

# Arts Education Benefits

## The Research:

Data collected from a variety of sources suggest a correlation between involvement in fine arts and improved academic achievement.

- Fine arts, especially at the elementary level, contribute to the development of neural connections that enhance learning in mathematics, reading, writing, and general language development.
- Studies of first graders indicate that musical training enhances the ability to read by facilitating phonemic awareness, i.e. the connection between the visual and spoken sounds of words.
- Music and music therapy is an effective tool for increasing communication in autistic children.
- Art has a positive academic impact on students over time. Studies from the National Educational Longitudinal Survey indicate that gains become more pronounced with longer involvement.
- Students with consistently high levels of involvement in instrumental music during middle and high school years demonstrate significantly stronger mathematical skills by their senior year. This is true for both ends of the socioeconomic spectrum.
- Arts activities outside the school also appear to have an impact on student achievement. A study of the involvement of economical disadvantaged students in athletic, community-service, and arts-based organizations indicated that participation in arts-based programs had the greatest effect on skills related to academic growth, especially language skills and learning strategies.

Project Zero at Harvard University conducted a comprehensive analysis of research projects related to fine arts and academic achievement and found the following causal relationships.

- A medium-sized causal relationship was found between simply listening to music and temporary improvement in spatial-temporal skills.
- A large causal relationship was found between learning to play music and spatial-temporal reasoning. The relationship appeared in both general and at-risk populations.
- Medium to large relationships were found between acting out texts through classroom drama and improvement in several verbal skills, including understanding, recall, and reading achievement.

## Source:

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