



VSA Florida



Dear Parents,

This year your student has a unique opportunity to work with a master artist from the community. **Artist Name** will partner with your child's classroom teacher to increase your child's self-expression and communication, motor and social skills, and creative thinking through an arts residency.

This opportunity is provided by VSA Florida, a non-profit organization funded in part by the Florida Department of Education, which works to make the arts and arts education more accessible and inclusive. You can learn more about our work at <http://www.vsafl.org>. This program is part of our *My Art My Way* artist in residence program. Annually VSA Florida conducts over 130 artist in residence programs in visual art, music, dance, and drama across the state.

Included in this letter are ways you can extend the arts experience for your child after the residency has ended. Childhood arts experiences have been proven to help children develop real-life skills like critical thinking, hand-eye coordination, motor skills, and social skills. Arts experiences also increase self-esteem, provide opportunities for self-expression, and lead to higher test scores in the classroom.

Occasionally, VSA Florida takes photographs of residencies in action to help us tell the story of our work and make the case to funders. *Please sign the media release form enclosed.* Your child will still get to participate, even if you do not sign this form.

Meet the Artist:

Picture and brief bio here

DON'T FORGET: Opt in to VSA Florida's accessible art e-newsletter for a listing of art activities accessible to children with disabilities in your area at:

<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/3353151/Parent-Opt-In-Accessible-Art-E-news>

Continuing the Arts Experience After the Residency

Your child's art residency is just the first step in introducing your child to the social and academic benefits the arts provide. Here are some ways you can continue the arts at home:

Make your house art-friendly.

The most basic materials and supplies are often the best ones for encouraging creativity. Remember, it is not about the product, it's about the process.

- Colored pencils, crayons, paints, sidewalk chalk, an assortment of papers, scissors, and glue can lead to open-ended trial-and-error style exploration.
- Encourage your child to play dress up and write stories they can act out.
- Have pots and pans or other musical instruments available for music making.
- Play music and dance around the house.
- Visit VSA Florida's Pinterest site for exciting art activities to enjoy with your child at home <https://www.pinterest.com/vsaflorida/>
- More information about supporting your child's art experiences and ideas for activities can be found at <http://www.pbs.org/parents/education/music-arts/>

Listen to music together.

Whether it is a kid-friendly radio station or classical music, expose your child to different kinds of music and let your child decide what he or she likes and does not like. Some great resources include:

- <http://www.npr.org/music>
- <http://www.sfskids.org>
- <http://www.nyphilkids.org>
- <http://pbskids.org/games/music/>

Watch programs about the arts on TV or explore online.

Encourage discussion with your children about what they are seeing, whether they like or dislike it, and why. Some great resources include:

- <http://www.pbs.org/show/art-assignment/>
- <http://www.pbs.org/program/art21/> or <https://www.art21.org>
- <http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/education/kids.html>
- <https://www.moma.org/research-and-learning/teachers/online>



Attend accessible arts events, museums, and shows in your area.

VSA Florida has a region-specific accessible arts e-newsletter for parents! In this quarterly newsletter we promote arts activities from museums, performing arts centers, and more that are accessible for children with disabilities. Opt in to the e-newsletter at:

<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/3353151/Parent-Opt-In-Accessible-Art-E-news>

Many museums and performing arts spaces now have hands-on workshops or programs geared to children. Prepare your child for this new experience by listening to music, viewing pictures, or reading books at home; explain what the experience will be like; and discuss appropriate behavior. The Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs has two great pre-visit guides to help:

- Going to the Museum- <http://www.miamidadearts.org/education/going-museum>
- Going to the Show- <http://www.miamidadearts.org/education/going-show>

Enroll your child in art classes.

Let your child pick what to try and encourage them to stick through an entire session before trying something else. VSA Florida hosts community arts classes in specific areas of the state.

Visit <http://vsaf1.org/content/vsa-florida-programs/Classes> for more information. Other accessible art classes are listed in our region-specific accessible arts e-newsletter. Opt in to the e-newsletter at: <http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/3353151/Parent-Opt-In-Accessible-Art-E-news>



VSA Florida Media/Photo Release

Please check the appropriate section and complete the lower section

_____ Parents/Guardians/Adult Artists

My signature on this document gives my consent to VSA Florida to photograph or videotape me/my child and to use such photos, voice or other likeness for future public awareness including print media, online news distribution, VSA Florida website, television and radio opportunities, video, promotional materials and other educational or exhibition purposes. I also acknowledge that my/my child's work that is created through VSA Florida programs may be selected, displayed, used, or reproduced to benefit the ongoing statewide art programming of VSA Florida.

_____ Teaching Artists

My signature on this document gives my consent to VSA Florida to use my application and biographical information as well as any images of my art and/or photographs in any publications or press releases that originate from the VSA Florida office.

Artist Name (Student or Adult) _____

County _____

Program Site _____ Teacher _____

Parent/Guardian signature (if necessary) _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Please return this form to your teacher who will submit it to VSA Florida or mail to:

Dee Miller, Director of Education
VSA Florida
4202 E. Fowler Avenue, EDU105
Tampa, FL 33620

Email: deemiller@usf.edu

Phone: 813.974.0745

Fax: 813.905.9878