



When children engage in enjoyable activities with friends, family, and other caring adults, it not only allows them to have fun in the moment but can also help them to develop their social and emotional skills for the future.

Creative activities like arts and crafts can be great ways to spend time together, have fun and nurture your relationships. These activities also encourage children to focus their thoughts, involve communicating with others, and help them to know themselves.

While you might create a memorable keepsake, the real value lies in the joy and connection shared throughout the experience.

Shaping Us Portrait Activity

We are encouraging anyone with children in their lives, no matter the age, to make time for each other, to sit down together and create portraits of one another.

You can enjoy this activity in a way that is fun for you and the child you are with: you might want to draw, paint, or make a model out of things around the house, to make your portrait.

The magic of this activity comes in making space for each other, really looking at and focusing on each other, connecting and having fun.

We encourage grown-ups to draw with children, so you are both creating portraits of each other. Don't worry about the quality of your art. Use the moment to share the experience – appreciating the strengths in each other's artwork and perhaps having a giggle where things don't turn out as planned.

We'd love to see examples of your portraits, so please do share them (not personal photos) on Instagram or X and tag our account, **@earlychildhood** – and most importantly, let us know how you found the experience.

Doing more and involving younger children

If you've enjoyed this activity, you could suggest to your child that they could draw other portraits of someone they care about. Encourage them to think about the person when they draw them. For example, could they draw the person wearing their favourite colour? Or in their favourite place? In doing this task they are really thinking about other people, and other people's feelings, emotions and thoughts.

This portrait might make a lovely gift for a family member or friend.

These activities can be adapted for babies and young toddlers too. Many of us have photos of people we care about around our homes and on our phones. Babies and toddlers often love looking at these pictures and talking about the people in them. You could show them photos of themselves with a friend or family member and talk about what they were doing together.

