

## **How art can help kids with ADHD**

Creating art can be a fantastic outlet for both adults and children with ADHD. Many people with ADHD are intelligent and creative individuals, finding therapeutic outlets therefore to help channel that creativity could become a valuable medium for self-expression. This article will take a look at the different ways in which art can help children with ADHD.

## **Giving children with ADHD a voice**

Sometimes, putting things into words can be a frustrating and difficult task for people with ADHD. Art therapy can open the doors to communication by creating the opportunity for people to express their thoughts, feelings and emotions in a different way. This is a great outlet for the ADHD mind which can be racing with thoughts. It can help greatly calm the mind as well as soothe anxiety. Over time, it could also help children learn how to organize their thoughts better.

## **A method to help practice self-control**

Art therapy can bring a range of physical and emotional benefits to children with ADHD, helping them learn to cope with some core issues associated with the condition. These include learning to become less impulsive, improving decision making skills, learning to be more flexible as well as improving social skills and self-esteem. Art therapy also creates the opportunity for children to work on practicing self-control. This is particularly important as it is so common for people with ADHD to feel as if they are out of control so much of the time.

## **Art therapy and improving social skills**

A round robin exercise is used often during art therapy with groups of children, where each child adds something new to a drawing or painting when it is passed to them. This is particularly effective at helping improve social skills as it teaches children how to relate to others and build empathy.

Creating art in a group is beneficial for these reasons, as through the process of looking at each other's artwork, discussing it or creating together, a child is picking up important social skills.

## **Creating the right environment**

Staying focused on a task can be quite a challenge for people with ADHD. If your child is creating art at home try and minimize any distractions, if you have a study or conservatory then working in there would be preferable, otherwise working at the kitchen table when it's quiet for example is fine too.

## **Helping keep your child motivated and focused**

Setting little goals or incentives can greatly aid motivation, however once they have gotten into the swing of things and have learnt to appreciate the benefits of creating art, they should have less of a problem getting started and staying on task.

Forms of art that are much more physical are a good choice as they help engage more of the senses and keep children focused and stimulated on more levels. Moulding objects out of clay or finger painting are two very good options. Also getting the family involved could help your child enjoy the creative process

even more, you could all collaborate on something together which can have the added benefit of helping improve your child's social and interpersonal skills, and it's also a great bonding activity.

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