

CASE STUDY

The Spark's Creative Learning Toolkit // Sparking Creativity Family Champions

ABOUT THE SPARK ARTS FOR CHILDREN

The Spark Arts for Children is a busy children's art organisation based in the heart of the city of Leicester's cultural quarter.

Over the last few years we have come a long way, from an organisation with an annual children's arts festival to a fully-fledged, strategically positioned children's arts organisation with a year-round multi-art form programme. Over recent months, in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have rapidly adapted our approach in order to continue to support the families and children we work with, throughout.

THE SPARK'S CREATIVE LEARNING TOOLKIT



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The Spark's Creative Learning Toolkit was produced as a free digital resource to help guide teachers (initially) and families with children through high quality creative learning activities, encouraging exploration, experimentation and enjoyments through artistic adventures together, at home or in the classroom. The activities are best suited to children from Reception through to KS2 (ages 4-11) and have been split into 3 themed packages - NATURE, RECYCLING and RHYTHM. Everything needed to participate in the activities can be found at home or in the garden / park, intentionally making it as accessible as possible to those who may not have art materials to hand, or the means to acquire them.

The activities within the Toolkit are structured to compliment the completion of DISCOVER Arts Awards and a bespoke Arts Award Logbook was designed to support this, with clear and simple instructions and produced in black and white to minimise reproduction costs for schools / families should they choose to print.

Funding was secured from The Mighty Creatives' *Digital Discover Grants* to support the development of and costs associated with accrediting Arts Awards as part of this initiative.

The resource was initially circulated to 40+ schools across Leicester/shire at the start of the pandemic and disseminated through e-newsletters and schools' online learning

portals and made available via designated page on The Spark Arts for Children's website, alongside our broader programme of [Spark at Home](#) work.

The resource was promoted extensively through The Spark's newsletters and social media and has its own (private) Facebook Group, within which children and families could share the work they were creating in response to the Toolkit and gain support, ideas and feedback from The Spark team.

SPARK YOUR CREATIVITY

A week of arty adventures!

As the pandemic continued, it was clear that schools would not continue to operate in the usual manner and that children would remain at home with their families / carers for an indeterminate length of time. We therefore chose to hone in our support to children and families at home and to run a series of week-long 'challenges' with pre-recruited *Sparking Creativity Family Champions*. The challenges each focussed on one of the [BITESIZE Creative Learning Toolkits](#), July was NATURE and August RECYCLING. Over the course of the week, the families participated in ZOOM sessions for support from The Spark team and to connect with each other and share their creative journeys, had updates and were set challenges through Facebook LIVE and through a private Facebook Group. The Spark Team were also available via email and over the phone to answer any questions. Over the course of the two 'challenges' 30 children from 17 families were supported and inspired to successfully achieve their DISCOVER Arts Awards.

Their work has been celebrated through an online [Creativity Gallery](#) and through The Spark's newsletters and social media (all with permission to do so).



Feedback from participating families:

"I would just like to say a big thanks for the support and opportunity for this wonderful art project. Amber has loved it! In terms of feedback I genuinely have nothing negative to say at all! It has been a fantastic ride this past week or so, encouraging my daughter to tap into her creativity the way she sees fit. The support has been lovely, knowing there is always someone at hand to ask any questions. A wonderful experience and very well organised."

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"For me doing the Arts award with Oscar was helpful to give him a reason and a deadline for creating something instead of thinking, "I'll finish it later". And it's been good that he has had encouragement from other people and see what other children are doing. It's a bit of a routine that has been missing while he has not been able to go to school."

We enjoyed doing it and it was good to see the others work. Being able to do this in person and at a distance is good. Sometimes these things are done where we can't get to them. An online alternative is a good idea for work going forward. It would be great for this to continue for others and also the opportunity to do the other levels would be great."

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"The boys have really enjoying their tasks and looking at the artist in question, and thinking about nature and how we see things. Thank you for taking them on this journey. The boys particularly loved the process being interactive with regards to creating their art and then photographing it. They enjoyed all of the activities and it was made fun by not having to make them sit and write about it."

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"Feedback, I've struggled to think of any improvement to suggest. We thought the art award and packs were great and very accessible and easy to follow. We were looking for a project after home schooling finished and this was ideal. It was a good way to get us outdoors but looking at specific things."

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"I'd like to thank you for giving the kids the opportunity to do an award during these strange isolating times and for your support through the project. We enjoyed it and hope to do more in the future."

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"The support from Spark was great. Just enough and very reassuring to be able to connect with the same person especially when I was worried that I couldn't supervise completion of the work. Turns out I could and it was all very simple. It was great to get quick answers/solutions like this for everything and great, clear regular communication. As any parent - particularly Mums - would probably say during lockdown, the relief of someone else doing and shaping the planning of activities was immense!"

THANK YOU for putting this activity on and I hope it's repeated. It was crucial that it was free and that there was a simple structure and timing to work within. For example, I felt too overwhelmed by lockdown to manage to do the other Arts Award activities on offer in our own time. The focus and support in this project were vital for me as an adult under pressure.

Culturally diverse and disabled artists and their work featured/signposted/encouraged to examine? Enjoyed the mix of digital, live, practical and personal support. A lovely balance!"

Examples of work produced:





Logbook examples (extracts):

Now you need to FIND OUT about an Artist...
WHO will you choose?

Andy Goldsworthy

Born in Cheshire 1956 25th July 63 years old.

4 children: Holly, Anna, James, Thomas.

Parents were F. Allin and Muriel.

He uses leaves and moss and stones and branches and clay and soil and sheep's wool.

He makes things from nature and makes them in a pattern.

He takes pictures of what he makes because they don't last forever.

He worked on a farm when he was young.

He goes out in the morning to do his artworks and the sculptures.

Use this page to collect information about your chosen artist

ANDY GOLDSWORTHY

PIC-COLLAGES

Take part in an arts activity...

It could be a workshop with an artist, watching a film, singing, dancing or reading...

Earlier ~~at~~ we watched some Andy Goldsworthy videos that were very good. I liked it when he put sheep wool on a stone ~~wall~~ wall. I also liked it when he lay on the pavement while it was raining he left an imprint 30 minute later the imprint came.

Use this page to sketch your ideas or stick in photos of you taking part in the arts activity

SHARE what you have discovered

WHAT have you learnt?

That its fun to make a leaf pattern.

I have learnt that me and my sister can work together.

I learned how to make leaf rubbings.

WHAT have you enjoyed?

I liked making mandalas.

I liked making patterns.

I liked making a leaf pattern.

What next?

We have received such positive feedback and requests for further activity from the teachers, families and children we have worked with and therefore plan to offer work of this nature during school holidays on an ongoing basis.