



6 Benefits of  
**Fine Arts in  
Developing  
Brains**



**Saint Paul's**  
LUTHERAN SCHOOL

# Parents looking for a school that will provide a solid arts education have their work cut out for them.

Shrinking budgets and a narrowing view of which school subjects are essential has led to a decades-long decline in arts education, particularly at public schools around the country. But even those who believe, as we do, that exposure and practice in the fine arts is critical to a well-rounded education may be surprised at just how many benefits the arts provide.

For example, a 2010 study by the Missouri Arts Council found that schools with robust arts programs had higher attendance and graduation rates. In addition, the study found that students in those schools did better on standardized math tests and had fewer disciplinary issues.

How is it possible that simply making a clay pinch pot, finger painting a masterpiece, or keeping time with rhythm instruments could achieve this? Let's take a look at six of the most significant benefits arts education provides to children.

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## 1. Self-esteem

In visual arts classes in particular, students are rewarded by seeing the fruits of their labor immediately. Painting a picture, making a clay sculpture, or creating a collage are tangible accomplishments that students can bring home and show their parents. This boosts a child's confidence and independence. After all, unlike in math or science, there are no right or wrong answers in art.

In fact, art and music teachers often find that students who struggle academically actually excel in their art classes. A school that provides fine arts classes widens the arena in which students can succeed.



## 2. Fine motor skills

Dipping a paintbrush into a pot and wiping the excess off the side, shading a drawing with a pastel crayon, striking a xylophone, and snapping your fingers to the beat engage fine motor skills that just aren't exercised in any traditional academic subjects. This is vital for students who are still learning to dress themselves and tie their shoes.

There's simply no substitute for weekly art and music classes for young students who are developing and honing those skills.

## 3. Math skills

The same Missouri study mentioned above found that children who are exposed to fine arts in school do better on standardized tests in math—but why?

Music is inherently mathematical! Children must count to learn to keep time. In order to read music, they must learn to decode a time signature and memorize how many beats are in a whole note or a quarter note. When they learn these things, they begin to understand the framework of a song. Assimilating this framework and learning its patterns helps them assimilate other frameworks and patterns in the future—addition facts and multiplication tables are just two examples.

When students learn to draw, paint, and sculpt, they practice shapes and are subconsciously learning about ratios and fractions. Creating art helps them learn how parts come together to make a whole.



## 4. Outlet for emotional expression

Children who have difficulty expressing their feelings verbally may find release in music and art classes. Visual arts classes typically allow for a wide range of freedom of expression—much more so than, say, a writing assignment where the student needs to concentrate on spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Students aren't tethered to those sorts of constraints when they're painting a picture.

Music is relaxing, and studies have also found that the simple act of singing helps reduce stress.

Having a regular outlet for these types of expressions during the school day can help calm children who may have had a tough day. They also provide a brain break between subjects that students may find grueling, while teaching other skills.

## 5. Creativity

Some children seem to be overflowing with creativity. Others may need a little nudging to get creative.

All children have an aptitude for creativity, but they may not know how to express it. Fine arts classes excel at nurturing that creativity and helping it to bloom. Once the creativity starts to flow, it will seep into other aspects of the child's education. No other classes match the potential of fine arts classes to get those juices flowing.



## 6. Language skills

Fine arts classes use vocabulary that students won't come across in other subjects. They also exercise descriptive speech in a way that other subjects don't.

The repetitive nature of children's songs helps cement new words while emphasizing syllables and rhyming patterns. Students with speech issues may find that they are more comfortable singing than speaking, which means that their music classes become a place where they find a break from the challenges of talking in class. Singing songs together in music class also aids in building memorization skills.

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# Now it's time to find a school that feels as strongly about arts education as you do.

Here at St. Paul's Lutheran School, we believe that children thrive in art and music classes that allow them to explore God's creation and glorify the Creator. That's why we've developed a robust arts program that allows students time to explore these vital learning areas during school hours. We also emphasize learning about the arts through field trips and opportunities for extracurricular activities.

Our commitment to the arts is just one of the ways we help our students flourish, both academically and spiritually. We view our students as unique gifts who contribute to our tight-knit community, making St. Paul's the best it can be.

If you would like to learn more about how we support art education or have questions about what it's like to attend our school, schedule a tour with us today!

To schedule a tour, give us a call at **(260) 424-0049** or email us at **info@stpaulsfw.org**. We hope to see you soon!