Why Coloring is Important

Coloring is important, both in the lives of children, and in the lives of adults. Why is coloring so important? Here are just a few of the many reasons-

1) Self-expression - coloring on a blank "canvas" (piece of paper), is a way for children and adults alike to express themselves.  You can tell a lot about the way a person is feeling by the images that they draw, the colors that they use, etc. A child who draws skulls and other disturbing objects might be crying out for help, in the only way that he/she knows how.  A child who draws hearts, suns, and other cheerful objects may be expressing satisfaction, content, and love, in the only way that he/she knows how.  It is important to give children a chance to express themselves, and not all children express themselves through words and through writing, many use art.

2) Color recognition - many children receive their first (and sometimes their only) exposure to the color wheel and art, through the use of crayons, markers, and colored pencils.  Learning how to tell the difference between red, pink, green, yellow, and so forth, might not seem like a big deal, but children who color with crayons or markers early on, have an easier time of understanding colors, the makeup of colors, and the mixing of colors.  This can only help the child as he/she gets older, and is exposed to the full spectrum of color in the color wheel.

3) Therapy - for many people coloring is therapeutic.  Institutions across the globe use coloring to help people "vent" their feelings and frustrations, as well as other emotions through coloring.  A child who is angry might choose to scribble over a picture of a sun with a black crayon until the picture isn't visible.  A child who cares for organization or wants things done in a certain manner may meticulously color in between every single line.  Regardless of whether it's scribbling, or coloring the "best picture ever", coloring can be a way to de-stress, after a busy morning of schoolwork, wind down, and calm down, after the stresses of a day at school or work.

4) Grip/Control - many children learn how to hold a pencil, pen, marker, or colored pencil, by first learning how to hold a crayon.  For many children, a crayon is the first object that they have to "grip" in a certain manner, in order to control it.  Many children learn how to hold a pencil, by first coloring with crayons.  I think it's important for children to develop proper grip and control over a crayon, to help them properly grip and control other writing instruments in the future.  All of the skills they learn from skills, will definitely help when it comes time to work on penmanship.

5) Coordination - coordination is yet another important lesson that we can learn from coloring.  It takes a lot of hand-eye coordination to color in a coloring page.  From the proper way to hold the crayon, to recognizing what color to use, to sharpening crayons, these basic coordination developing skills will last children a lifetime.

6) Building motor skills - any time a child does something like color, play with blocks, paint, etc, they think they are just having fun, when in fact they are developing motor skills at a very basic, simple level that they will expand on later in life.  Coloring with crayons or markers, learning to print, pencil grasp, playing with Play Dough, beading, lacing, crumpling paper, tearing paper, using stamps, and wiggling fingers all are activities that help to strengthen and develop hand muscles.  These skills are very important to help develop activities later on, such as typing, lifting objects, and other activities that they will encounter as they grow older.  These activities require arm muscles and hands to work together to be able to manipulate objects to perform the task(s) at hand.

7) Focus - I think that focus is another "big lesson" that is learned from such a simple activity as coloring in a coloring sheet.  A classroom can be a "buzz" of activity, and a child may have a hard time focusing, concentrating, and staying engaged in the task at hand.  Children who spend their time completing a coloring page "to the best of their ability" stay in the lines at all costs, the very best they can, despite the activity going on around them.  This enables them to develop concentration and focus skills, that will help them as they get older in school and have to complete math or spelling worksheets, without being bothered by the "buzz" around them in the classroom.

8) Boundaries - Another thing that children learn from coloring pages, with preprinted pictures on them, is how to accept boundaries.  While a toddler or preschooler might scribble all over a coloring sheet, with no respect for the boundaries (lines on the coloring page), as the child gets older, they will begin to respect those lines, and make an effort to color between them.  While I encourage scratch paper coloring as often as possible, so that children are free to express themselves, for many preschoolers this is their only exposure to printed boundaries.  This early exposure to boundaries in print, will be a huge help when handwriting time comes around, and the child has to respect the boundaries of the preprinted handwriting lines on the paper.

9) Milestone - This is the last little "importance" of coloring that I will mention for now, and that is that coloring in the lines is a milestone, a sense of accomplishment, the first step towards a successful academic career for many children.  For many children coloring in the lines is just as important as counting to 10, counting to 100, reciting the alphabet, learning the multiplication facts, and so forth.  It's a milestone that says "yes I can" do whatever I come across, and it provides children with pride, a sense of self worth, and helps them to feel accepted in a society that is often quick to judge, and slow to respond.  This sense of accomplishment will carry them through life, and help them not to give up so easily, when something new comes along.

Source: http://www.dltk-kids.com/articles/why-color.htm