

INTERPRETATION OF FIGURATIVE ART SYMBOLS IN DRAWINGS BY 4-5 YEAR OLD CHILDREN

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Abstract: This study examines the complex symbols of children aged 4-5 years and how they use illustrations to represent the human body, animals, nature, and other elements of daily life. During this period, children begin to create more detailed and complete figures, using a wide range of shapes and lines to express their thoughts, emotions, and perceptions of the world around them. In illustrations of the human body, children use circles and lines to symbolize body parts such as the head, hands, and feet, reflecting movement and actions they observe in adults and others. These figures are often simple but begin to include elements such as gender, with boys depicted with short hair and girls often shown in dresses.

Children also use illustrations to depict animals, which are an important part of their world. At this age, they start using spiral and solid lines to represent the movement of animals, such as birds in flight or fish in water. This use of lines demonstrates the children's attempt to understand and express the dynamic and natural movement they observe in their environment. Animal illustrations also become more detailed, highlighting specific elements like a dog's fur and a cat's whiskers, reflecting the development of the ability to create more complex figures and express natural details.

Additionally, illustrations of nature, such as trees and flowers, are also important at this stage of development. Children of this age use circular and spiral shapes to depict natural elements and express their movement, as seen in flowers and trees that bloom. They also use different colors and shapes to reflect the natural world, creating compositions that express their imagination and perception of nature. This period marks a growth in the child's perceptive and creative abilities, allowing them to more clearly express the world they experience.

Another important aspect of this study is the representation of the home and furniture, as part of the child's everyday environment. At the age of 2-4 years, children often create simple and figurative forms of homes and furniture, using horizontal and vertical lines to symbolize objects like chairs and tables. As they move into the 4-5 age range, these figures become more complex, including additional elements like windows, doors, and interior details that reflect a growing ability to understand the structure and function of objects.

The work includes selected works from specific age groups and was developed over a four-year period. The research process involved direct observations and structured questions focusing on the psychological aspects of children's development. This study also highlights the importance of drawings in understanding children's mental and perceptual development. Illustrations are a powerful tool for understanding how children perceive and interpret their world through the creation of complex symbols that reflect their relationships with nature, individuals, and the objects around them. This gradual process of figure creation serves as a mirror to their intellectual and creative development, and through these illustrations, we can better understand the space and world they see and experience.

This study contributes to the understanding of how children create and use symbols to reflect their perceptions of the world, helping educators and parents better understand the stages of children's development and support their creativity and mental growth.

Keywords: symbols, lines, shapes, illustration, emotion

1. INTRODUCTION

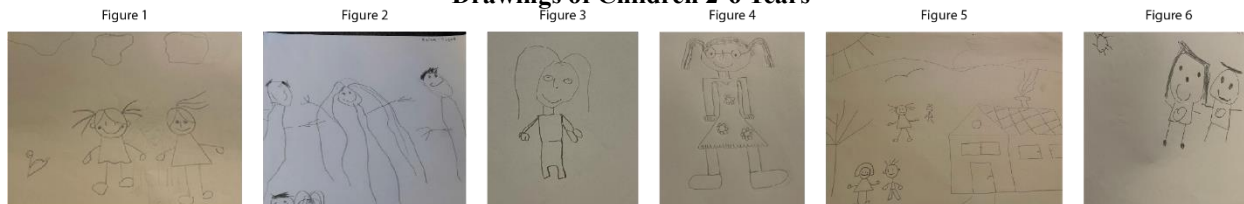
Have you ever looked at a child's drawing and felt the desire to understand what they are trying to express? Children's drawings are much more than colorful scribbles; they are a reflection of their inner world, a unique language that conveys their emotions, thoughts, and perception of the environment around them. Beyond childhood, the process of observing art has the power to open a window into the emotional world of adults as well. Mature drawings often reflect personal experiences and deep emotions, making this journey an extraordinary way to explore art as a universal language of emotion and perception.

2. COMPLEX SYMBOLS IN CHILDREN AGED 4-5 YEARS

Symbols representing the human body include forms such as circles for the head, hands, and feet. Complex figures in children's drawings vary and may relate to favorite games, room furnishings, summer or winter vacations, and so on. These illustrations are naturally presented, often consisting of numerous lines and complex forms, helping us understand the movement and figurative aspects of these symbols. In different illustrations, we can observe differences in the portrayal of genders. Boys often have short hair with a full hairline, while girls have long, flowing

hair. (fig. 1, 2, 3, 4) Boys may be depicted wearing shorts, while girls are frequently shown in dresses but can also appear wearing trousers.(fig. 5, 6). Children’s illustrations are an expression of their mental and perceptual development. Here, we aim to analyze specific aspects of these drawings.

Drawings of Children 2-6 Years



Drawings from Tetovo, Gostivar and Struga preschool students, aged 2 to 6.

Source: Mladost (Rinia)-Tetovo

In this age group, there is a strong tendency to use lines as a tool to depict the surrounding world. Children often create simple and repetitive forms using horizontal, vertical, and spiral lines. They frequently represent familiar objects such as flowers, trees, and animals in a simple and abstract manner. This is evident in the use of circular and spiral lines found in illustrations of trees, flowers, and animals

Another significant aspect is the use of simple lines, such as horizontal and vertical ones, which reflect forms in nature. These lines help children understand spatial concepts and motion. For instance, they use lines to depict the movement of animals like birds in flight or fish in water. Children in this age group use lines to express dynamics and changes in nature, as well as to emphasize familiar elements. (fig. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11)

Drawings of Children 2-6 Years



Drawings from Tetovo, Gostivar and Struga preschool students, aged 2 to 6.

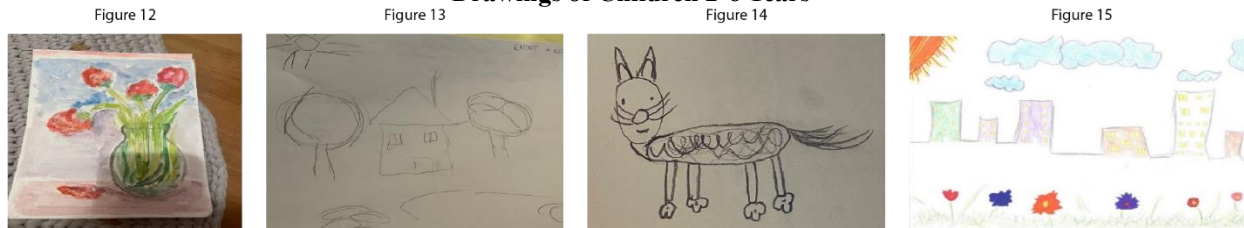
Source: Sonce (Dielli)-Struga

Drawings of Children Aged 4–5 Years

At this age, there is a noticeable development in children's creative abilities. Figures become more detailed and complete. Often, children create compositions including natural elements such as trees, flowers, and animals, using more details to tell a story or express emotions. For example, they might emphasize the characteristics of animals, such as a dog’s fur or a cat’s whiskers, using lines to highlight significant details. This development reflects their growing perceptual and creative capacity. (fig. 12)

While children aged 2–4 tend to create simple and direct forms, those aged 4–5 and 5–6 are capable of creating more complex figures and better understanding connections between forms and natural elements. This is evident in their use of symmetry, descriptions of nature, and the creation of detailed forms such as trees and flowers. (fig. 13, 14, 15)

Drawings of Children 2-6 Years

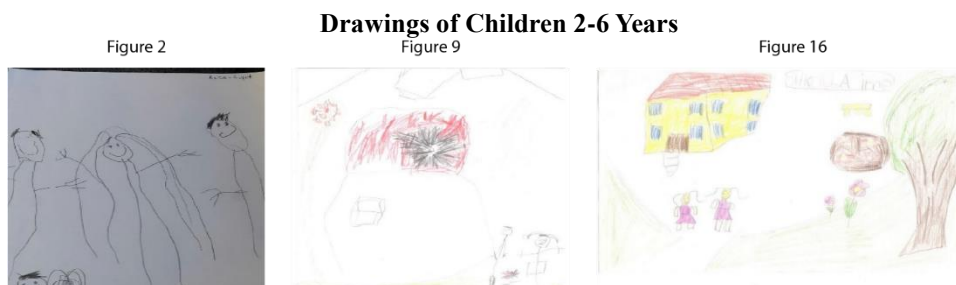


Drawings from Tetovo, Gostivar and Struga preschool students, aged 2 to 6.

Source: Pcelka(Bletet)-Gostivar, Mladost (Rina)-Tetovo

Houses as a Symbol in Drawings

The house, as a space of security for children, represents a place where they feel peace and happiness. Drawings of houses often depict life within four walls and the liveliness outside them. At the age of 2, houses are represented without clearly formed walls, consisting of figurative elements dominated by curved, wavy, and spiral lines. (fig. 2) By ages 4–5, the figurative structure of the house becomes more complex, including four walls and interior spaces with limited order. At ages 5–6, children’s figurative expressions become more spatial, synthetic, and analytical. They create detailed projects and depict elements of the world around them through their imagination. (fig. 9, 16)



Drawings from Tetovo, Gostivar and Struga preschool students, aged 2 to 6.

Source: Mladost (Rinia)-Tetovo, Sonce (Dielli)-Struga

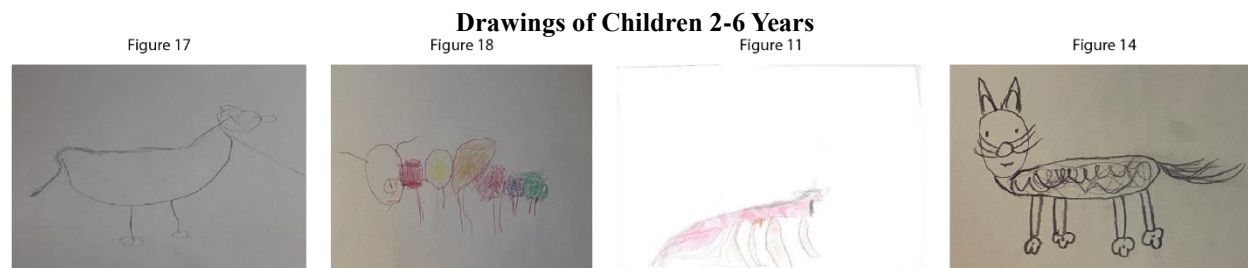
Animals in Drawings of Children Aged 2–4 Years

Animals are part of children’s surroundings and hold special importance. They frequently appear in children’s drawings, represented through circular lines, zigzags, complete lines, and intersecting lines.

At the age of 2, children often draw spontaneous circular lines that are linked to forms they observe around them. In illustrating birds in flight, crossed and complete lines can be seen. Similarly, illustrations of fish, insects such as ants, and other animals showcase circles and vertical lines symbolizing movement. (fig. 17, 18, 11)

For children aged 4–5 years, animal illustrations become more complete and figurative.

For example, a drawing of a dog may use strong and frequent lines to depict fur, with notable differentiation in features like ears. The animal's fur becomes an essential structural element in their depiction, reflecting their developing observation skills. Children often draw various animals, emphasizing their distinguishing features, such as birds’ wings in flight, feathers, dogs’ and cats’ fur, tails, legs, and ears. For cows and sheep, they emphasize the nurturing aspects, such as the milk they provide. These details showcase children’s growing understanding of the world around them. (fig. 14)



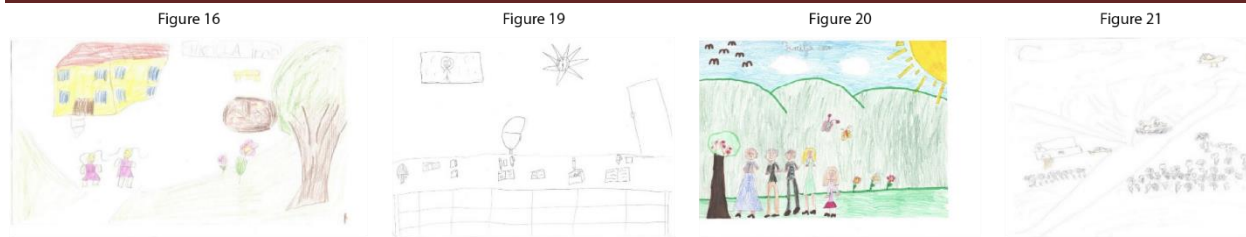
Drawings from Tetovo, Gostivar and Struga preschool students, aged 2 to 6.

Source: Sonce(Dielli)-Struga

Illustrations of Nature by Children Aged 4–5 and 5–6 Years

Children aged 4–5 years create more prominent representations of nature using circular shapes and lines to symbolize petals. Petals appear in various forms, such as circles, semi-circles, and spirals. This reflects their deepening perception of nature and the living world. (fig. 16, 19, 20, 21)

Drawings of Children 2-6 Years

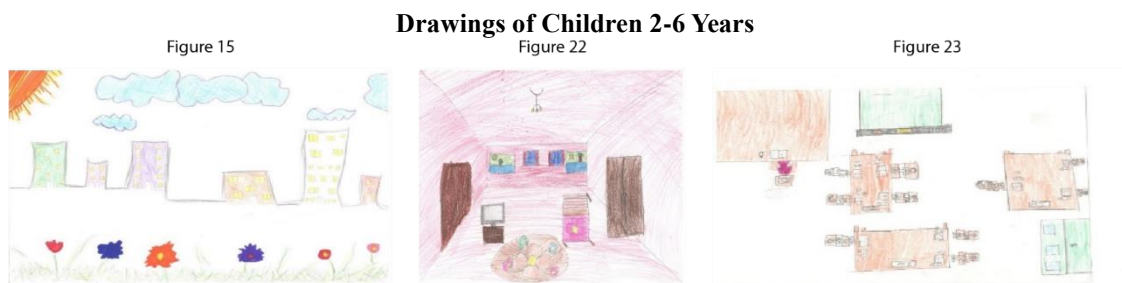


Drawings from Tetovo, Gostivar and Struga preschool students, aged 2 to 6.

Source: Mladost (Rina)-Tetovo

Illustrations of Furniture by Children Aged 2–4, 4–5, and 5–6 Years

Furniture, a part of children's daily lives, frequently appears in their drawings as an essential aspect of living. For younger children, chairs are represented with horizontal wavy lines that form their shape. For older children, furniture becomes more varied in form, with additional details such as squares to represent interior objects, emphasizing functionality and structure. (fig. 15, 22, 23)



Drawings from Tetovo, Gostivar and Struga preschool students, aged 2 to 6.

Source: Mladost (Rina)-Tetovo

3. CONCLUSION

Children's illustrations serve as a mirror of their mental and perceptual development. They reflect how children view and interpret their world, showing a gradual progression from simple lines to complex figures. Artistic expression becomes a powerful tool to study children's cognitive and creative growth.

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