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Interpreting your child's first drawings

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He proudly offers them to you. A bit perplexed, you display them on the door of the refrigerator? What do they really say about him?

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1. Some key points to understand

Children reveal themselves through graphic productions. The subjects, the colors, the drawing provide valuable information to psychologists. Take a step back before undertaking any analysis, and weigh your conclusions: like dream interpretation, the interpretation of drawings is not an exact science!

- Observe his work in its entirety: density, number of colors, etc.
- Place it in its context: work done at school, following an event, etc.
- Recall if it was spontaneous, translating his mood of the moment.
- Study the proportions: children make large the aspects that are important in their eyes.

In practice: some basic errors

- **Repetition** does not necessarily indicate a problem. Perhaps he reproduces the same subject because you congratulated it the first time.
- **Talent:** you see a magnificent tortoise in a multicolored mosaic... while he was only experimenting with his new box of paints.
- **Genius:** if he suddenly draws a "blue planet" at age 4, it is surely the subject of a school workshop.
- **Literal interpretation:** not all children who represent themselves surrounded by two houses are torn between two estranged parents!

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2. The meaning of the current figures

- **Character (his):** the size of the eyes reveal his curiosity, the size of the mouth reveals his capacity to verbalize his emotions. Arms raised, he is asking to be heard; lowered, he is seeking tranquility. Feet anchored on the ground signify stability.
- **House (his universe):** the bigger it is, the more he is at ease. The number of windows signifies his degree of openness. Without access underlines a sense of failure.
- **Sun:** sign of energy, it represents the mother to the left of the sheet, and the father to the right.
- **And also:** tree (force, anchored in his environment), animals (emotions), water (femininity, birth), land (attachment to the mother), sky (aspirations, dreams) etc.

3. Zoom on the colors

He uses more than three, he is dynamic and open to others. He is happy with one or two colors: he is going through a period of looking inward.

- **Red:** it is the favorite color of young children. Later, it channels energy, but also anger and aggression.
- **Yellow:** optimism, knowledge... it is the color of curious and expressive children.
- **Blue:** sign of peace and harmony, it underlines a need to advance at his own pace.
- **Green:** it is associated with maturity and intuition.
- **Black:** With young children it is more of a sign of self confidence. Later on, it is associated with anguish.
- **And also:** pink (tenderness), orange (team spirit), brown (attention to detail, security)...

Memo: The characteristics of the drawing

- **The drawing:** a confident line indicates relaxed. Hesitant, suggests fear of being judged. A fine line is a sign of great sensitivity; a thicker line denotes energy.
- **Use of space:** the more the sheet is filled, the more the child has confidence in his future. A nearly blank page reveals timidity.
- **Positioning of the subjects:** a confident child represents himself at the center of his world.
- **Organization of the subjects:** if he draws his family, the size and proximity of the people has significance.

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Attention and perfection in the plastic arts comes through play first. Here are a few examples of fun activities to practice with the family or to fill some time at a birthday party.

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