



Celebrating Family Milestones: By Making Art Together

Debra Linesch

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As each family grows and develops, everyone experiences the challenge of changes and transitions. Although adults frequently have trouble coping with change, it can be much more difficult for a child. Even birthdays, temporary separations or friends moving away can result in confused feelings that are very difficult for children to express and handle by themselves. The basic message of **Celebrating Family Milestones** is that families can communicate with each other and provide mutual support by making art together.

The author is a professional psychologist who has used art therapy to reach children with serious problems they were unable to deal with verbally. She has applied the same techniques to help families (including her own) weather transitions and grow closer and stronger.

This book deals with two major problems that impede communication: lack of time together and the difficulty of expressing feelings through words alone. By taking time on a regular basis to make art together, families participate in an enjoyable activity that provides the setting for communication. Making art together helps family members to express feelings with more than just words, which are often so difficult to find, especially for children.

Although children will usually say they're okay, they often hide the fear or confusion they feel inside. In their art children will express - often unconsciously - what they really feel. The results provide valuable clues for parents, who can use this opportunity for discussion and reassurance if necessary.

Projects cover a wide range of family experience, including the birth of a new baby, the death of a grandparent, a temporary separation during a parent's business trip, the celebration of New Year's and the importance of the family tree. Every project is complete in itself, yet the author leaves room for improvisation to suit each family's particular situation.

Celebrating Family Milestones will be welcomed by parents and educators alike. The simple but distinctive projects require no particular skill and no expensive materials. The emphasis is on the process of working together to make art and the feelings expressed through this activity, rather than the final product. However, many of the pieces made with the help of this book will ultimately become family treasures, rich with memories and associations.

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