

# **Erik Wood Workshops and NYC Department of Education Universal Prekindergarten Standards**

This document shows the learning skills addressed in Erik Wood art workshops as indicated by the New York City public schools Standards for Universal Prekindergarten. The skills addressed include social and emotional development, physical development, creative expression/aesthetic development, cognitive development, language and literacy, and mathematical skills.

Listed under each skill category are Indicators (established in the Standards) that teachers use to determine if a particular skill is being developed by the children. The commentary under each Indicator explains how Erik Wood workshops specifically address that particular Indicator of skill development.<sup>1</sup>

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## **Social and Emotional Development**

### ***Shows interest through chosen materials and activities:***

Erik Wood art workshops provide a wide array of unusual materials to choose from.

### ***Develops initiative, individuality, autonomy and decision making:***

Every child works individually, choosing materials and making all decisions as to where and how to place them; the result is that every piece is unique.

### ***Demonstrates confidence and positive self-image:***

No special artistic ability is required so everyone is successful; the professionally finished pieces, especially when publicly displayed, foster tremendous self-esteem.

### ***Increasingly maintains self control in difficult/challenging situations:***

Unusual materials require thought and problem-solving; help is available when requested, for facilitating rather than for taking over.

### ***Shows increasing ability to sustain interest and interactions with peers by helping, sharing and participating in discussions/activities:***

Children work individually, but side by side, for about 90 minutes, and often offer each other problem-solving suggestions; clean-up is cooperative. Children share paints.

### ***Develops disposition as a learner through working and playing with peers and adults:***

Children observe and mimic suggested techniques for preparing and adhering materials to styrofoam "canvas".

### ***Understands and respects similarities and differences in others:***

Children are able to observe and appreciate each other's unique work, especially when formally displayed.

## **Physical Development**

### ***Uses small pegs and boards: strings small beads, some in patterns:***

Children manipulate buttons and other small objects in unique designs using individual methods.

### ***Begins to build complex block structures:***

Children use unusual materials (bottle tops, slide cases, cdroms, floppy disks, etc.) to create architectural designs and structures.

### ***Manipulates play objects that have fine parts:***

Children use (non-toxic) glue, to attach unusual materials to the styrofoam "canvas".

### ***Uses scissors, paintbrushes and other art materials appropriately:***

We suggest starting each piece with a visual image and give children many appropriate and theme-related magazine photos to choose from; scissors are made available to trim their selected image(s) and fabric trims that are also supplied; about half-way through the workshop, once all materials have been placed and adhered to the styrofoam "canvas," children are given non-toxic watercolors to paint the "canvas" backgrounds.

### ***Draws and recognizes combinations of simple shapes:***

While there is no drawing required in a Erik Wood workshop, children combine the materials to represent specific objects such as trees, boats, land masses, and buildings.

### ***Shows awareness of top and bottom, up and down:***

Children are made aware of the fact that their pieces will eventually be hung up, whether publicly displayed or at home, and decide what's top and bottom

### ***Demonstrates motor control:***

Children use scissors, glue, and paintbrushes, among other tools and materials.

### ***Shows perceptual judgment and awareness of own limitations:***

Children are encouraged to take as many materials as they want; then they must figure out a way to fit them into their work (they are asked to put back anything they cannot use); children are encouraged to ask for help when they need something they cannot figure out how to do.

## **Creative Expression/Aesthetic Development**

### ***Explores and manipulates a variety of materials:***

The Erik Wood art program provides a wide variety of unusual materials and encourages the children to take and use as much as they want in their work.

### ***Uses materials in non-traditional and unique ways:***

Children use the abundant and unusual materials to create unique designs; there are no real rules and they may make abstract patterns, deliberate representations, and architectural structures, depending on the theme of the project.

***Shows interest in what can be done with tools, texture, color and techniques:***

Children are shown some techniques for handling the materials, along with a few finished pieces to suggest ideas; then children are encouraged to come up with their own ideas and methods for executing them.

***Chooses materials and subjects with intention and purpose:***

Since children are encouraged to select and use the materials in their own way, they form their own unique plans for doing so.

***Participates and plans in individual/group activities:***

Children work individually, but side by side, and often offer problem-solving and aesthetic suggestions to one another; when the work is publicly displayed, and if there is an opening "event" to mark the occasion, there are ample opportunities for group planning, discussions, and celebrations.

***Uses language of art:***

Because the children make all their own decisions with regard to choosing their materials, and where and how to place them on the styrofoam "canvas," they are constantly working with changing patterns, color contrasts, spatial relationships, cause and effect, and texture.

***Expresses interest in and shows appreciation for the creative work of others:***

Because the pieces are unique (and therefore non-competitive), children often offer suggestions and praise to one another while working side by side; when the work is publicly displayed, the children have even more opportunity to share and appreciate one another's work

***Uses descriptive language to explain or question about a piece of art work:***

When asked about their work, many young children are able to offer stories and/or explanations about it, some quite detailed.

***Responds in various ways to other work:***

Children are eager to look at and touch the samples of finished work they are shown at the beginning of each workshop; they are interested in each other's work yet manage to "do their own thing".

***Shows pride in their work and chooses to share with others:***

Because every piece is unique and everyone is successful, the Erik Wood art program fosters pride and self-confidence; when the work is publicly displayed, children are eager to share their work with their peers and adults.

# Cognitive Development

## ***Understands, responds and makes requests with appropriate expressions and actions:***

Children are encouraged to work as independently as possible, but to raise their hands and ask politely for help when they really need it; they are also asked to cooperate with their neighbors to share paints and certain tools.

## ***Interacts in a variety of conversation exchanges:***

At the beginning of every workshop, children are introduced to the idea of creating art from unusual and re-purposed materials, some techniques for using them, and some samples of finished art that are relevant to the theme of the workshop. There is an interactive discussion about the samples, in which they are asked what the samples represent pictorially, and what the materials were used for in actuality before they became 'art'. For example, in discussing one of six Animal Habitats samples, they are asked to identify the habitat, (i.e. "ocean" below), who lives there, what some components *are* and what they are *supposed* to be (i.e. blue zipper is top of the ocean).



## ***Understands and follows simple and multi-step directions:***

At the beginning of every Erik Wood workshop, instructions are given for starting a piece and techniques are demonstrated for working with the materials; for example: each child is instructed to 1) decide on your theme (i.e. ocean, arctic) 2) choose appropriate visual images from a selection of magazine photos, 3) select appropriate materials to 'build' your piece (i.e. things to make trees if creating a rain forest) 4) place and glue your images and materials 5) continue adding materials until you feel it is finished 6) say, "I'm ready to paint" to be set up with paints (to share with your neighbor), water and a brush.

## ***Understand and participates in turn taking conversations with peers and adults:***

Children are encouraged to participate in discussions about the work at the beginning of every Erik Wood workshop; they are also encouraged to ask for help when they need it, and to discuss their work when they are finished; they must cooperate with their neighbors to share certain tools.

## ***Uses tone of voice that is appropriate to the setting:***

Children are encouraged to raise their hands to ask questions and to politely ask for help when they need it; they are told to ask their neighbors nicely when sharing tools.

***Engages in meaningful conversations to communicate information, experiences, ideas, feelings, opinions, and needs:***

Children are encouraged to speak about their work, to explain what is going on.

***Integrates new and more complex vocabulary appropriately in conversations:***

The abundant and unusual materials and techniques introduced in the Erik Wood art program, in addition to the children's stories about their work, offer ample opportunities for introducing new and complex vocabulary. They are given new words, including art terminology (i.e. 'assemblage'), environmental terminology (i.e. "re-purposing"), and words that are theme-appropriate (i.e. "nocturnal" in the Animal Habitats workshop).

***Uses multiple word sentences or phrases of increasing length and complexity when describing ideas, feelings or actions:***

Children are encouraged to talk about their work, to explain their thinking, tell stories.

## **Language and Literacy**

***Uses language to invent ideas and imagery on peer conversation:***

Children are encouraged to talk about their work and what it represents; there is ample opportunity for them to discuss their imagery with one another during the process and afterwards, especially if the work is displayed.

***Uses words to make connections between prior and new experiences or ideas:***

In talking about their work, children often tell stories which connect the work to their real-life experiences or to future dreams and plans.

***Asks questions to obtain information:***

Children are encouraged to ask questions before and during the process.

***Uses talk and voice appropriately in conversation or group interactions in diverse settings:***

Children are encouraged to participate in an orderly fashion in the opening discussions; they are instructed to raise their hands and ask politely for help when they really need it; they are asked to discuss their work when they are finished.

***Listens and responds appropriately in conversations or group interactions:***

Children are drawn into the opening discussions and demonstrations, and are invited to ask relevant questions; they are casually and intermittently asked about their work throughout the process.

***Uses talk to persuade, suggest, negotiate, clarify and show empathy for others:***

Children are asked to share certain tools with their neighbors which requires persuasion, negotiation and, finally, cooperation; working side by side, children often offer suggestions for problem-solving to one another, and demonstrate empathy for one another when things go awry.

**Responds to "what might happen if" questions in situations when using materials:**

Due to the unusual nature of the materials and the freedom with which they are used, there are ample opportunities for "what if" questions; children are encouraged to experiment and problem-solve.

**Makes and articulates connections to photographs, pictures, drawings and familiar written words:**

Every Erik Wood project begins with a visual image of each child's choosing; some workshops are specifically themed to include common signage and logos (i.e. "Chase Bank", the "New York Public Library", "FedEx") with which to build city scenes.

**Begins to understand that speech can be written to convey meaning:**

Children are asked about their work; brief narratives are collected and transferred to signage that accompanies the finished work, furthering the connection between visuals, storytelling, and the written word as in books. The signage plaques also contain the name and age of the child and can be used in displaying the work.



by John, age 4, 2010  
UCP/NYC Bronx Children's Program  
(typically developing child)

"It's the sea. The whale, the seahorse, the fish, the sea frog and the squid (the purple bottle top + red beads) live there! The water is blue. The buttons are the seashells. There's a purple sun and a white moon. The zippers are where the people dive in. The stick is seaweed!"

**Develops a growing understanding that print can serve a variety of functions:**

Children's names are written on the backs of the pieces; their name, age, and narrative are written on the accompanying signage plaque. Their stories can be extended, in school, or at home, when the finished work is returned.

***Exhibits a growing interest and involvement in listening to and telling a variety of stories:***

When asked about their work, children often have elaborate stories to tell which may connect to their real-life experiences or may reveal hopes and dreams for the future.

***Starts to understand stories can be invented:***

When children are asked to talk about what's "going on" in their work and their words are written down and read back to them, they see a connection between their ideas and written stories. When the work is returned with signage that includes their name and narrative, it furthers the connection.

***Creates own stories:***

When asked about their work, some children have elaborate stories to tell; when the stories are written down and appear on their signage plaques, children can make a connection between storytelling and books.

***Creates artwork or gives a response that shows story comprehension:***

Sometimes the stories that children tell about their work relate to real-life experiences and offer an outlet to express things that may be bothering them.

***Experiments with a growing variety of writing tools and materials such as crayons, markers, paint, pencil:***

Children use watercolor paints in their Erik Wood art pieces. They are given markers upon request.

***Understands that writing is a way of communicating for a variety of purposes:***

Children's names are written on the back of their styrofoam "canvas" to identify their work; narratives are collected, making a connection between the spoken and written word, which is an introduction to the idea of storytelling and books; and when the work is publicly displayed, they see plaques with information about them and their work

## **Mathematical**

***Sorts objects by attributes:***

Every Erik Wood workshop has more than 50 bins of materials from which to choose; children are allowed and encouraged to take as much as they want; when they are finished using the materials and are ready to paint, they are asked to return any materials they have not used to their proper bins.

***Describes change such as taller, shorter, longer, smaller:***

The wide variety of materials includes objects of many sizes and shapes that the children alter and combine to make patterns and to represent other objects (i.e. zippers become roads, trees, the top of the ocean).

***Finds and names locations/positions with simple relationships such as "near to" and "far away":***

Placement of materials is decided solely by the children, but sometimes they need help securing the materials to the styrofoam "canvas"; they are encouraged to do as much as they can, and then to clearly express where and how they want the materials to go.