

Self-Portrait

Children study their own faces in the mirror and then draw a self-portrait to be displayed in a classroom portrait gallery.



Preparation

What's Needed

Sometimes I'm Bombaloo, stand-up mirrors, 8 1/2" by 11" white paper, multicultural crayons, markers or paints, 11" x 14" construction paper for backing/frame, or inexpensive 8 1/2" x 11" picture frames.

Things to Consider

This exploration requires children to be quiet and focused for a period of time. Try to schedule it at a time of day when children are best able to concentrate. Make sure the physical space is arranged so that children are not crowded, but are able to see each other and see the mirror clearly.

If you have a large group, you may want to offer a quiet activity for some of the children during this time to avoid crowding around the mirror.

Key Standards Children Practice

Individual Development and Identity

- Comparing own similarities and differences to others
- Exploring, identifying and analyzing how individuals relate to one another



The Exploration

Step by Step

1. Begin this exploration with a discussion about how each child looks. Ask:

What do you look like?

Look at the shape of your eyes, and now look at another person's eyes—are they the same?

What parts of a face are hard to draw? What parts are easy?

What is special about the way you look? Do you think you could draw that special feature?

2. Working with three children at a time (or more if you have more mirrors), have each child sit where he can clearly see himself in a mirror.

3. Ask the children to look carefully at themselves in the mirror, at the shape of their eyes, the color of their hair, the color of their skin. Tell them they can begin drawing themselves any time they want. Remind them that you don't expect their portrait to look like a photograph and that there are many ways to express what they see.

4. As the children complete their portraits, ask them to pick a color of construction paper or a picture frame to put their picture in.

5. Gather the group again later that day. Have the children hold up their pictures during group time and share with the group one thing they like about the portrait they drew. Record these comments.

6. Set up a group "portrait gallery" and look at the way children are similar and different.

Talk With Children

Young artists need specific feedback regarding their work. You might say something like this:

I see that you looked carefully at your eye color and chose a color that matches it best.

That brown really matches your hair color!

I see you are holding something in your picture. What is it?

If some children won't come to the drawing area, talk together about some of the things they like to do or favorite things about themselves.

Observe Children

Some children may not be able to focus on this exploration in the way you had planned.

Value all their attempts at this ambitious project, and show that you value them by recording them.

Watch how children divide their time between looking at themselves and drawing. Do some go right to creating the self-portrait? Do others hold back? What colors do children use to represent themselves? Are some children more interested in what others are doing and taking cues from their work?

The documentation you make of this exploration is important. Keep copies of children's comments about their self-portraits. The observations you make of children as they draw are also important. Keep the portraits, comments and your observations in each child's social studies portfolio, along with any relevant photographs.

Extend Children's Learning

Revisit this same self-portrait exploration several months or even a year later. Children who were reluctant at first may now join in.

As children become more comfortable with drawing themselves, you might suggest they try to do a "happy" self-portrait or a "sad" self-portrait or a portrait that tells you how they are feeling at the moment.

Compare with the children how their artwork has changed. Ask them if things they like about themselves have changed.

Connect With Families

Display *Sometimes I'm Bombaloo* and the self-portraits where families can see them. Invite families to visit the portrait gallery. On the wall near the portrait gallery, post :

Self-Portrait

After reading *Sometimes I'm Bombaloo* we took time to look carefully at our faces in a mirror and drew what we saw. We talked about:

- the parts of our faces
- how our features are the same and different
- what we especially like about how we look
- what our faces can tell others about how we feel

