

Rock Crafts

A creative way for kids to use the stones they stumble across is to turn them into animals, people, or objects.

With just a few supplies -- paint, glue, and clay -- children can try out their skills as rock artists. Like sculptors, they'll learn to judge proportion and form. Like painters, they will need to consider color and shape, along with such pleasant dilemmas as how to create a tapered wing on a rounded rock.

1. Glue rocks together before painting them, attaching small stone features such as eyes, feet, or beaks to body parts before joining larger parts; attach whiskers and tails after painting. Cement glue makes the strongest bond but should be used only by parents working in a well-ventilated area. (Kid-friendly glues are less durable and are best for rock crafts that will sit on shelves.)



2. Kids can design a project by arranging rocks until the figure looks right. Use little cushions of nondrying clay to support parts while the glue sets; bread clay works especially well. For example, the alligator's hungry mouth is partly supported by his pink tongue (below left). Cut-up coffee stirrers are glued to the fellow's underside for stability (below right) and painted gray.

