

Express Yourself in Full Colour

Art Therapy



Piper isn't afraid to get messy when she expresses herself through art

GET THE FACTS!

Art Therapy...

- is a health service profession based on psychological theory and research.
- employs art and other creative modalities to uncover one's feelings.
- takes into consideration thoughts, feelings, and behaviours within the therapeutic process.
- can be used to explore issues of family, loss and grief, and development.

Benefits of Art Therapy include:

- Increasing self-awareness and self-esteem.
- Building and developing social skills.
- Helping to change behaviour.
- Resolving or reducing emotional pain.
- Increasing coping mechanisms.
- Developing strategies for problem-solving.

"Art Therapy allows the child to be a child... children need art, and physical limitations should not get in the way of them exploring and growing through art. At The Darling Home for Kids, if kids get messy, that's a good thing!"

- Becky Hewis, Art Therapist,
The DarlingHome for Kids

PIPER'S STORY

One day while picking up her 2 year-old daughter Piper from The Darling Home for Kids, Erin Gibson was surprised to see paint under her little fingernails. Mom thought, "What is this?" But in her backpack, she found a canvas and a painted T-shirt Piper had made during Art Therapy. Up until then, mom did arts and crafts with her eldest daughter Kaeleigh but never really thought about Piper being able to do that. She thought the dexterity and fine motor skills needed to do arts and crafts would be too hard, but it turns out that something so simple like art is very adaptable and inclusive. Her family doesn't know why she chooses certain colours or why she laughs, but they're happy she's doing it on her own and when she's done, they hang her masterpieces around their house. They see Art Therapy as Piper's way of giving them a gift, and proudly display her art on their fridge because they know it is an expression of their beautiful daughter.

Art Speaks! Remember that feeling of pride you had when you saw your creation or art hung in the school hallway or on your fridge? When given the platform, children can and will express themselves in full colour, and with complete freedom and creativity.

Art Therapy uses the creative process to facilitate self-exploration and understanding. The primary objective of Art Therapy begins with helping the child tune into his or her creative space. Creating safe spaces that feel comfortable and easy allows children to trust their surroundings and the therapist, allowing

them to set aside any physical, emotional, or mental barriers that may be blocking them from pure expression.

At **The Darling Home for Kids**, we use Art Therapy because we know it does not rely on language or verbal skills, and therefore it is an accessible modality for all our children. The healing power of Art Therapy lies within the act of making art. It encourages choice and decision making, allowing the child complete freedom throughout the process. The end result, whether it is a canvas, a sculpture or a mug for mom or dad painted with love, reinforces the critical importance of spontaneity, originality, and authenticity to oneself.

Therapy sessions at the Home include one-on-one sessions as well as group sessions, all of which are provided by our trained Art Therapist. Each session is customized based on the children participating, their artistic preferences and unique therapeutic goals. Each year The Darling Home for Kids strives to provide over 100 hours of Art Therapy across 25 sessions, as we engage children across all of our core programs - respite, palliative and residential care.

For our children, a little splash of colour goes a long way. By tuning into their own feelings and imagination, our children are empowered to create beautiful works of art, both on and off the canvas.

To learn more please visit us at
www.darlinghomeforkids.ca



Matthew puts paint to canvas to express himself



Rachel is all smiles when creating artistic masterpieces