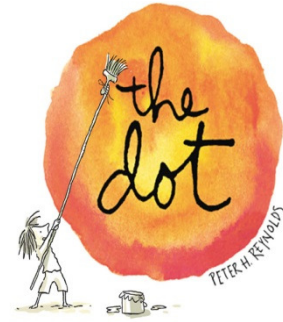


**Title:** The Dot

**Author:** Peter H Reynolds

**About:** Building Confidence & Positive Guidance

**Ages:** 3+



In Peter Reynolds story “The Dot” we are introduced to his character Vashti. Vashti is a child who presents herself as not having a high sense of confidence in her artistic abilities. When her art teacher approaches Vashti in class, she notices that Vashti did not make use of the time in class. She also notices that Vashti seemed to feel defeated, thinking that she was not capable of making a drawing. The teacher in turn uses positive guidance to encourage her to do her best. This encouragement got Vashti to create the most simplest of things, ‘a dot’. Vashti’s dot is praised in the most amazing way by her teacher. In this experience Vashti found a confidence in herself to not only create but to experiment pulling her mind where she didn’t think it could go. Vashti suddenly experiences with this and a number of dots of all different forms.

This story is helpful for caregivers as it teaches children that it is not how well they can do something; it is the effort that they put into it that makes it their best. It also reminds caregivers that their relationships with children deeply influence and shape children as they are building confidence and self-esteem in each interaction they have. The confidence that they develop this early will carry them beyond their preschool experience and shape the way they approach many situations in the future. Preschool children are learning to become independent and are discovering daily what they can accomplish on their own. This exploration does not come without a range of emotions such as sadness, anger or frustration. Vashti’s teacher could have easily gotten frustrated with Vashti for not ‘performing’ in art class. However she noticed the feelings that Vashti seemed to be experiencing in that moment and chose positive guidance and humor to engage Vashti in the activity. In one brief interaction Vashti’s teacher built Vashti’s confidence and desire to do more than she thought she could do. Peter Reynolds has shown us how experiences such as the one Vashti had, help to set the foundation for self-identity in the future.

Rebecca Gardner, MFT  
Early Childhood Consultant  
Early Childhood Consultation Partnership