

## Aluminum Foil Sculptures

**Summary Description:** Explore sculptural possibilities by working with aluminum foil.

**Level:** Preschool

**Cost:** Under \$5

**Mess factor:** Little

**Suggested location:** Kitchen table or table outside

**Children will experience:**

- Art creativity
- New vocabulary words

**Materials:**

- Aluminum foil (two sheets per child and for yourself to start with; extra sheets as needed) Tip: Some brands of aluminum foil are very thin, while others are thick. Most children like sculpting with the thicker quality foil because it holds the shape better.
- Supplementary materials such as ribbon and pipe cleaners for wrapping or decorating.
- Examples of sculpture reproductions from the DIA (For links to sculptures from the DIA, please see page 3)

**Definition:** A SCULPTURE is a three-dimensional (3D) piece of artwork.

**Vocabulary words/topics to focus on while conversing with your child:**  
sculpture, build, color, size, shape, and texture

**Beginning:** Talk with your child about the DIA field trip and show them the pictures of sculpture art. Then talk about things you've seen your child fold,

roll, or crumple (for example, paper towels, napkins, leaves). Say something like, "Aluminum foil is another material you can roll, fold, or crumple into different shapes." Demonstrate ways to roll, fold, and crumple aluminum foil. Continue by saying something like "When artists do that, they call it making a sculpture. I wonder what sculptures you can make." Give your child one or two pieces of aluminum foil.

**Middle:** Make comments about how the aluminum foil is taking on different shapes. Talk about how the foil looks and feels, how folding, rolling and crumpling affect the foil's appearance, and what, if anything, they make with the foil. Use words related to texture (smooth, bumpy, pointy), action (bend, twist), and shape (curved, straight, round, flat) to help your child experience and appreciate the sculpture. Encourage your child to use other materials such as ribbon or pipe cleaners to wrap around or decorate the sculptures.

**End:** Let your child know when there are about five minutes left in the activity. Then put away the materials together. Help your child find a place in the home to display the sculpture.

### **Younger children:**

- Young toddlers probably will not talk as much about what they are doing. They are more interested in just making things and exploring aluminum foil.
- Young children enjoy it when others copy what they are doing. Imitate young children's actions as they create!
- Describe what you see your child doing – for example, "Oh you are tearing the foil into a lot of pieces."
- Give your child other kinds of materials to explore, such as tissue paper, construction paper, plastic wrap, and wax paper.

### Older children:

- School-age children love this activity because making sculptures is a new way for them to express themselves. Their sculptures will have many details.
- Challenge children to sculpt themselves.
- Give them a shoe box and encourage them to create scenes.
- Children might like to do this project over several days so they will need to have a place to keep the work(s)-in-progress.

### More!

- Supply other materials the children can mold. For example, in addition to play dough and clay, offer beeswax, wet sand, and newspaper.
- Look for real photographs, exhibition posters, and/or reproduction postcards of sculptures made of metal and other materials in your community and/or online.

### Links to sculptures from the Detroit Institute of Arts:

*Viewing this as a printed resource? You can find the art pieces listed below by visiting <https://dia.org/collection> and searching for each art piece by name.*

- [Coo Wha Zee, 1962](#)
- [Man Crossing a Square on a Sunny Morning, 1950](#)
- [Moonmad, 1944](#)
- [Reclining Figure, 1939](#)
- [Spirit Box, 2009](#)