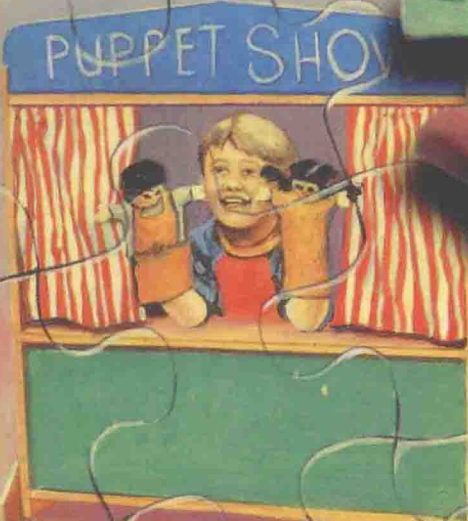
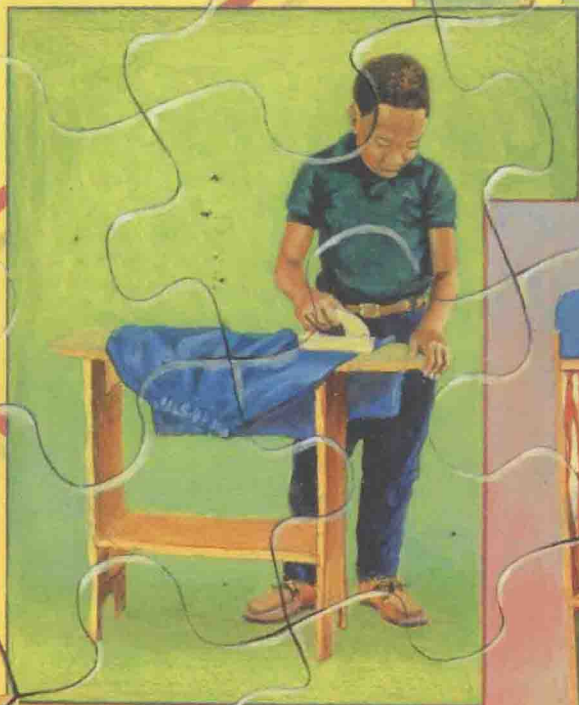


Creative Activities

for Young Children

Mary Mayesky

5th
EDITION



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Delmar Publishers Inc.

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Creative Activities

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To my daughter Claire—

You were the beginning. Through your eyes I learned
a new way to see the world. Thank you for this and
for the person you've become.

In love and appreciation. Momma (MEM)

Preface

Day in and day out, dedicated people in the field of early childhood education work tirelessly to perform one of the most important roles in our society—guiding the learning of our youngest citizens. Daily, they face the difficult challenges presented by young children growing up in a world so very complex and confusing. Unfortunately, the size of their task is not often equalled by the size of their paychecks or the regard in which they are held by society.

It is with a deep sense of respect and thanks that this book is presented to these unsung heroes of early childhood education. It is hoped that this book will be an aid and inspiration to their work with young children.

The fifth edition of *Creative Activities for Young Children* has been updated to reflect the unique challenges facing those in early childhood today. Some of the new features of the fifth edition include:

- New field-tested activities in each unit.
- New lists of children's books and teacher's reference books in each unit.
- Updated and additional information on the use of computers with young children.
- Increased emphasis on the use of recycled materials in activities.
- A new section entitled "Think About It . . ." that provides thought-provoking and research-oriented material related to the unit topic.
- Many new "This One's for You!" sections, which expand on some of the text material or touch on a related concept for added interest.
- In the Health and Safety Unit, a new section on allergies and young children.
- Also in the Health and Safety Unit, new research on television viewing and its effects on children's eating habits.
- More sugar-free and sugar-reduced recipes in the Food Unit as well as in other units, designated by the symbol ☺.
- A special section on teaching peace in the Social Studies unit.
- Also in the Social Studies Unit, an enlarged section on blocks and their use in teaching social studies.
- In the Program Basics Unit, a list of unsafe and potentially dangerous art supplies.
- A new section on scissoring in Unit 12, including how to introduce and practice this skill with young children in a developmentally appropriate way.
- An expanded woodworking section in Units 11 and 13, including more specific information on materials, setup, supervision, and specific activities.
- A new section on how to talk with young children about their art.
- A new bilingual/bicultural education section in the Language Arts Unit, including a comprehensive list of references for many multicultural children's books.
- Additional lists of children's books for many ethnic groups: Chinese-American, Latino, Vietnamese-American, African-American, Native American, etc.
- An expanded environmental education section, including a section on ecology.
- Non-sweet alternatives for trick-or-treat in the Halloween Holiday Unit.
- Also in the Halloween Holiday Unit, a Halloween Carnival, with simple games, as an alternative to trick-or-treat.
- In the Winter Holiday Unit, more information on holiday symbols, their origins, and significance.
- New sections on Native American and Hawaiian holidays.
- New activities, recipes, songs, and poems in all holiday and seasonal units.

You will discover these and many other new features as you use the fifth edition of *Creative Activities for Young Children*.

The same purpose remains in this edition as in the first four; it is designed for the person who is dedicated to helping young children reach their full potential. It is written for people who want to know

x Preface

more about creativity, creative children, creative teaching, and creative curriculum and activities.

Most people agree that creativity is natural to young children. However, creativity is a delicate skill that can easily be destroyed. Too few teachers receive instruction in the meaning of creativity or the ways in which creativity can be stimulated in children. This has been particularly true of teachers who work in early childhood education centers. Because these centers are rapidly increasing in number and size, the need for more trained teachers is especially great. Stimulation of children's creativity must be placed high on the list of priorities of all of these centers.

Creative Activities for Young Children is written for anyone who is interested in children, but since it is written especially for busy persons who work with children in early childhood schoollike settings, the following points are emphasized:

- The approach to creativity is a practical one. A wide variety of activities is included in each section. All activities have been successfully classroom-tested with young children.
- Information on *why* activities should be carried out as well as on *how* to carry them out is presented. Theory is provided where it is needed.
- Learning activities and skill builders are included to help readers experience their own creativity.
- References for additional reading are given at the end of each unit so students can explore each subject in more depth as desired.
- Each unit begins with carefully worded, easy-to-understand objectives and ends with review questions.

Part 1 presents a general discussion of various background theories relating to child development. Included in Part 1 are units on creativity, aesthetic experiences, social-emotional and physical-mental growth, as reflected in art development theories, and theories on play and encouraging creative dramatics in the early childhood program. Part I sets an appropriate theoretical stage for application of these theories in specific classroom activities presented in Part 2.

Part 2 covers early childhood classroom practices

in what are generally considered traditional early childhood settings such as preschools, nurseries, and child care centers. It is organized into three sections: Section 6 (Creative Activities in Other Curricular Areas), Section 7 (Creative Activities Involving Holidays), and Section 8 (Creative Activities Involving Seasons). In the units, the student is given many suggestions for creative experiences for young children in the following areas: music, games, finger plays, creative movement, sciencing, environmental education, poetry, food experiences, math, language arts, social studies, and health and safety. Part 2 also includes photographs of children's artwork, providing further creative ideas to use with young children.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the many people who helped make this book possible: Casper Holroyd, for the many wonderful photos of children; the staff of Hayes Barton United Methodist Summer Program, for their cooperation; the Director and Staff at Method Day Care Center, for their continued support and cooperation; Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, for permission to reprint materials used in Unit 4 and Unit 23; the National Association for the Education of Young Children, for permission to reprint materials in Unit 3, Unit 5, Unit 11, and Appendix F.

Special thanks to Jane Holding, for her technical assistance in the manuscript preparation; as well as to Mr. Eugene Adams, Principal of Brooks Elementary School, in Wake County Schools, Raleigh, North Carolina, for allowing the author to photograph kindergarten classes at Brooks School. The early childhood teachers in Wake and Durham County Schools are gratefully acknowledged for their inspiration, which is reflected in many of the practical ideas and techniques throughout this book. Special acknowledgment is given to the early childhood teachers in the Durham County Schools for the Halloween and Halloween Carnival ideas, as well as for Thanksgiving and fall ideas. A final word of thanks and remembrance for Dr. Rebecca Murray of Meredith College for the woodworking skills information in the text.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mary Mayesky, author of this fifth edition, is a certified preschool, elementary, and secondary teacher. She is a former professor in the Program in Education at Duke University former director of the Early Childhood Certification Program, and supervisor of student teachers. She has served as assistant director for programs in the Office of Day Care Services, Department of Human Resources, State of North Carolina. She is also the former principal of the Mary E. Phillips Magnet School in Raleigh, North Carolina, the first licensed day care magnet school in the Southeast. She has served several terms on the North Carolina Day Care Commission and currently serves on the Wake County School Board.

Dr. Mayesky has worked in Head Start, day care,

kindergarten, and Y.W.C.A. early childhood educational programs and has taught kindergarten through grade eight in the public schools. She has written extensively for professional journals and for general circulation magazines in the area of child development and curriculum design. She is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and the National Association for the Education of Young Children and was named Woman of the Year in Education by the North Carolina Academy of the Y.W.C.A. Her other honors include being named Outstanding Young Educator by the Raleigh Jaycees, awarded research grants by the Duke University Research Council and the American Association of School Administrators Research Award, and being nominated for the Duke University Alumni Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching Award.

Contents

Preface / ix

PART 1 Theories Relating to Child Development **1**

Section 1	Fostering Creativity and Aesthetics in Young Children	2
	Unit 1 The Concept of Creativity / 2	
	Unit 2 Promoting Creativity / 13	
	Unit 3 The Concept of Aesthetics / 24	
	Unit 4 Promoting Aesthetic Experiences / 35	
Section 2	Planning and Implementing Creative Activities	47
	Unit 5 Children, Teachers, and Creative Activities / 47	
	Unit 6 Creative Environments / 64	
	Unit 7 Using Media to Promote Creativity / 77	
Section 3	Art and the Development of the Young Child	87
	Unit 8 Art and Social-Emotional Growth / 87	
	Unit 9 Art and Physical-Mental Growth / 104	
	Unit 10 Developmental Levels and Art / 126	
Section 4	The Early Childhood Art Program	154
	Unit 11 Program Basics: Goals, Setting Up, Materials, and Strategies / 154	
	Unit 12 Two-Dimensional Activities / 180	
	Unit 13 Three-Dimensional Activities / 200	
Section 5	Play, Development, and Creativity	218
	Unit 14 The Role of Creative Play in Development / 218	
	Unit 15 Dramatic Play and Puppetry / 232	

PART 2 Theory into Practice: Creative Activities for the Early Childhood Program **251**

Section 6	Creative Activities in Other Curricular Areas	253
	Unit 16 Creative Movement / 253	
	Unit 17 Creative Music / 272	
	Unit 18 Creative Language Experiences / 294	
	Unit 19 Creative Sciencing / 338	
	Unit 20 Creative Mathematics / 377	
	Unit 21 Creative Food Experiences / 400	

	Unit 22 Creative Social Studies / 432	
	Unit 23 Creative Health and Safety / 459	
Section 7	Creative Activities Involving Holidays	483
	Unit 24 Halloween / 483	
	Unit 25 Thanksgiving / 514	
	Unit 26 December Holidays / 526	
	Unit 27 Valentine's Day / 552	
	Unit 28 Spring and Summer Holidays / 564	
Section 8	Creative Activities Involving Seasons	591
	Unit 29 Autumn / 591	
	Unit 30 Winter / 614	
	Unit 31 Spring / 629	
	Unit 32 Summer / 652	

APPENDICES	673
-------------------	------------

Appendix A	Fine and Gross Motor Skills	673
Appendix B	Language Development	676
Appendix C	Basic Program Equipment for an Early Childhood Center	679
Appendix D	Room and Yard Organization, Exhibitions, and Displays	682
Appendix E	Recycled Materials	687
Appendix F	Criteria for Selecting Play Equipment for Young Children	693

PART 1

Theories Relating to Child Development

Part I presents a general discussion of various theories relating to child development. Beginning with the concept of creativity, theories, techniques, and basic program components and how they are related to the growth of creativity in young children are presented. Within this theoretical context of creativity, Part I provides basic information on planning and implementing creative activities for young children. Also included is a section on art and how it is related to the physical, mental, and social-emotional development of young children.

Practical information on how to set up an early childhood art program with individual units for both two- and three-dimensional activities is also included. The final section of Part I covers the concept of play and its relationship to a child's overall development

as well as development of creativity. Units on dramatic play and puppetry provide numerous ideas and activities to encourage the young child's natural creativity.

At the end of each unit in Part I are many suggested activities designed to reinforce the concepts covered in each unit. A wide variety of field-tested activities for young children are also included in each unit for use in early childhood settings.

The review questions and references for further reading provided at the end of each unit further reinforce the main concepts. In essence, Part I sets the theoretical stage for application of these theories in the more specific subject and classroom areas presented in Part II.

Section 1 Fostering Creativity and Aesthetics in Young Children

Section 2 Planning and Implementing Creative Activities

Section 3 Art and the Development of the Young Child

Section 4 The Early Childhood Art Program

Section 5 Play, Development, and Creativity

SECTION 1

Fostering Creativity and Aesthetics in Young Children

UNIT 1

The Concept of Creativity

OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to

- define creativity.
- list three ways in which children benefit from an environment in which creativity is encouraged.
- list two ways teachers benefit from encouraging creativity in the classroom.
- name five things a teacher can do to help children develop a willingness to express creativity.
- list several characteristics of creative children.

Take a few minutes to watch a four-year-old child in action. At one moment he is building a tower out of blocks. Suddenly he spots one of his friends playing with a homemade finger puppet. He wants to make one, too. A bit later he is playing with a guinea pig, stroking its fur and tickling its chin. Next, he is placing long, wide strokes of color on a piece of paper and getting spots of paint on everything in sight.

What is this? Now he is at the sand table building a sand castle with a high sand tower that keeps falling over. He seems to have discovered something. It is easier to build a tower out of blocks than out of sand; so he is back building with wooden blocks. It looks as though he is back where he started, except that the new block tower does not look anything like the one he started earlier.

It is exciting to watch active young children studying the world around them. A couple of things become clear almost immediately. First of all, children are full of curiosity. They seem to enjoy investigating

and finding out things. Second, they seem quite capable of doing this successfully. They are very creative in finding answers to problems that arise from their curiosity. A child can figure out how to reach a needed block that somehow got thrown behind the piano. Another child selects interesting materials in order to make a finger puppet that is different from all the others.

Young children seem to have a natural ability to come up with creative answers, creative approaches, and creative uses of materials. They must be free to develop all these natural abilities that make each child so uniquely different.

People who are specially trained to work with young children need to understand creativity and have the skills to help and encourage children to express their creative natures. They should realize the importance of creativity for children and for teachers. They should be able to identify creativity in chil-



FIGURE 1-1 Young children are naturally industrious and involved in learning new skills.

dren and be able to help them develop a willingness to express this creativity.

Teachers can also promote creativity by modeling creative behavior. Torrance (1970) found that students with more creative teachers produce more creative work than students with less creative teachers. Whether motivation, imitation, or both create this effect is unknown. The important point is that teachers can model creative behavior for children. Thus, children can see “how it is” to be creative.

WHAT IS CREATIVITY?

Perhaps the most important thing for the student to realize about creativity is that everyone possesses a certain amount of it. Some people are a little more creative, some a little less. No one is totally uncreative.

It should be recognized that young children tend to be highly open and creative. Unfortunately, many adults want children to conform. As outside pressures from adults grow, the children’s environment closes in on them. They find it less and less rewarding

to express interest in things, to be curious, to be creative in investigating their world.

One shudders to think about how many creative children have been “forced into line” by well-meaning adults. Even some trained teachers prefer children who are quiet; some even punish children who ask too many questions. It is important to know ways of encouraging a child’s creativity in order to avoid these kinds of mistakes. To begin with, one should understand the meaning of the term *creativity*.

There are many meanings for this word. A definition by one writer on the subject, May (1975, p. 39) describes creativity as the “process of bringing something new into being.” Paul Torrance (1970), a pioneer in the study of the creative process, suggests

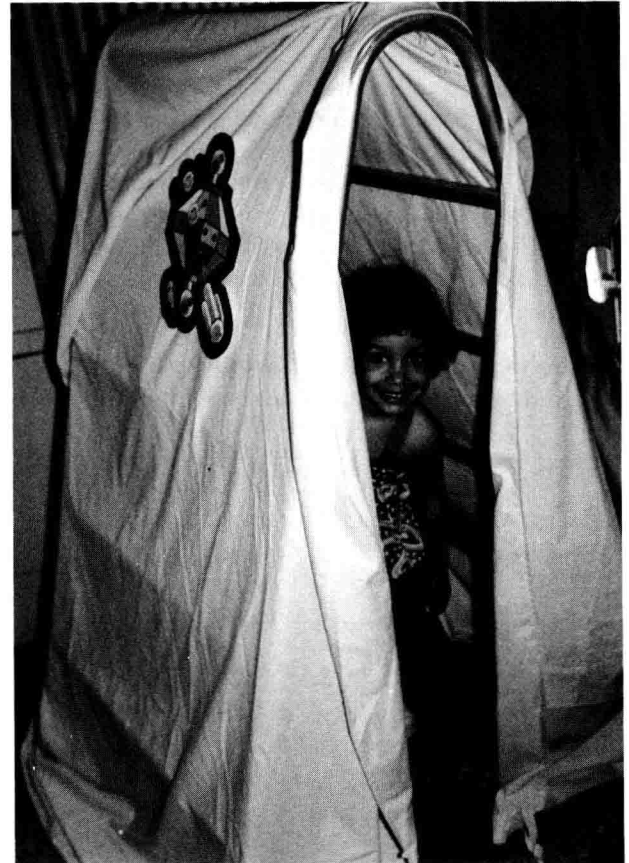


FIGURE 1-2 Children may use play equipment in unexpected ways.

4 Section One Fostering Creativity and Aesthetics in Young Children

that creativity is the ability to produce something novel, something with the stamp of uniqueness upon it.

No matter how creativity is defined or understood, all agree that it is a precious element of human intelligence and life. However, the following definition may help the student understand the concept better. *Creativity* is a way of thinking and acting or making something that is original for the individual and valued by that person or others. What this means is that any new way to solve a problem or to produce a new product, such as a song, a poem, or a new machine, is a creative act. A person does not have to be the first one in the world to produce something in order for it to be considered a creative act.

The Creative Process. When someone is creating something, there are usually two parts to that person's activity. The first part has to do with the discovery of an idea, plan, or answer. The second part has to do with working out, proving, and making certain that the idea or answer works or is possible. The first part, *discovering*, involves using the imagination, playing with ideas, and exploring. The second part, *proving*, involves using learned skills, evaluating, and testing. This is shown in the creative process model in Figure 1-3.

Thought Processes and Creativity. There are two kinds of thinking that produce solutions to prob-

lems. One of these types is called convergent thinking. The other type is called divergent thinking. *Convergent thinking* usually results in a single answer or solution to a question or problem. *Divergent thinking* opens things up and results in many answers to a single problem.

For example, if a child is asked to count the number of fish in an aquarium, there is only one correct answer. This is a question that leads children to convergent thinking. On the other hand, if a child is asked to tell as many things as possible about the aquarium, there are obviously many correct statements that can be made. Questions such as this encourage divergent rather than convergent thinking.

Variety and Creativity. One of the problems in understanding the meaning of creativity is in recognizing the many kinds of creativity that exist. There is the kind of creativity that allows people to express themselves in a way that makes others listen and appreciate what they hear. There are creative abilities that enable human beings to discover meaning in nature—meaning that others had not understood before. In other words, creativity can be of many and

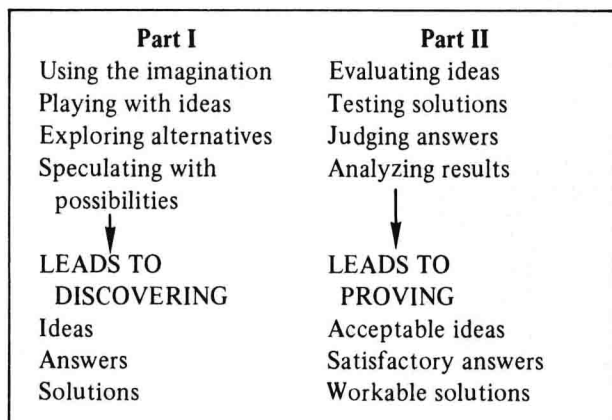


FIGURE 1-3 Creative process model



FIGURE 1-4 Giving children a variety of materials lets them create at their own pace.

varied types. It may result in the production of new inventions. It may lead to new or better designs. It may result in new ideas or new thinking. It may cause better plans to be developed. It may display itself in the production of new and attractive compositions.

Creativity begins in a person's mind. It usually results in some form of expression that can be seen, heard, smelled, tasted, or felt.

IMPORTANCE OF CREATIVITY

Creativity is the mainspring of our civilization: from the concept of the wheel, through the steamboat, the telephone, the automobile, the airplane, radio and television, computers, automation, the electronics industry, nuclear power, and space travel. All the milestones of great inventions, scientific discoveries, as well as great painting, literature, music, drama, and all forms of artistic expression have depended on creative thinking of the highest order. Thus, the progress of civilization and humanity's present evolutionary stature are essentially due to creative thinking and innovations. Our inherent creativity contributes to the very quality of our lives.

The rapid changes of our present age require that problems be tackled creatively. The technological advances and discoveries during the next couple of decades could surpass all the past accomplishments in human history (Raudsepp, 1980). It is difficult to foretell exactly what knowledge we will need to solve future problems creatively. What the young are learning now will surely become obsolete. Everyone can and must continue to learn throughout life, but knowledge alone is no guarantee that we will meet future problems effectively. Only a strong creative ability will provide the means for coping with the future (Raudsepp, 1980).

Encouraging or discouraging a child's creative nature makes a great deal of difference in the first experiences in a school setting. Children learn early and quickly that there is a reward for certain kinds of behavior. If the rewards they seek result from quiet, uncreative behavior, the children quickly learn to act in a quiet and uncreative way. It may take a teacher a long time to "shape up" the children. But in time, these "different" youngsters can be made to



FIGURE 1-5 Children enjoy activities in which they can participate freely and openly.

conform. In the process, however, the children's creative natures may be destroyed. Therefore, one must understand the importance of encouraging a child's creativity.

Children want to express themselves openly. They want to bring out new ideas and have new experiences. They enjoy creativity and benefit from it in many ways, including:

- Learning to feel good about themselves.
- Learning to seek many answers to a problem.
- Developing their potential to think.
- Developing their individuality.
- Developing new skills.
- Experiencing the joy of being different.

Teachers also benefit from encouraging creativity, in such ways as:

- Being able to provide for more and greater variety in the program.
- Learning to recognize children for their unique skills.
- Being able to develop closer relationships with children.
- Having fewer behavior problems.
- Using a minimum of standardized curricula and external evaluation.

IDENTIFYING CREATIVITY IN CHILDREN

It is important to recognize four main things when identifying creativity in children:

1. All children are creative to some degree.
2. Some children are more creative than others.
3. Some are more creative in one area than another.
4. Creativity can be destroyed by a teacher who does not appreciate the creative act or the child who expresses the act.

With these points in mind, the student should consider the following suggestions for identifying creativity in children:

Provide free periods when materials are available and children can do whatever they wish with the materials. During these periods, observe who gets tired quickly and goes from one thing to another. Identify who becomes deeply involved with the materials. Also observe which children use materials in an unexpected way.

Question children in ways that permit them to freely express opinions and ideas. Some children have set opinions and are closed to new ideas. For them, questions usually have just one answer. Other chil-

dren see many possible ways of answering a question and come up with unexpected ideas and solutions. They also look at problems in many ways.

Encourage children to share an experience. Then ask individual children to create a story about the experience or make a drawing. Some children just stick to the facts. Others are more imaginative in their stories or drawings. Unusual or unexpected relationships may be described by some children.

In other words, when children are being creative, they are flexible, original, confident, and adventure-some. They can redefine situations and are willing to work at things for a long time. They will work hard

1. Accepts disorder
2. Adventurous
3. Strong affection
4. Altruistic
5. Aware of others
6. Always baffled by something
7. Attracted to disorder
8. Attracted to the mysterious
9. Attempts difficult jobs (sometimes too difficult)
10. Outwardly bashful
11. Constructive in criticism
12. Courageous
13. Deep and conscientious in convictions
14. Defies conventions of courtesy
15. Defies conventions of health
16. Desires to excel
17. Determined
18. Discontented
19. Disturbs organization
20. Dominant (not in power sense)
21. Emotional
22. Emotionally sensitive
23. Energetic
24. A fault-finder
25. Doesn't fear being thought "different"
26. Feels whole parade is "out of step"
27. Full of curiosity



FIGURE 1-6 Young children have a natural ability to find creative uses for materials.

FIGURE 1-7 Sample characteristics of creative persons (adapted from Torrance, 1962)