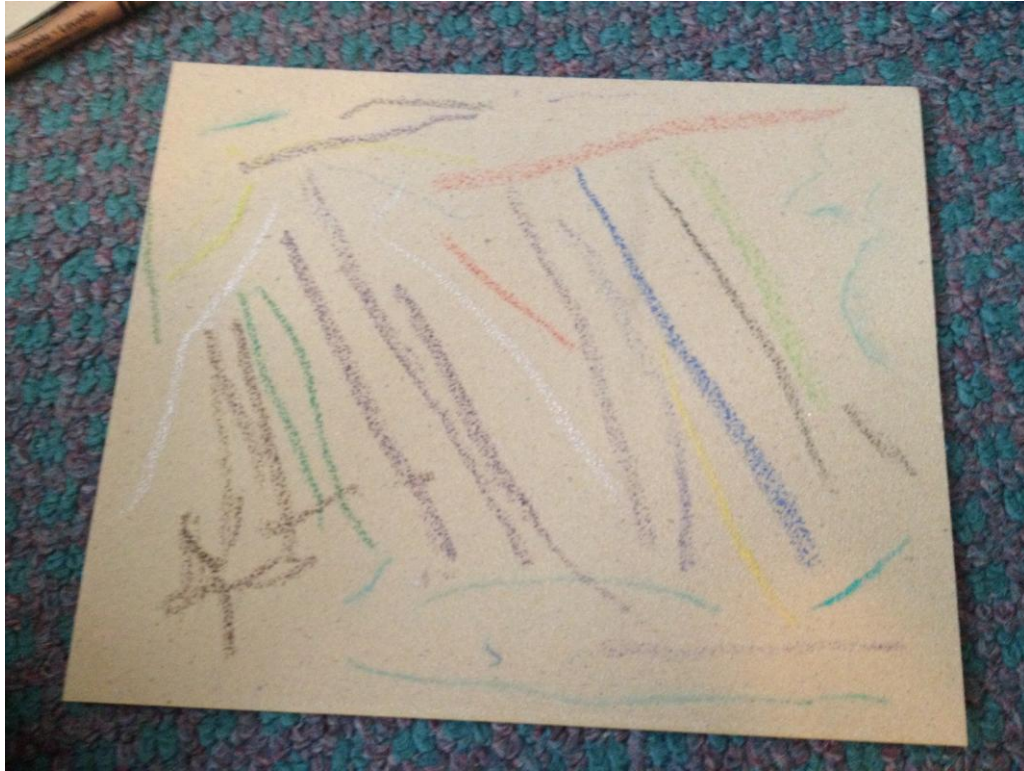
Procedure: I have introduced different drawing textures and materials to involve more sensory. The children were not asked to draw anything in particular.

Materials: Crayons on sand paper, crayons or markers on heavy paper, and scratch art paper with scratch sticks.

Objective: To involve more sensory in the art to see if it will help with some behaviors and the regression.

Process:





Conclusion: All his drawings are closer to what he did last November than what he did in the spring. Rory is also talking a lot less and when he does he chooses to push other kids buttons and to get them worked up. Rory has been exhibiting a lot of behaviors that we have overcome in the past. I talked to his teacher and there are some things going on at home. He is not required at home to do things for himself and if he says “no” to cleaning up toys then that is accepted and he does not have to. The regression may be a sign of anxiety that the stability in his home life has changed, now that he spends more time with one parent than the other.

Drawing Together

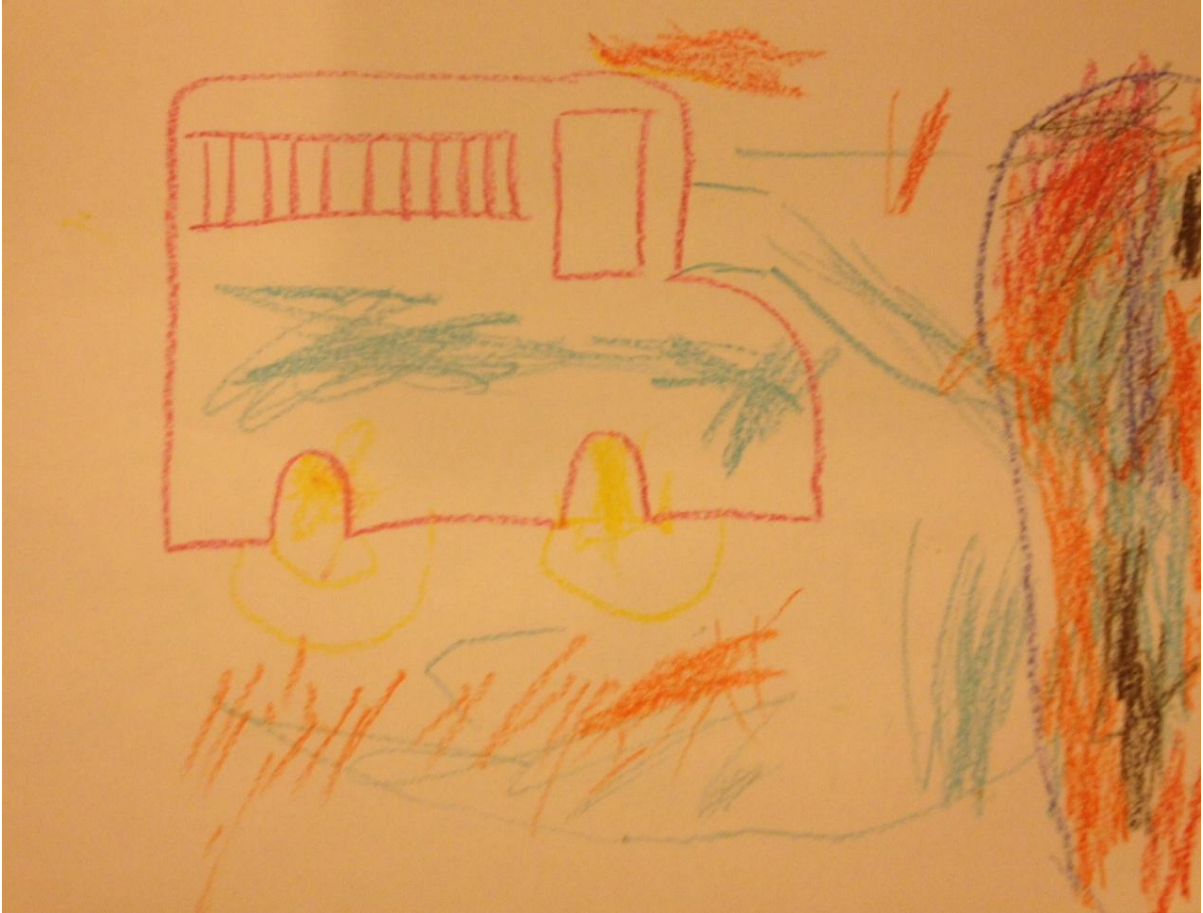
Procedure: I asked Rory to draw a picture with me and he was given the power of choosing the topic.

Materials: Crayons on heavyweight drawing paper.

Objective: To engage Rory and to observe if the old tendencies came back or if he continued with the lines.

Process:





Conclusion: For the first drawing that we did together, Rory asked for me to make a lion. He then kept telling me what to draw next and I reminded him he has to draw something first because we were taking turns. He grabbed a yellow crayon and drew with his hand in a fist and using very hard pressure while trying to make a circle. Rory gave up trying to create a circle and just made scribbles in two different directions in a fast manner. Rory also contributed to the picture by making grass and coloring the lion's body. He really didn't do as much as he has in the past and I asked for a story, but he couldn't give me one.

I chose to turn the paper over and I know he has been into fire trucks lately so I drew the fire truck outline, adding a window and a ladder. I then took a paper for

myself and started to draw flowers and a butterfly. Rory looked at me and then started to draw the wheels of the fire truck. He kept making them larger until he got them to look like circles, starting with scribbles then a circle and ending with the largest circles from the wheel wells. Rory then started to tell a story:

"It needs a siren (and drew the red and yellow on top of the fire truck), this is the siren; it is flashing because it is going fast. (Rory drew an outline on the edge of the paper and filled it in.) This is where the fire truck is going; it is a fire. The fire truck is going fast, see?"

I looked over from what I was doing and gave him undivided attention and said, "Oh, yes it is."

Rory then continued with the story, "The fire truck needs to stop. It is going too fast. (Rory drew orange under the fire truck and stated it was stopping. He grabbed a light blue crayon.) This is the water coming out of the truck and going into the fire, do you see it?"

I replied that, "Yes, I can see it and it looks like the fire truck is going to put out the fire."

Rory looked at me, smiled and said, "The fire truck always wins!"

The picture took Rory ten minutes to complete, and when he had finished he looked more relaxed than I have seen him in a while. Rory went to the front room to play and actually played with the children instead of trying to hide the toys they were looking for. This only lasted that day, but it was a great success to see Rory that way instead of regressing.

Case Study: Macy

Another little girl I worked closely with was Macy she was three years old when I first started in the spring and now is four years old.

Paper Bag Puppets

Procedure: Each lunch sized paper bag was prepared by folding the bottom corners of the flap and gluing the folds in place to create a jaw line. Materials to decorate the puppet were then glued on by the child. Then I took a picture of it and printed it for them to put it into their art journal; I also came up with a question form for their journal and asked them to draw a picture of their puppet doing something good.

The questions I asked about their puppet:

Tell me about your puppet, does it have...

A name?

Superpower?

Family?

Where does it live?

How old is it?

What does it eat?

Materials: Markers, wiggle eyes, gems, buttons, foam shapes, leaves, pom-poms, construction paper, scissors, and Mod Podge glue.

Objective: Increase self-expression, independence, self-esteem, hand-eye-coordination and imagination.

Process:



Conclusion: I asked Macy why her puppets were frowning and she said that they just were and then said she was done.

I observed her closely for a few weeks, focusing on her behavior and how she acted with the other kids. She was a very bubbly, happy, smiling and laughing like any child her age. I had concerns of insecurity, or maybe even depression, so I brought it up to one of my professors and I was reminded to take a step back and look at her development. We realized she is on track and her personality is possibly a reflection of

her mother's personality. She is a very happy little girl and positive. It is possible that she is just not that into drawing or like any four-years-old, does one thing and then moves on to the next as fast as she can. I learned to take a step back and I observed her a little more then I realized, she is getting older and now she is the "big kid" in the class. She has more responsibility and she is asked to do more for the younger kids and to be a positive role model, and that explains a lot of her behaviors. I bring this up because it was a very important lesson for me to learn that it is very easy to "over analyze" a situation and as a therapist I will need to be able to take a step back and look at what I am doing and making sure I am not over analyzing anything and really seeing what is there.

Free Drawings

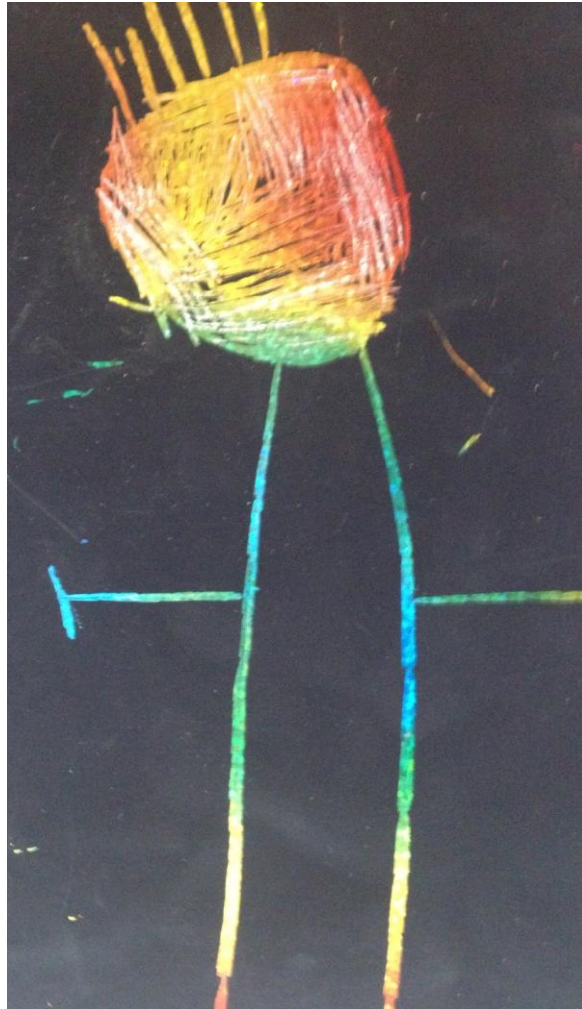
Procedure: I have introduced different drawing textures and materials to involve more sensory, they were not asked to draw anything in particular.

Materials: Crayons on sand paper, crayons or markers on heavy paper, and scratch art paper with scratch sticks.

Objective: To involve more sensory in the art to see if the drawings would change by becoming more or less detailed.

Process: Here are some examples of her drawings:





Conclusion: When I took a step back and really looked at her art, it is very age appropriate and there are no red flags. When looking at her behavior she is very positive and happy.

CONCLUSION

Children's drawings are very complex, it takes a lot of time and practice to understand what is being expressed. Without practice, it is easy to overanalyze or project onto a child's artwork. I have shared that I have overanalyzed Macy's work, and was surprised at how easy it was to do. It is very interesting to research the different theories and compare the similarities and differences between them. Once more these are only theories, and they can be influenced by a child's surroundings and culture. These theories are a great foundation to understanding children's drawings and to help them in a way that only art can.

The work with the children was the most rewarding for me. I enjoyed watching them grow and succeed. It was gratifying to watch Rory grow out of some of his behaviors and see everything he was able to accomplish in a short time. Then it was hard to see him regress back to where he started. However, through art I was able to communicate with him in a way that allowed him to go back to the child with all the progress, even for just a day. I was also given the opportunity to help Sally and her friends cope with the scary situation involving open-heart surgery. I had the training and the tools to help the children in a way that they needed at that time.

I am honored that I have had the opportunity to work with these children. They have taught me so much about how I can help people through the challenges life gives us. I hope to continue working with children and to continue learning from their art. I also hope this paper teaches people about what art therapy is about and ways it can benefit our children and our communities.

References Cited

- Berk, L. E. (2008). *Intants and Children* (6th Edition ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Betensky, M. G. (1995). *What Do You See? Phenomenology of Therapeutic Art Expression*. Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Betts, D. J. (2003). Developing a Projective Drawing Test: Experiences with the Face Stimulus Assessment (FSA). *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association* , 20 (2), 77-82.
- Brookes, M. (1976). *Drawing with Children: A Creative Teaching and Leraning Method That Works for Adults, Too.* . Los Angeles, California, United States of America: Jeremy P. Tarcher, INC.
- Case, C. &. (1990). *Working with Children in Art Thearpy*. New York, New York, United States of America: Tavistock/Routledge.
- DiLeo, J. H. (1983). *Interpreting Children's Drawings*. New York, NY: Brunner-Routledge.
- Folks-Appleman. (2007). *Draw Me a Picture*. (S. Parren-Gardner, Trans.) Foxap Scriptus, Nuenen, Netherlands: Th.L.M.
- Harris, D. B. (1963). *Children's Drawings as Measures of Intellectual Maturity*. New York, New York, United States of America: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc.
- Hobday, A. &. (1999). *Creative Therapy with Children & Adolescents*. Atascadero, California, United States of America: Impact Publishers Inc.
- Kellogg, R. (1969). *Analyzing Children's Art*. Palo Alto, California, United States of America: Mayfield Publication Company.
- Klepsch, M., & Logie, L. (1982). *Children Draw and Tell: An Introduction to the Projective USes of Children's Human Figure Drawings*. New York, New York, United States of America: Brunner/Mazel.
- Kramer, E. (1977). *Art Thearpy in a Children's Community*. Springfield, Illinois, United States of America: Schocken Books.
- Lowenfeld, V., & Brittain, L. W. (1987). *Creative and Mental Growth* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Yersey, United States of America: Prentice Hall.
- Malchiodi, C. A. (1998). *Understanding Children's Drawings*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Myers, D. G. (2008). *Psychology*. New York, New York, United States of America: Worth Publishers.

QSX Software Group. (2005 йил 1-June). *Color Meaning*. Retrieved 2012 йил 5-March from Color Wheel Pro: <http://www.color-wheel-pro.com/color-meaning.html>

Rubin, J. A. (1998). *Art Therapy an Introduction*. Lillington, North Carolina, United States of America: Edwards Brothers.

Rubin, J. A. (2005). *Child Art Therapy* (25th Anniversary Edition ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Solso, R. L. (1933). *The Psychology of Art and the Evolution of the Concious Brain*. Cambridge, Massachusetss, United States of America: The MIT Press.

Thomas, G. V., & Silk, A. M. (1990). *An Intorduction to the Psychology of Children's Drawings*. New York, New York, United States of America: New York University Press.

Williams, G. H., & Wood, M. M. (1977). *Developmental Art Therapy*. Baltimore, MD: University Park Press.

Zelanski, P., & Fisher, M. (2003). *Color* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, United States of America: Prentice Hall Inc.