

## CALL TO ACTION



# Turner Center for the Arts Advocates No Child Without Art.

The Turner Center for the Arts wants to encourage every child in the Lowndes County area has an education in the arts. Creativity and art are vital areas of child development and communication.

We hope all children can be given the opportunity to practice art and are given the freedom to express themselves. Art should not be restricted to just being a painter, but should allow the child to create things, solve problem differently and contribute to society.

Ages five to six is an ideal time to develop creativity and artistry, because their logical thinking has not fully developed yet, but their fine motors skills are developing fast.

Every elementary school in Lowndes County does not offer an art education to children in kindergarten. Only 47 percent of children in our area receive some kind of art education at this age.

Many studies have been done in the past two decades regarding the importance of art and creativity in the development of children. Working extensively in visual arts with children the past eight years, Turner Center for the Arts have come to realize that art builds on several important skills in a child's development:

- **Encouraging creativity.** When scribbling on a sheet of paper or drawing a picture, a child is learning to communicate visually. The drawing might just be of a place or thing, or it could communicate what emotions the child is feeling. Mixing colors and learning how to use an art tool allows children to experiment and discover something new.
- **Increasing fine motor skill function.** Whether learning how to cut properly with scissors for the first time, figuring out how to draw an object or attempting to control a paintbrush's strokes, a child can learn intricate fine motor skills that will be vital in the future.
- **Developing problem-solving skills.** A child wants to draw a picture of a happy memory. He must decide what which materials to use or which color he or she wants to use. If the color they wish to use is not available, he or she must decide on another option. Art encourages basic and advanced problem-solving skills in a variety of ways.
- **Supporting self-expression.** Allowing a child to have an outlet, such as painting a picture, can help him or her deal with their emotions. The child is learning to portray visually what can not be said through their words or actions. Self-expression is an important human trait evident in the visual arts.

Some people feel art education is not important in child development. They think young

children should be more focused on discipline and obedience. Restraining a child from his or her individuality can cause serious problems in the future. Studies have shown that children, who are restricted from playing and freedom of expression, are 55 percent more likely to be rebellious and misbehaved young adults.

“The arts teach children to make good judgments about qualitative relationships, unlike much of the curriculum in which correct answers and rules prevail, in the arts, it is judgment rather than rules that prevail,” according to Elliot Eisner, professor of education at Stanford University. “The arts celebrate multiple perspectives. One of their large lessons is that there are many ways to see and interpret the world.”

Turner Center for the Arts would like to enforce a “No Child without Art” policy in Lowndes County. This would entail enforcing each elementary school to provide art education to all students at the kindergarten level. We also want to encourage parents to let your children explore their artistic and creative talents at home.

It is usually the visual arts that communicate ideas better than words. Art has been used as therapy for many years. We want art to be incorporated into children’s everyday life.

Turner Center for the Arts pledges to work with the Valdosta City Council to provide art education to all children at the kindergarten level in our area. Help us get this policy in the works. Contact your local city councilmen today.