



Paint Your Path: Leading with Love

A Family-Centered Creative Reflection Experience

Facilitator Guide & Workshop Manual

Hosted By: Parents Inc. of New Jersey Annual Parenting Conference

Facilitated By: STR8UP EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Leading with Love: Parents as Change Makers



WHAT IS PAINT YOUR PATH PROGRAM?

Paint Your Path: An Artistic Approach to Career Readiness





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Paint Your Path is an innovative, arts-based career readiness program created and developed by **Dashaan Jennings** and **Inshira Graham**, in collaboration with a dedicated team of volunteers from **STR8UP Employment Services**.

The program was designed to help youth and young adults explore their personal journeys, identify their strengths, and envision their future through creative expression.

Unlike **traditional** workforce development programs, **Paint Your Path** uses **art** as a tool for self-discovery, healing, goal setting, and career exploration. Participants engage in guided painting activities, reflective discussions, and interactive exercises that encourage them to connect their life experiences with their aspirations for the future.

Through the **metaphor** of creating a **colorful** path on canvas, you are invited to reflect on where you have been, celebrate the strengths that have **carried** you through challenges, and design a vision for where you want to go. This program recognizes that every individual's **journey** is unique and that creativity can serve as a powerful bridge between **personal growth** and professional success.

Paint Your Path integrates key career readiness skills including:

- Self-awareness and personal development
- Goal setting and future planning
- Communication and self-expression
- Confidence building and resilience
- Teamwork and relationship building
- Workforce preparation and career exploration

Rooted in STR8UP Employment Services' commitment to **healing-centered engagement** and **youth and family** empowerment, Paint Your Path creates a safe and supportive environment where participants can explore their **identities**, **share** their stories, and **build** confidence in their ability to **achieve** their goals.

Led by the vision and passion for artistic expression, the program demonstrates how creativity can be a powerful catalyst for personal transformation, workforce readiness, and lifelong success.

PAINT YOUR PATH WORKSHOP

Leading with Love: Parents as Artists of Their Families

Workshop Overview

Leading with Love: Parents as Artists of Their Families is an interactive, healing-centered workshop developed through the **Paint Your Path** initiative at STR8UP Employment Services. This experience invites parents and caregivers to recognize that, just like an artist with a blank canvas, they have the power to shape, influence, and create the environment in which their families grow and thrive.



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Using paint, reflection, storytelling, and guided discussion, participants explore their family's journey, identify strengths, celebrate resilience, and create a visual representation of the future they hope to build together.

Icebreaker Exercise:

Share Your Color: Parent Partner Interviews

What is your name and the color that describes your of your feeling at the moment?



Instructions: Pair up with the person next to you. If you do not have a partner let us know. Use the blank sheet of paper near you to take notes. What is your name? What is your favorite color? What color reflects your current feeling at the moment? What two colors make up the color of your feeling at the moment ?



SHARE YOUR COLOR



**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1



Pair up with the person next to you. If you do not have a partner, let us know.

2



Use the blank sheet of paper near you to take notes.

3



Take turns interviewing one another using the questions below:

•

What is your name?

•

What is your favorite color?

•

What color reflects your current feeling at the moment?

•

What two colors make up the color of your feeling at the moment?

4

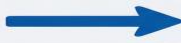


Be prepared to share what you learned about your partner with the group!



**TAKE NOTES HERE!**

**COLOR REFERENCE GUIDE ON PAGE 4**
Use the color guide to help identify colors that best represent emotions, feelings, and experiences.



**SEE PAGE 4**



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WHAT COLORS MEAN

COLORS SPEAK. CHOOSE WHAT SPEAKS TO YOU.

RED Passion, energy, strength, courage, determination Use it when: You want to show power, love, or strong emotions	ORANGE Creativity, enthusiasm, excitement, warmth, encouragement Use it when: You want to feel inspired, motivated, or optimistic	YELLOW Happiness, joy, positivity, hope, clarity Use it when: You want to express joy, ideas, or new beginnings	GREEN Growth, healing, balance, renewal, abundance Use it when: You want peace, growth, or a fresh start	BLUE Calm, trust, peace, wisdom, stability, communication Use it when: You want to feel calm, focused, or connected
PURPLE Spirituality, intuition, imagination, dignity, transformation Use it when: You want to connect with your inner self or dream big	PINK Love, compassion, kindness, self-worth, nurturing Use it when: You want to show love, care, or self-acceptance	BROWN Stability, support, reliability, comfort, grounding Use it when: You want to feel safe, supported, or connected to your roots	BLACK Strength, protection, mystery, elegance, new beginnings Use it when: You want to set boundaries, reflect, or start over	WHITE Peace, purity, clarity, simplicity, fresh starts Use it when: You want clarity, a clean slate, or inner peace
COMBINE COLORS! Mixing colors can show balance, blending of emotions, and the beauty of your unique journey.				

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Created by Inshira Graham & a team of volunteers at STR8UP Employment Services
PAINT YOUR PATH: OUR ARTISTIC APPROACH TO CAREER READINESS | www.str8upes.org

HOW TO BLEND & MAKE COLORS

EVERY COLOR YOU SEE CAN BE CREATED. EXPLORE. MIX. BLEND. EXPRESS.

PRIMARY COLORS

These 3 colors can't be made from any other colors.

RED YELLOW BLUE

SECONDARY COLORS

Made by mixing 2 primary colors.

RED + YELLOW = ORANGE
YELLOW + BLUE = GREEN
BLUE + RED = PURPLE

TERTIARY COLORS

Made by mixing a primary and its neighboring secondary color.

RED + ORANGE = RED-ORANGE
ORANGE + YELLOW = YELLOW-ORANGE
YELLOW + GREEN = YELLOW-GREEN
GREEN + BLUE = BLUE-GREEN
BLUE + PURPLE = BLUE-PURPLE
PURPLE + RED = RED-PURPLE

HOW TO BLEND COLORS

- 1. DRY BRUSH BLENDING**
Use a dry or lightly loaded brush. Great for soft transitions and textured blending.
- 2. WET BLENDING**
Blend colors while the paint is still wet. Perfect for smooth, seamless transitions.
- 3. LAYERING & GLAZING**
Let the first layer dry, then add a thin layer of another color on top. This creates depth and richness.

COLOR MIXING GUIDE

	RED	ORANGE	YELLOW	GREEN	BLUE	PURPLE	BROWN	BLACK	WHITE
RED									
ORANGE									
YELLOW									
GREEN									
BLUE									
PURPLE									
BROWN									
BLACK									
WHITE									

COLOR PAlettes

Use these palettes to create mood, harmony and inspiration in your artwork.

WARM & ENERGETIC
Red, Orange, Yellow, Coral, Warm Pink

COOL & CALM
Blue, Teal, Green, Lavender, Blue Violet

NATURAL & EARTHY
Olive Green, Burnt Sienna, Gold, Brown, Beige

BOLD & VIBRANT
Purple, Fuchsia, Cobalt Blue, Turquoise, Yellow

SOFT & PASTEL
Blush Pink, Lilac, Sky Blue, Mint Green, Light Yellow

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Start with small amounts of paint. You can always add more.
- Use clean water and a clean brush when switching colors.
- Observe real life for inspiration—nature is the best artist.
- There are no mistakes in art—only new color discoveries!

Paint Your Path: YOUR STORY. YOUR COLORS. YOUR FUTURE.
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Leading with Love: Parents as Change Makers

Instructions:

Family Journey & Strengths Reflection

Every family has a story.

As we prepare to begin our painting exercise, take a moment to reflect on your family's journey. Think about the experiences, milestones, challenges, and victories that have shaped your family over time. Consider the strengths that helped you move through each chapter—whether it was love, courage, patience, resilience, faith, determination, or support from others.

As you look at the colors on your table and the colors that have been shared throughout today's workshop, think about how those colors might represent different parts of your family's story. What colors represent moments of joy? What colors represent growth, healing, hope, or strength?

Imagine yourself as an artist creating a picture of your family's future. What would that future look like? What values, dreams, and strengths would guide the path ahead?

As you complete this reflection, begin thinking about how you can transform your family's story into a colorful path on your canvas.

At the end of this exercise, you will have an opportunity to share one strength that has guided your family and one hope you have for your family's future.

Remember: there is no right or wrong way to tell your story. Every family's journey is unique, and every brushstroke represents the love, resilience, and possibility that continue to shape your family's future.

Our Family's Path: Family Journey Guide

Paint Your Path: Leading with Love

Workshop Instructions (60-Minute Family Reflection Painting Experience)

Welcome Families!

Today, you will create a visual representation of your family's journey by painting, drawing, writing, and decorating your path. There is no right or wrong way to complete this activity. This is your family's story.

Before we begin, please make sure you have all of your materials: canvas, paints, brushes, water cup, paper towels, and your Family Journey Guide.

Once we begin, we invite you to paint continuously for the next 60 minutes. There will be no stopping between activities. Throughout the experience, facilitators will offer reflection prompts and ideas, but your painting is your own. There is no right or wrong way to tell your family's story.





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We are not asking for Picassos—we are asking for reflection.

As parents and caregivers, you are the artists of your family's story and the foundation upon which future generations will build.

As you paint, we encourage you to incorporate four elements into your family's path:

The Beginning of the Path – Where did your family begin? What people, values, traditions, and experiences shaped who you are today?

Hills and Curves – Every family experiences challenges, changes, obstacles, and turning points. Show the hills you've climbed, the curves you've navigated, and the bridges that helped you keep moving forward.

Family Strength Markers – Add symbols, colors, or images that represent your family's strengths, such as love, hope, growth, support, resilience, culture, and perseverance.

The Future Path – Dream about where your family is going. Paint your hopes, goals, dreams, and the future you want to create together.

When your painting is complete, take a Brush Note and write:

- *The title of your painting*
- *A brief statement describing its meaning*
- *One hope or goal for your family's future*

Place the Brush Note underneath your canvas and signal a facilitator.

We will provide you with a link to complete a brief feedback form.

Once everyone has finished, we will conclude with a Gallery Walk. During this time, we invite you to walk around the room, observe each family's artwork, and celebrate the stories, strengths, resilience, and dreams represented in each painting.

Most importantly, enjoy the process, share stories, and reflect together.

♡ Today is about honoring where your family has been, recognizing your strengths, and imagining where

Materials

- Canvas or poster board
- Paint and brushes
- Markers or colored pencils
- Paint Brush notes (optional)



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- Apron
- Plastic Cup

Step 1: The Beginning of the Path

Instructions:



Start your painting by creating the beginning of a path somewhere on your canvas. This represents where your family's journey began."

At the beginning of your road, think about:

-  Where your family started
-  Important family memories
-  Family traditions
-  Values that are important to your family

Use: word, symbols, drawings, or colors



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Ask yourself:

- What colors represent your family?
- What symbols remind you of your family?
- What memories stand out from the beginning of your family's story?

 Love
 Patience
 Teamwork
 Hope

 Creativity
 Faith
 Courage

Other:

Step 2: The Hills and Curves



"As every journey has twists and turns,
 Add some hills, curves, rivers, bridges, or obstacles to your path."

Recognize Challenges

Families face obstacles, but they also find ways to overcome them.

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Examples:

- *Difficult times*
- *Loss*
- *School challenges*
- *Financial struggles*
- *Health concerns*

You may choose to represent challenges through *colors, symbols, or words*.

Remember: The focus is not only on the challenge, but also how your family moved through it.

 Resilience
 Determination
 Advocacy
 Problem-Solving

 Communication
 Support from Others
 Perseverance

Other:

Step 3: Strength Markers



"Along your path"



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Paint: Symbols, Colors, or images that represent your family's strengths."

Examples:

- Hearts for love
- Trees for growth
- Stars for hope
- Hands for support
- Roots for culture and traditions

Think:

- What keeps your family going?
- What strengths do you want future generations to remember?

Take 5 minutes

A Lesson We Learned

What did this experience teach your family?

Strength We Gained:

Where We Are Today

What makes your family strong today?

1.

2.

3.



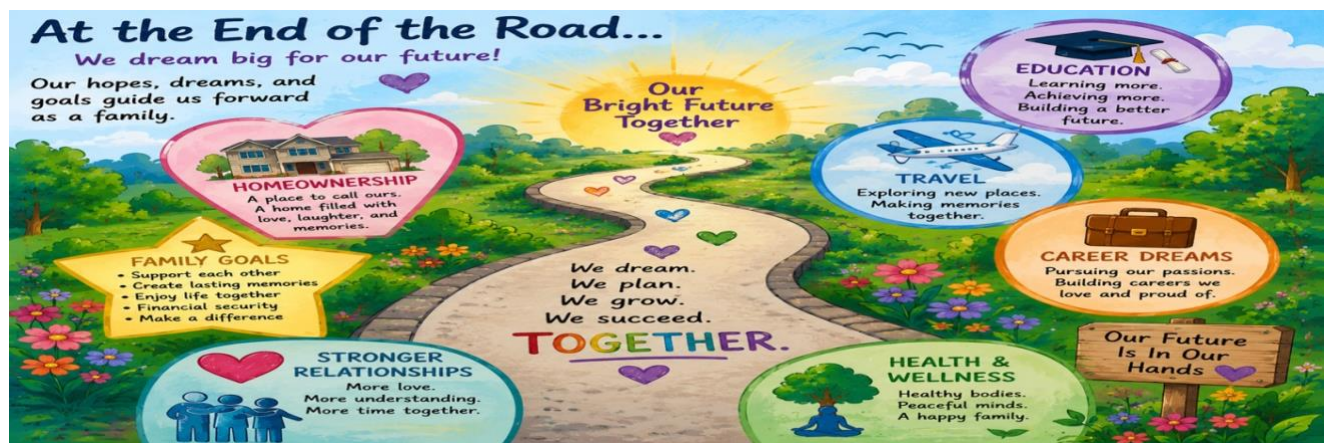
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Step 4: The Future Path



"Continue your path toward the future. Imagine where you want your family to go next."

At the end of the road, think about where your family wants to go.

Examples:

-  Family goals
-  Homeownership
-  Education
-  Travel

-  Career dreams
-  Stronger relationships
-  Health and wellness

Ask:

- What dreams do you have for your family?
- What opportunities do you hope to create?
- What does success look like for your family?

Encourage brighter colors and hopeful imagery.

Allow 5-7 minutes.

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BRUSH NOTES

1. Take one brush-shaped note.
2. Write the **title of your canvas** in the space provided. This title should represent your family's journey, story, or vision.
3. Write **one goal you have for your family in the future**. Think about something you hope to achieve, strengthen, or experience together.
4. Once you have completed your brush note, place it underneath your painting in preparation for our **Community Gallery Walk**.

As you place your brush note beneath your artwork, remember that every family is creating a unique masterpiece. Your title and goal help tell the story of where your family has been and where you hope to go next. We will take a picture and send them out to you all as well.

COMMUNITY GALLERY WALK

Closing Activity Instructions

As we conclude today's **Leading with Love: Parent as Artist to Their Families** workshop, we invite you to participate in our Community Gallery Walk.

1. Carefully place your completed painting on the designated display table.
2. Place your paintbrushes in the cup, someone will come around to collect and clean.
3. Make sure your brush note is positioned underneath your canvas so others can see the title of your artwork and your family's future goal.
4. Your painting will remain on display on a table outside of the event and continue drying until the end of the event.
5. Once all artwork has been placed on the table, take time to walk around the room and view each family's creation.
6. As you observe the artwork, reflect on the different journeys, strengths, hopes, and dreams represented throughout the room.
7. Feel free to quietly appreciate the work of others and celebrate the creativity, resilience, and love that each family has shared today.

Reflection

As you walk through the gallery, consider:





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- What strengths do you see reflected across our community?
- What hopes and dreams connect us as families?
- What inspires you about the stories being told through these paintings?

Closing Thought

Every painting displayed here represents more than colors on a canvas, it represents a family's story, their resilience, their love, and their vision for the future. Together, these individual works create a collective portrait of a community committed to growth, healing, and hope.

Thank you for sharing your creativity, your experiences, and your vision with us today.



SCAN TO COMPLETE FEED BACK
FORM

