

Tips for and Benefits of Crafts

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Benefits of crafts for child development

Arts and crafts provide opportunities for children to engage in **self-expression, discover/use new coping skills, participate cooperatively in groups, and improve motor function and skills**. Historically, arts and crafts have been largely focused activities for children however recent research shows adults have benefited from them as well. (i.e. adult coloring books used for relaxation and mental breaks to support mental health and wellness.)

- **Skills impacted by use of crafts**
 - Fine motor skills—pinch, prehension, in hand manipulation or dexterity
 - Postural Strength
 - Sensory processing and exploration
 - Bilateral coordination
 - Line awareness
 - Scissor skills
 - Language
 - Self-confidence
 - Cognitive skills like problem solving, planning, attention, goal setting
 - Functional Tool use and safety

Benefits of crafts for mental health and wellness

- **Develops personal and unique interests and imagination** using a wide variety of recycled everyday items.
- Creating together **fosters connection and sharing of ideas** amongst family members, friends, etc. Connection and the sharing of ideas in a supportive safe space **increases positive feelings of confidence, curiosity, non-judgmental observation and expression**.
- Engaging in visual arts and crafts can **reduce anxiety** according to research published in 2018 by the University College London Mental Health Network (*4 Reasons Craft Is Good for Your Mental Health*, 2020).

Top 5 reasons to do crafts

1. **Crafts are goal-oriented**, which mean they can be completed in one sitting. This allows for kids, teens and even adults to focus on and complete a project within an amount of time. Often, we are never done - there is always something we are waiting on. Crafts can provide a sense of accomplishment.
2. Facilitate **the development of functional skills** such as the use of tools.
3. **Encourage innovation and creativity**, which can lead to new ideas and better productivity and work/school performance.
4. Provide **a channel to express oneself** which helps with mental health and wellness.
5. It's a great way to **connect with those who are older than us as they teach us skills** or crafts they enjoy are skilled at. For example, grandparents teaching their grandchildren how to sew by creating stuffed animals or costumes for their toys.

Craft Ideas by age

- **Birth - Preschool**
 - Finger painting
 - Stamps bought or created with various household items
 - [Ultimate List of 100 Crafts and Activities for Toddlers and Preschoolers - Artsy Craftsy Mom](#)
- **Elementary**
 - [Crafts Project Ideas for Elementary School Kids \(thesprucecrafts.com\)](#)
- **Tweens & Teens:**
 - Loom bracelets/jewelry making
 - Canvas painting
 - Making slime
 - Coloring
 - Diamond art
 - Sticker puzzle crafts
 - Origami
 - Wood puzzles
 - Sand art
 - Tin foil watercolor art
 - Collages
 - Color/create your own stickers
 - Do-a-dot paintings
 - Chalk drawing outdoors

Craft resources

- [How to Make Foam Dough for Kids \(everydaydishes.com\)](#)
- [DIY Paper Marbling – Honestly WTF](#)
- [10 Fun Spongebob Squarepants Craft Activities for Kids \(brightstarkids.com.au\)](#)
- [Make gorgeous \(cheater\) watercolor prints using markers + water - It's Always Autumn \(itsalwaysautumn.com\)](#)
- [Foil Transfer Art : 6 Steps \(with Pictures\) - Instructables](#)

Resources

4 reasons craft is good for your mental health. (2020). Retrieved March 18, 2024, from <https://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/stories/4-reasons-craft-good-your-mental-health>

Occupational Therapy crafts for kids. (n.d.). *The OT Toolbox*. Retrieved March 17, 2024, from <https://www.theottoolbox.com/crafts-for-kids/>

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