

Enroll Your Children in the Arts  
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“I would teach children music, physics, and philosophy; but most importantly music, for the patterns in music and all the arts are the keys to learning.” - Plato

The new school year begins this week, and many parents sit at kitchen tables weighing and selecting their children’s classes for the year. The current educational trend pushes a hard sell for STEM courses: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. But this push comes with an unfortunate pruning of the arts. But a child’s education must flower fully: petals and all. After all, a STEM alone is not very beautiful.

The arts are incredibly important for a child’s full development. These classes open students to that awe-inspiring ineffable experience. Participation in an everyday arts course develops the part of a student’s mind that fosters creativity, emotion, and appreciation for the human experience. All of which enhances your child’s cognitive ability to excel in other subjects: the keys to learning. No wonder Plato valued the arts so much.

As a music educator, I have personally seen the amazing impact of music programs. I’ve seen students on the edge of dropping out transformed. I’ve seen high risk students discover pride in their overall education because of music. Students involved in arts programs do tend to develop a sense of interest and ownership in their entire education. As a university professor, I’ve also seen music scholarships enable students to attend college, even when they’re not going to major in music.

Research has overwhelmingly shown the enormous cognitive benefits of arts education. One study found that students studying music showed significantly improved IQ scores compared to students who were given computer lessons. The entire mind needs to be educated, including the creative and expressive skills that arts courses uniquely nurture.

Artistic creativity is just as important as other subjects. Knowing computer coding and calculus is great, but it’s the creative application of that knowledge that changes the world. Involving your children in the arts offers real creative and cognitive benefits. These students will be the ones who find the patterns that unlock the mysteries, issues, and challenges of the future.

Enroll your child in an arts class this year. Take advantage of the music, dance, theater, or other programs that many public schools offer. 2500 years ago Plato noted that students schooled in the arts had learning keys that enabled success in school and in life. The only difference today is that we have more scientific data that justifies this. Hand your child these learning keys, promote the arts, and nurture your child’s full education.

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