

# ParentBrief



## When it actually does look like a giraffe

Be honest. I bet we've all thought this – I know I have. The latest creation from the art room arrives home. We say, "that's great...I love the colours you've used, especially that big blotch of purple in the top right corner... clearly you've enjoyed yourself and you're very pleased with the result...well done!!" What we're careful not to say is, "I actually have no idea what this is supposed to be."

As parents, we go through the pre- and primary years of our kids' drawings, cardboard constructions, models of whatever and many multi-coloured cotton balls, pipe cleaners and fifty metres of masking tape and we figure that by the end of their primary schooling, we'll probably recognise a familiar shape or outline that we can identify with. But what happens when our kids really do have a talent for art, sculpture, music, pottery and drawing, and all they want to do is visit a gallery or a recital or a kids' writing workshop instead of being glued to a screen every chance they get? If we've given birth to an 'artistic type' who couldn't give a toss about the myriad of mindless electronic entertainment or sport of any kind, we may have to get over it and embrace their talent...

### What constitutes an 'artistic type'?

Artistic kids who actually produce art rather than just appreciating it, tend to be nonconformists who hate cleaning up their rooms. As adults, they won't want to work at a job 9-5. Artistic types tend to be disorganised, emotional, impulsive, impractical, free-ranging and intuitive, and resemble people who have right-brain dominance. The Artistic type prefers creative ideas and self-expression to being organised or making lots of money and often have well-developed artistic, musical, or writing skills. Artistic

types are attracted to creating, composing, expressing and imagining.

### Early encouragement

Regardless of their talent, it's important to encourage kids in any endeavour from an early age. Most kids like to draw, finger paint, colour in or glue cardboard together. But for little kids who prefer to spend hours creating, to the detriment of other activities, much can be learned from the process of creating as opposed to the end product. Some kids may prefer to paint to music or fiddle around playing a toy flute or keyboard, others might like to build something using food such as dried pasta shapes or popcorn. Finger painting, foot painting, hand printing all provide a wonderful tactile experience for kids: the gluey, squelchy feel of paint against skin. Your child might enjoy wordless picture books or illustrating a story of their own or one we create for them. Building and constructing a model will give them experience in problem solving, and the maths of working out what will fit where or how long a piece of cardboard needs to be.

### What interests artistic kids?

As kids enter secondary education, studies that correspond with Artistic interests include English (literature and expression), foreign languages, social studies, home economics, art, music and business management.

When it comes to higher education, corresponding studies can include architecture, cinema, comparative literature, music conducting, social psychology, graphic design, metal and jewellery making, play and screenwriting, and auctioneering or business communications.

On the home front, the Artistic type of child will naturally respond positively to the leisure activities that include art, music, craft, food, entertainment, performing, dancing and collecting.

### Artistic kids and learning

When kids are a natural at sport, or seemingly fit the mould when it comes to an accepted activity, it can often be easier to go with the flow and enrol them in a club or class. But for kids who are very interested in creative pursuits when dad would prefer them to accompany him to the footy or mum be more comfortable if they did gymnastics, their natural flair can be curtailed if we try to fit the proverbial round peg into the square hole. There is much learning to be had through exposure to the arts and purely creative pursuits.

Yes, creative kids can be messy and disorganised, impractical and impulsive. But there's an upside. Imagine how proud you're going to feel decades from now, when your kid's giraffe (that actually does look like a giraffe – the one you've laminated into a placemat) sells for over a million at auction. As you stand in the middle of the bomb site called a bedroom, just keep that in mind.