

Stages of Artistic Development

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MAECED



Scribbling
(2-4 years)



Pre-schematic
(4-7 years)



Schematic
(7-9 years)



Dawning Realism
(9-12 years)



Pseudo-naturalistic
(12-14 years)



Decision Stage
(14+ years)



Introduction

Children **communicate** long before they can write.
One of their earliest languages is **art**.
Every **scribble**, **line**, and **drawing** represents
how children **think**, **feel**, and **perceive** the world.
Children's drawings are not merely "cute pictures";
they reveal **cognitive**, **emotional**, **social**, and **motor** development.



As future early childhood educators,
understanding **artistic development** allows teachers to:



Assess
developmental progress



Plan
age-appropriate art activities



Encourage
creativity rather than perfection



Understand
children's emotions through drawings



What is Artistic Development?

Artistic development refers to the progressive changes in children's ability to **express thoughts, feelings, imagination, and observations** through visual art.

It develops alongside:



Brain
development



Fine motor
development



Language
development



Cognitive
development



Emotional
development



Social
development



Art is therefore both a **developmental** process and a means of **communication**.





Theoretical Foundation



Viktor Lowenfeld's Theory of Artistic Development

Viktor Lowenfeld (1903–1960), often regarded as the father of art education, proposed six developmental stages of children's artistic growth in his influential book *Creative and Mental Growth*.



“Lowenfeld believed that:
“Children should not be taught to copy adults. Instead, art should develop naturally according to their developmental readiness.””

His theory remains widely used in:



Early
Childhood
Education



Elementary
Education



Child
Psychology



Art
Education



Special
Education



Lowenfeld's theory helps educators understand how children express themselves through art and supports their natural growth and creativity.



Stage 1

Scribbling Stage (2–4 years)

Characteristics

Children enjoy the **movement of drawing** rather than producing recognizable images.

Drawing focuses on:



hand movement



experimentation



sensory exploration

The child **does not intend** to create **realistic objects**.

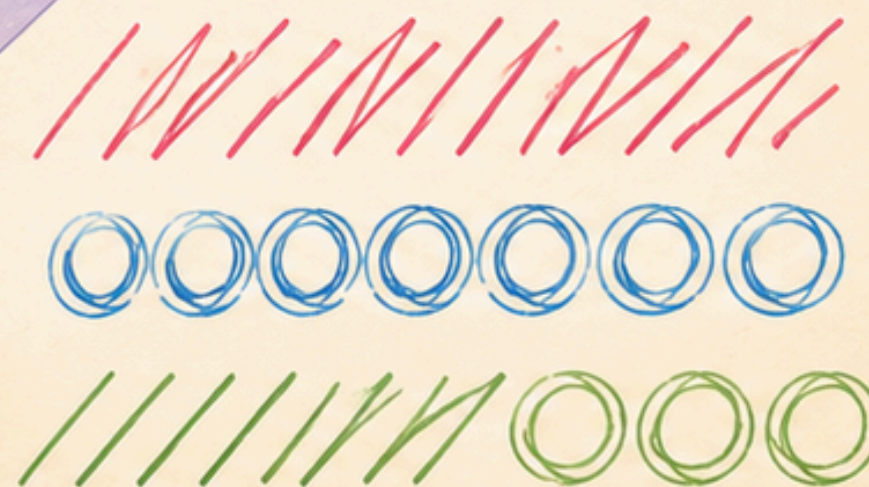


Types of Scribbling

1 Random Scribbling

- uncontrolled movements
- no visual intention

Example:



At this stage, children express freely through lines, loops, and marks. Our role is to **encourage** their exploration and **celebrate** their creativity!



Stage 1: Scribbling Stage (2-4 years)

2. Controlled Scribbling

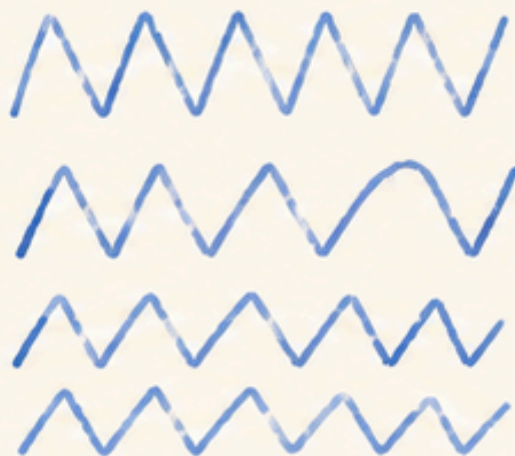
The child begins **controlling movement**.

Examples include:

Circles



Zigzags



Spirals



Repeated Lines



As children practice, their movements become more **purposeful and controlled**, helping them build the foundation for future artistic skills.



★ Stage 1: Scribbling Stage (2–4 years) ♥

3. Named Scribbling

The child assigns meaning. ♥

Example:



Adult:

“What is this?”



Child:

“This is Daddy.”



Although adults cannot recognize it, the child has symbolic intent. ♥





Developmental Skills

These skills help young children **grow**, **explore**, and **express** themselves through art. ♥

Eye-Hand Coordination



Helps children use their eyes and hands together effectively.



Shoulder Control



Supports large arm movements needed for drawing and painting.



Finger Strength



Builds the muscles in the hands and fingers for better control.



Imagination



Encourages creative thinking and helps children express their ideas uniquely.



♥ When these skills develop, children gain confidence in **creating**, **exploring**, and **learning** every day. ★

Teacher
April ♥

Classroom Activities

Finger Painting



Exploring colors and textures using finger movements.



Jumbo Crayons



Encouraging bold strokes and creativity with easy-to-hold crayons.



Chalk Drawing



Promoting outdoor creativity and large muscle coordination.



Sponge Painting



Discovering patterns and textures through sponge stamping.



Sand Drawing



Building fine motor skills through sensory and tactile play.



Teacher should **NEVER** ask:

"What is it supposed to be?"



Instead ask:

"Tell me about your drawing."



Stage 2: Pre-schematic Stage (4–7 years)

Children begin using symbols.

Characteristics

Children draw using **simple symbols** to represent the world around them.

Children draw:

- ✓ people
- ✓ houses
- ✓ trees
- ✓ flowers
- ✓ sun
- ✓ pets



This is the stage of:
“My first people.”

Key Points

- ★ Children use symbols that have **meaning** to them.
- ★ Drawings may **not look real** but are very important.
- ★ Size, color, and placement show the child's **ideas** and **feelings**.

The symbols children draw are their way of **expressing thoughts, experiences, and imagination.** 

Every drawing is a window into a **child's world.** 

Teacher
April 

Stage 2: Pre-schematic Stage (4-7 years)

Children begin using symbols.

Human Figure

Often called the
“tadpole person”

Features:

- ✓ large head
- ✓ two legs
- ✓ sometimes arms
- ✓ no neck
- ✓ little body



Example



At this stage, drawings are
symbolic rather than **realistic**.



Color Use

Children choose colors based on **preference** rather than **realism**.

Example:

 Purple grass

 Blue sun

 Pink tree

 Perfectly
normal. 



Classroom Activities

These activities help children **express** their ideas, build **confidence**, and develop **creativity**.

Self-Portrait



Children draw pictures of themselves using simple shapes and colors.

Family Drawing



Children draw pictures of their family members and special moments together.

Favorite Animal



Children draw their favorite animals and share why they like them.

My Home



Children draw their house or home and the things around it.

Community Helpers



Children draw people who help in the community and what they do.

Through these activities, children learn about **themselves**, their **world**, and the **people** around them.



They now know:
"This is how I draw
a house."
"This is how I draw
a tree."

Stage 3: Schematic Stage (7-9 years)

Children develop consistent visual symbols.

Characteristics

- ✓ Consistent symbols
- ✓ Baseline
- ✓ Skyline
- ✓ Better organization
- ✓ Objects arranged logically

Example

- Sun
- Bird
- Tree House Tree
- Ground

The ground line appears.
Objects no longer float.

Color

- More realistic
- Green grass
- Blue sky
- Brown tree

Children's drawings now show
their understanding of space,
order, and the real world!

Classroom Activities

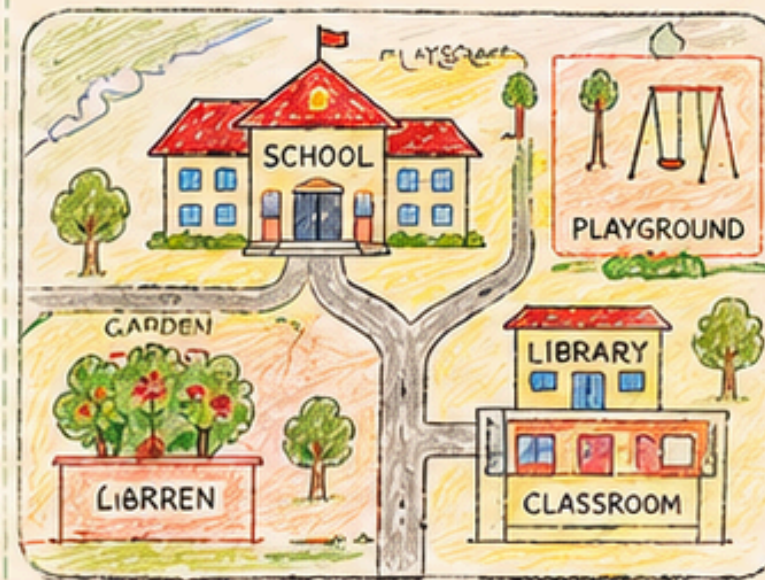
These activities help children **observe**, **imagine**, and **represent** the world around them through drawings.

Landscape Drawing



Children draw natural scenes like mountains, rivers, trees, and the sky.

School Map



Children create simple maps of their school and label important places.

Neighborhood



Children draw the places around their homes like stores, parks, and roads.

Community Scene



Children draw people in the community and the important things they do.



These drawings show how children **understand** and **connect** with their environment.



Stage 4: *Dawning Realism* (9–12 years)



Children begin noticing reality.

Instead of symbols, they attempt **realistic** representation.



Characteristics

- ★ Improved proportion
- ★ Overlapping objects
- ★ Perspective begins
- ★ Details increase
- ★ Different facial expressions
- ★ Gender differences appear



At this stage, drawings look more like the **real world** because children **understand** what they see.



Children take **pride** in their work and pay attention to **details**.



Example of Dawning Realism

Instead of every person looking alike, they now draw:

- ★ hairstyles
- ★ clothing
- ★ height differences
- ★ facial features



- | | | |
|---|--|---------------------------|
| ✓ | | Different hairstyles |
| ✓ | | Different clothing |
| ✓ | | Different heights |
| ✓ | | Different facial features |

Common Frustration

- Children compare their drawings with peers.
- Some stop drawing because they think:

“I’m not good at art.”



Teachers should encourage effort rather than perfection.





Activities

These activities help children **observe**, **express**, and **appreciate** the world in many ways.



Still life



Children draw objects that do not move, like fruits, vases, or toys.

Nature drawing



Children draw things in nature, such as trees, mountains, flowers, and animals.

Observation drawing



Children look closely at an object and draw what they really see.

Portraits



Children draw people, showing facial features and expressions.

Comic strips



Children tell stories through pictures and words in sequence.



Stage 5: Pseudo-Naturalistic Stage (12-14 years)

Art becomes expressive. Adolescents seek realism.

Characteristics

- ✓ Perspective
- ✓ Shading
- ✓ Depth
- ✓ Movement
- ✓ Personal style
- ✓ Identity expression



They ask:
“Does this
look realistic?”



Activities

These activities help children explore their **creativity**, **imagination**, and **unique artistic expression**.

Fashion illustration



Children design clothes and styles, expressing ideas through fashion.

Poster making



Children create posters to share messages about things they care about.

Character design



Children invent characters with their own looks, stories, and personalities.

Digital drawing



Children use digital tools to draw, color, and create amazing art.

Mixed media



Children combine different materials like paint, paper, and fabric.



Every activity encourages children to **imagine**, **create**, and make their own **masterpieces!**



Stage 6: Decision Stage

(14 years and above)

Students make choices regarding art.
Some pursue **advanced artistic skills**.
Others use art for **recreation**.

Characteristics



Personal style



Students develop their own unique artistic voice and visual expression.



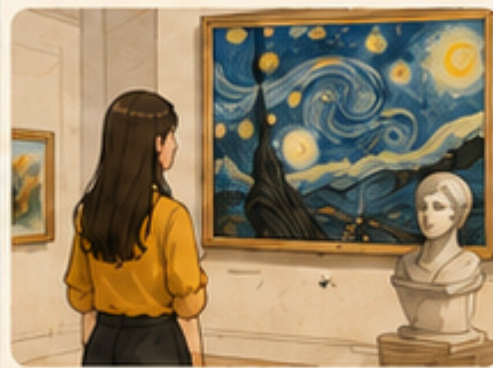
Critical thinking



They analyze, reflect, and solve problems through art.



Art appreciation



They understand and value different art forms, artists, and cultures.



Portfolio development



They build portfolios to showcase their skills and growth.



Career exploration



They explore careers related to art and design or use art in other fields.

Every choice in art is a step toward **discovering who you are and what you can create.**



Art is not just a subject—it's a way of seeing, thinking, and becoming.



Activities

Explore. Create. Inspire.

Painting



Express ideas and emotions using colors, shapes, and textures.

Graphic Design



Communicate messages visually through layouts, typography, and imagery.

Photography



Capture moments and tell stories through the lens.

Animation



Bring characters and stories to life through movement and creativity.

Architecture



Design spaces that are functional, beautiful, and sustainable.

Digital Illustration



Create stunning artwork using digital tools and imagination.

Every activity is a step toward discovering who you are and what you can create. ♥



STAGES OF ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT

♥ Children grow as artists step by step! ♥



★ STAGE

📅 AGE

CHARACTERISTICS



💡 EXAMPLE

1. SCRIBBLING



2-4

Random marks



Lines, circles



2. PRE-SCHEMATIC



4-7

First symbols



Tadpole person



3. SCHEMATIC



7-9

Organized drawings



House on ground



4. DAWNING REALISM



9-12

Better proportions



Detailed people



5. PSEUDO-NATURALISTIC



12-14

Perspective



Realistic portraits



6. DECISION



14+

Personal style



Teacher April





Important Teaching Principles



DO

✓ Encourage creativity



✓ Praise effort



✓ Display children's artwork



✓ Ask open-ended questions



✓ Provide varied art materials



✓ Allow free expression



DON'T

✗ Correct children's drawings



✗ Draw for them



✗ Compare artworks



✗ Force realism



✗ Grade based only on neatness



♥ Sample Classroom Analysis

Example 1

A five-year-old draws:

- purple grass
- giant mother
- tiny father
- smiling sun



Interpretation:

- ✓ Pre-schematic stage
- ✓ Symbolic representation
- ✓ Size may indicate emotional importance rather than physical size



Sample Classroom Analysis

Example 2

A ten-year-old carefully shades mountains and overlapping trees.



Interpretation:

- ✓ Dawning Realism
- ✓ Improved spatial awareness
- ✓ Observation skills developing



Reflection Questions

1

Why should teachers avoid correcting children's drawings?



2

How do children's drawings reflect their cognitive development?



3

How can teachers encourage artistic confidence in children?



4

Why is creativity more important than realism during early childhood?



5

How would you adapt art activities for learners at different developmental stages?



Art is not about perfection.
It's about **expression**, **growth**, and **discovery**.



Key Takeaways



Artistic development follows predictable developmental patterns, but each child progresses **at an individual pace**.



Children's drawings reveal cognitive, emotional, social, and motor development.



The teacher's role is to nurture creativity, not impose adult standards.



Artistic expression supports holistic development and should be integrated into early childhood curricula.



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