

Dr. Debrah C. Sickler-Voigt Presents...

# Children's Development in Art: A Global Perspective

## Children's Development

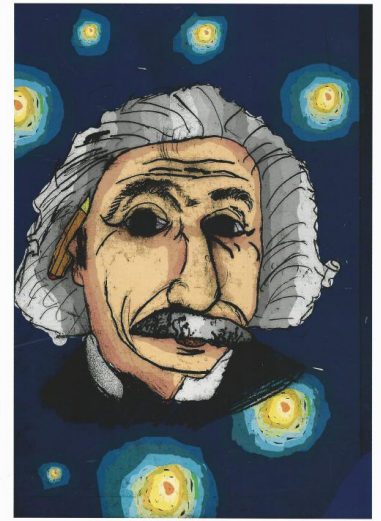
Children are unique individuals. Each child matures and develops at an individual pace. Children grow cognitively, physically, socially, emotionally, and artistically as complete individuals. For the most part, same-aged children across our planet develop at rates close to one another. Internal and external factors in their lives impact their overall development. These include diet, environmental stimuli, genetics, and educational access (The College Board, 2012). For example, children may receive more or less access to age-appropriate instruction and curricular resources. Children participate in different educational systems with disparate approaches to learning, with some being more effective than others (Wood, 2007). Some children have better access to nutritional foods or more opportunities to move their growing bodies. Scholars have identified the common characteristics that same-age children share to design children's development theories. Teachers apply these theories to develop age-appropriate learning activities and effectively manage their classrooms (see Sickler-Voigt, 2020).

- **Artistic development** refers to children's abilities to manipulate and communicate through various art media and processes, as well as their aptitudes in artistic reasoning and decision-making skills.
- **Cognitive development** refers to children's abilities to think and acquire knowledge. As children's cognitive abilities develop, they are better able to process information, solve problems, form educated decisions, make connections, and think abstractly.
- **Physical development** represents children's bodily growth. As their bodies develop, children have greater abilities to control their fine and gross motor skills. They can simultaneously use their muscles and nerve functions to perform selected actions.
- **Social/Emotional development** refers to children's feelings and interpersonal relationships and their role in children acquiring information, responding to others, and developing a sense of well-being.



## A Global Approach to Teaching Art

Art is a universal language. When children study international artworks, concepts, and beliefs, they have multiple opportunities to expand upon, as well as reinterpret what they currently know. Such examinations serve as inspirations to spark students' personal inquiries about life's various meanings and contemplate their roles in society. Each year, ICEFA Lidice's exhibitions focus on United Nation's UNESCO global themes. These themes (big ideas) represent global concepts and concerns that people across our planet share. For example, ICEFA Lidice's child-friendly themes include happiness, education, and identity, which children from countries around the world can understand from their unique perspectives. A global approach to art education enables children to see firsthand how humans are interconnected, despite our perceived differences.



## Contemporary Best Practice in Children's Artistic Development

- Children's artistic development evolves while working under the guidance of highly-qualified teachers, who help foster their creativity and encourage student choices.
- Artists serve as catalysts for understanding how artistic skills and deep understandings develop over time.
- Children are inspired by their peers and the images they see in visual culture.
- Children refer to and recycle their previous graphic symbols when acquiring new artistic skills to express particular ideas visually (Kindler, 2004, 2010; Kindler & Darras, 1997; Wilson, 2004; Wilson & Willson, 2010).

## Comprehensive Art Education

**Comprehensive art education** is a curricular model for educating the whole child. All learning activities within the comprehensive curriculum are meaningful to students' lives. Children have a voice and are involved in making curricular decisions under the guidance of their teachers. Teachers collaborate with students to examine local, global, and personally-driven issues and themes. Teachers utilize disciplines in art and life to provide students with insights into the meaning of the human experience. See Sickler-Voigt, 2020 for more information.



- **Art production** is a method to communicate ideas visually using assorted art media and processes.
- **Aesthetics** is the philosophical study of art that asks "what is art" and "what is beauty?"
- **Art criticism** is the process of making informed judgments about art in oral and written forms.
- **Art history** is the study of international artworks by all people including fine art and crafts.
- **Visual culture** is the study of all visual images within our world, including graphic designs and symbols in popular culture.

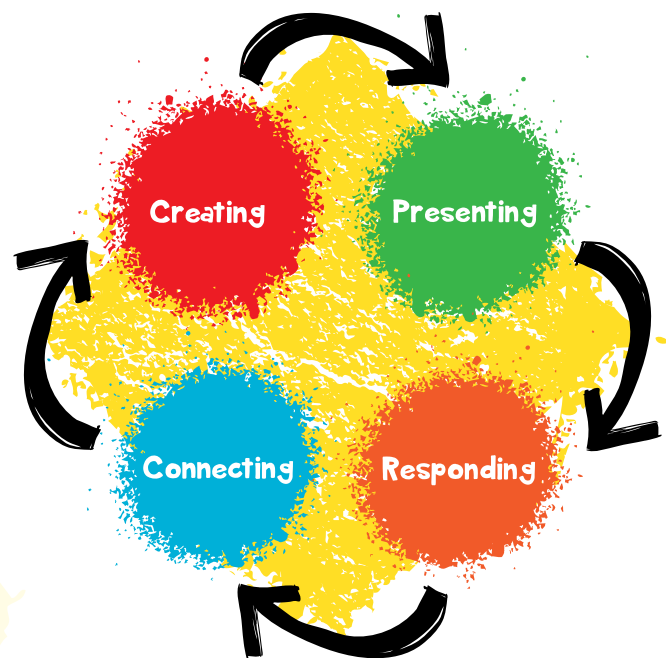
## Big Ideas, Essential Questions, and Enduring Understandings

“**Big ideas** are broad topics that students study in depth to address significant human issues that remain relevant regardless of the time periods and cultures in which people live” (Sickler-Voigt, 2020, pp. 6-7; see also Stewart & Walker, 2005; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Big ideas include universal themes such as creativity, protection, and integrity. Students apply big ideas to ask and answer important questions about life, called **essential questions**. These broad questions assist students in developing **enduring understandings** over time. Enduring understandings “are statements summarizing important ideas and core processes that are central to a discipline and have lasting value beyond the classroom;” they identify “what students should value about the content area over the course of their lifetimes” (NCCAS, 2014; p. 14).

## National Visual Arts Standards

The **National Visual Arts Standards** (NCCAS, 2014) identify the student learning outcomes teachers expect their students to achieve over the course of their studies as lifelong learners. Teams of scholars, teachers, and artists developed these innovative standards. Their structure is based on international best practices in art education and provides age-appropriate learning outcomes for students to achieve. Using an approach called **backwards design**, teachers predetermine key information that students should know and apply them to develop a meaningful curriculum for students. Teachers augment students’ knowledge and skills by building on the big ideas, methods, facts, theories, and learning processes that they present within their curriculum. This information assists students in achieving long-term goals and applying their knowledge to situations within and beyond the classroom. The **National Visual Arts Standards’ Framework** of creating, presenting, responding, and connecting promote children’s lifelong learning skills as part of a comprehensive art curriculum:

- **Creating:** “Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work.”
- **Presenting:** “Interpreting and sharing artistic work.”
- **Responding:** “Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning.”
- **Connecting:** “Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context.” (NCCAS, 2014, p. 11-12)



## ICEFA Lidice's Children's Artworks



- (Top Page 1) Honourable mention. Rusinova Anastasia (7 years), Gorogskaia Shkola Iskusstv, Kharkiv, Ukraine. ICEFA Lidice 40th Exhibition
- (Bottom Page 1) A medal to the school for their collection of mixed media. Šulcová Anna (14 years), ZUŠ, Blatná, Czech Republic. ICEFA Lidice, 42nd Exhibition
- (Top Page 2) A medal to the school for their collection of graphics. Pršalová Ema (9 years), ZUŠ, Praha 5, Czech Republic. ICEFA Lidice, 43rd Exhibition
- (Bottom Page 2) A medal to the school for their collection of graphic art: Syafiaah Siti (15 years), Si Ling Secondary School, Singapore, Singapore. ICEFA Lidice, 40th Exhibition
- (Page 5) A medal to the school for their collection of paintings. Ona Cheuk Yan Ding (12 years), Simply Art, Hong Kong, China. ICEFA Lidice, 39th Exhibition

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**Dr. Debrah C. Sickler-Voigt** is a Professor of Art Education. Her textbook is *Teaching and Learning in Art Education: Cultivating Students' Potential from Pre-K Through High School* (Routledge, 2020). It provides greater insights into children's development theories and practices.

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