

Gifts: Kids in arts score better in math and English

Although electronic games are popular with kids, they don't build the same type of creativity and innovation that simpler toys or gifts can, Basom said.

"Even when girls are playing with dolls, and I hate to sound old fashioned, but when boys are playing with tanks and trucks, they're building an imaginary area and using their imaginations instead of having everything fed to them," Basom said.

When you give a creative gift, you're giving a child something that they can use to create their own works.

"Whether it's a song or picture that they'll do with their art easel or a story that they'd write to accompany the pictures, it really gives them a chance to be creative and be a young artist," Basom said. "There are all kinds of studies that show that kids that are involved in the arts score better on mathematics tests and English."

Basom said there are also studies that say arts programs are often what keep kids going to school.

"The classes in the arts are ones that kids look forward to going to, and they have to be involved in other classes, too," she said.

Inspire creativity

Check local music, book, art, hobby and retail stores for creative products for your kids. Here are some ideas for kids, some may be available locally, while others may only be available online.

Reading

Family Talk and Family Talk 2 Card Games, from Aroundthetablegames.com, ages four and older, \$12.95