

General Guidelines for running Arts Programs



Harms Elementary School
After School Program
Workshops

People assume that teaching art to elementary school students is simple – until they try it! By following the guidelines below, you will avoid some of the most common mistakes that amateurs make when teaching art to young children.

They can do it.

Children can learn more, and can do more, than most adults realize. Truly understanding this fact will help you find ways to ‘break down’ the activities in this Binder for any elementary school children, even if they don’t seem to get the concept at first. If they aren’t responding to your directions, try using simpler language. You can also try breaking up processes with several steps into single-step actions. You’ll soon learn how quickly your class can move through any given project; and you will definitely be surprised how far the children will take some activities with only a little prompting.

“Safety first.”

Follow all ASP general safety guidelines. Know where emergency exits, first aid kits, and all sinks are located. There are also safety concerns specific to arts activities:

Many of these projects use substances to which children may be allergic without knowing it. Potential allergens include materials made from latex, some paints and cleaners, duct tape, glue, and many other art materials. The best way to prevent safety concerns is to know your materials, and the effect these materials can have on sensitive individuals. For example, chemicals used in paint or cleaners that would not bother someone without allergies may cause skin breakouts, headaches, or other symptoms in susceptible persons. Latex allergies can cause severe ‘burning’ in people who suffer from this condition – sometimes with just a light touch. Lists of materials we use that may cause reactions, probable symptoms, and treatment suggestions are given in the last section of each of our Arts Workshop Binders. Each Binder also has copies of all appropriate Material Safety Data Sheets in a pocket at the back. MSDS provide important information on several of the chemicals that we use in our programs. It is your responsibility to be aware of potential safety hazards, to minimize them, and to handle any problems that may arise. *Always* use safety gear such as plastic smocks, gloves, adequate ventilation, etc., when the lesson plan calls for it! *Never* do a project with a class if you have inadequate or old safety gear. Find a different activity for the day and contact the Project Coordinator so she can order replacements. Following safety precautions at all times will ensure trouble-free, fun sessions.

Be prepared.

You’ll need to read the lesson plans at least twice to be well-prepared for the session. Ideally, you will also do the activity at least once yourself ahead of time so that you’ll know beforehand which steps will take more or less time. If you are not able to actually do the project yourself ahead of time, then you should at least be sure to think through the activity step-by-step. How will actually doing the hands-on portion of the project fit in with your explanation of the concepts behind the activity? Will you stop in between steps to reinforce these concepts, or will you simply wrap up at the end? Knowing the answers to these questions before you start will help you and the children to have the most fun and the best possible experience.

Be Clear.

It can be easy to give children too many directions and to give those directions too quickly when you are leading arts programs. Keep in mind the developmental stage of the age group with which you are working. First graders should be told to complete one step at a time – don't even indicate that there *is* a subsequent step until most of the class has finished the previous one. Fifth graders, on the other hand, should be given an overview of every step they will need to complete the project before they begin – otherwise, they may expect the activity to be over before it is, and get frustrated. Keeping the projects and your explanations in line with the children's ability to understand them is one of the most difficult skills to master when leading an arts session. Learning this skill is essential, however, to having a successful arts program.

Include writing.

Just like adults, children need to reflect on new knowledge in order to retain it. Having your students write short sentences summarizing what they did in class that day will help them remember the concepts behind the fun activities we do in each session. Each lesson plan includes suggestions for working writing - or other methods for the students to record what they have learned - into the sessions.

Mess it up.

Most adults have a fond memory of a time in childhood when they were so involved in an activity that they didn't care *how* dirty they got. Even 'neat' children usually love the experience of getting their hands covered in clay, paint, or mud. This is a hands-on program that allows for at least 20 minutes/period of the children doing experiments or other activities *themselves*. For many of these sessions, you will need to resign yourself to having a big mess on your hands by the end of the period. Supervise your students, but don't be afraid to let them handle the papier-mache or the paint. Every material that the children will use washes off – or the lesson plan will call for smocks!

Clean it up.

Remember that we are guests in each teacher's daily classroom. Please allow at least 10 minutes at the end of each class period to clean the classroom. Allow an extra 5 minutes if children need to wash their hands. Since the children made the mess, they should clean it. Adults should always supervise clean-up; only adults may use cleaning products such as sprays (students may use any hand soaps in the school). Make a note of any student who flatly refuses to assist with clean-up; use appropriate discipline and positive reinforcement to encourage these children to help next time. If the room is not clean when the children leave, then you must return to clean it before you go home.

Relax...

...especially if you've never worked with children before. All of this may seem *really* difficult - but most of the above guidelines should be followed for *any* activity that you do with children, including 'just' taking them outside to play. Once you get in the habit of following these guidelines with each session, your experience in this program will go much more smoothly; and your class will benefit much more from your sessions together.

General Guidelines for running Science Programs



Harms Elementary School
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Teaching Science to elementary school students does not have to be intimidating. If you keep a few simple guidelines in mind, the science sessions can be the most fun that you and the children have during the after school program.

Don't panic.

Okay, so you're not a 'science person'. If you've been able to read this far, you'll be able to understand the lessons in this workbook without any problems. Once you've mastered the concept and you know the steps for each day's project, you'll have no trouble presenting the sessions to the class.

"Safety first."

Follow all ASP general safety guidelines. Know where emergency exits, first aid kits, and all sinks are located. There are also safety concerns specific to science projects:

Many of these projects use substances to which children may be allergic without knowing it. Potential allergens include the insects used in some of our programs, materials made from latex, duct tape, and some of the chemicals which we use for more dramatic reactions. The best way to prevent safety concerns is to know your materials, and the effect these materials can have on sensitive individuals. Insects, for example, can cause reactions ranging from skin rashes to breathing problems. Chemicals that would not bother someone without allergies may cause skin breakouts, headaches, or other symptoms in susceptible persons. Lists of materials we use that may cause reactions, probable symptoms, and treatment suggestions are given in the last section of each of our Science Binders. Each Binder also has copies of all appropriate Material Safety Data Sheets in a pocket at the back. MSDS provide important information on several of the chemicals that we use in our programs. It is your responsibility to be aware of potential safety hazards, to minimize them, and to handle any problems that may arise. *Always* use safety gear such as goggles, plastic smocks, tweezers, gloves, etc., when the lesson plan calls for it! *Never* do a project with a class if you have inadequate or old safety gear. Find a different activity for the day and contact the Project Coordinator so she can order replacements. Following safety precautions at all times will ensure trouble-free, fun sessions.

Be prepared.

You'll need to read the lesson plans at least twice to be well-prepared for the session. Ideally, you will also do the project at least once yourself ahead of time so that you'll know beforehand which steps will take more or less time. If you are not able to actually do the project yourself ahead of time, then you should at least be sure to think through the activity step-by-step. How will actually doing the hands-on portion of the project fit in with your explanation of the science behind the activity? Will you stop in between steps to reinforce the concepts, or will you simply wrap up at the end? Knowing the answers to these questions before you start will help you and the children to have the most fun and the best possible experience.

Be Clear.

It can be easy to give children too much information when you are teaching science sessions. Each of the lesson plans in this booklet has a maximum of three main points that the children should understand by the end of the session. While you might be tempted to offer lots of additional information, keep in mind that you may end up drifting too far off topic (especially with younger children). If the discussion strays outside the bounds of the lesson plan, remember to bring it back to the main points at least once more before the class leaves.

Include writing.

Just like adults, children need to reflect on new knowledge in order to retain it. Having your students write in science journals, make class charts, or simply draw pictures of what they did in class that day will help them remember the science behind the fun activities we do in each session. Each lesson plan includes suggestions for working writing, drawing, or other methods for the students to record what they have learned, into the sessions.

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