

Craft Programs: Process vs Product Art

One topic that commonly arises in discussions around craft activities in Children's programs is the debate about process art vs product art.

Process based art focuses on the experience of the child, the creativity they are utilizing, the skills they are practicing, and more. The idea is that the child-directed process of exploring art materials is more important and will result in greater learning, self-confidence and creativity than if an end result is the primary focus.

Product based art focuses on the end result and is often used to teach a specific concept, skill set or to create a specific piece of art for kiddos to take home with them. A much-loved example of product art is handprint and footprint art.

In Children's Programs at the library, we provide opportunities for both models of craft exploration – often in the same program.

Our Crafty Creators program is a drop-in, school-age program. Each session has 4 craft stations. Three of them provide directions to create a specific product but also encourage participants to use the materials in ways other than as directed. The fourth station is open-ended with rotating materials and no directions or suggestions provided. Program participants often leave Crafty Creators with a specific creation, but they also often experiment with different materials and work on different skills during the program.

The March 10th theme was textures. Participants used texture plates and crayons to create designs of their choosing, glued fabric to index cards to create fabric collages, experimented with ink pads and used scrapbook paper to create a paper collage.

Some program attendees left with fabric collages on index cards. Other program attendees experimented with the ink pads as finger paint. One kiddo created their own "Truffula Tree" by rolling a piece of paper decorated at the texture table, "painting" another piece of paper pink using the ink pads, and placing the crumpled paper on top of the rolled paper as the leaves. The kiddo had a great story about how they had been reading *The Lorax* in school and wanted to speak for the trees.