**Artist of the Month**

By **Amanda**
Age Range: **5 to 11**

At the beginning of each month, on a dedicated display board, post up an example of an artist's work. I then encourage the children to find out the name of the artist and the name of the picture.

The second week another picture is added and again I set a competition to see if they can name this week's picture. This continues for the rest of the month, with the display ever changing. Once the first week is over and the children have discovered who the artist is, I add biographical information, facts and questions about the artist, to make an interactive display. I have a selection of books available to help them find the artist. When the children have entered the competition I usually hand out a prize for the correct answer at the end of the week.

This has certainly been a good way of my class being able to distinguish a Mondrian from a Monet!

<http://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/Teachers-TV-Quentin-Blake-Power-of-Illustration-6047869/>

**Ways to Nurture Imagination:**

* Ask questions, probe.
* Provide a variety of opportunities for observing, exploring and expanding thought processes.
* Encourage play and experimenting with new ideas, new adventures.
* Do things differently. Encourage children to think about how they can do something better.
* Give a child time to generate ideas.
* Deprive a child of something and let them create a replacement.
* Don’t judge or evaluate. Encourage the process of creativity rather than asking for a particular outcome or product.

**Encourage Creativity:**

* **Turn off the TV**and electronic games.
* **Tolerate Messes**. Let a child play in the dirt. A block of wood can become a bulldozer, sticks can become a secret fort.
* **Let Your Child Lead**. Take a walk and let your child led the way inventing games or making up songs or movements.
* **Listen to Your Child**. Answer their many questions.
* **Encourage Imaginary Play**. Preschoolers don’t care what they look like to others or how smelly their costume has become. Let them enjoy pretending.

**Make up Stories in the Car, on a Walk, while Reading Books:**

* Begin a story, then ask: “Where do you think the story should go next?”
* Let your child be the star of the story.
* Let children choose a word and begin a story making up things about the words. Continue the story by asking: What happens next, how, when, where, who, why?

**3 Questions to Enhance Creativity:**

* What would happen if?
* Is there a better way?
* What do you think?

**Benefits of Creative Play:**

* Ability to problem solve
* Higher self-esteem,confidence and self-fulfillment
* Better able to cope with challenges and difficult situations
* Becoming creators and innovators

How many times has a child discarded the new toy in a box – to play with the box? Your child will want more and more toys if they don’t know how to use their imagination to build on what they have. They will trade their imagination for things someone else thought of - instead of developing their own creativity.

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