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Why Drawing is Important for Kids

By Suma O'Farrell



As parents, we're always looking for ideas or products that engage our kids in creative and educational ways. Sometimes, the best things for them are very simple and easy to do and may not require much effort on anyone's part. Take drawing for example. Unless a child has a natural inclination toward art or drawing, their pursuit of this activity usually declines as they age and grow out of that developmental stage. How often do we encourage drawing as an option when our children are bored or looking for something to do if it's not already something they choose? Yet drawing is a great activity, not just to keep them occupied, but as a tool for developing skills that will serve them well in school. Stimulating imagination and creativity, encouraging exploration and observation, improving visual-spatial awareness and concentration as well as better handwriting and manual dexterity are examples of skills that may be enhanced through drawing.

Unlike reading, writing and math which are left-brained activities, drawing taps into the right side of the brain which deals with patterns and visual imagery. Drawing stimulates the brain to make observations. Children who draw often may improve their ability to notice detail and see differences or similarities. Over time, these details present themselves as patterns that are more easily recognized or understood. Drawing also requires the ability to visualize details, remember them and transfer the mental image onto a piece of paper. Visual-spatial skills are needed to take these observations and recreate, manipulate or modify them into shapes, patterns or designs.

Some kids thrive in subjects that require strong visual-spatial skills such as art, geometry, geography and science. For others, drawing may very well be a great stepping stone toward strengthening their understanding of these subjects. Those who do well in these areas often go on to become scientists, artists, engineers, architects, and designers to name a few.

Drawing is great for even those who feel they have no real talent. Most drawing tends to be focused around recreating real life or inanimate objects. Some kids may hesitate to draw because they may feel that their recreations don't accurately represent the object which they are trying to draw. However, drawing can incorporate any kind of design. In India, rangoli is a very popular type of drawing that manifests shapes and patterns as well as objects.

Rangoli can be drawn on a dot grid that provides an easy-to-use foundation for drawing. The grid allows one to experiment with drawing by simply making shapes or patterns rather than drawing objects. The idea is to be creative and experiment with no specific result required. However, the end result is usually very gratifying as unique patterns emerge. The dot grid also provides a great foundation for drawing objects as well since shapes can be transformed into images. Rangoli offers flexibility and ease that may encourage even the most reluctant person to try it. Once familiar, they may even feel compelled to continue drawing. With practice, rangoli may lead to better free-hand drawing.

Of course, one can always experiment with shapes and patterns without the use of a grid, and some may prefer a clean canvas or, perhaps, a different type of background. Whatever type of drawing your child may choose, provide them with lots of inspiration and materials!

Suma O'Farrell is the author of the multiple-award winning children's drawing book [Rangoli: An Indian Art Activity Book](#) through which she shares her love of the Indian art form, rangoli. Suma and her husband, Jim, together formed [Mazaa, LLC](#), a tween-focused company which aims to make culture accessible to kids through fun, hands-on products that encourage creativity and exploration.