

Pre-writing skills

Pre writing development

- Ensure the child has a good sitting posture with feet on the floor and hips and knees at 90 degrees and the table height is just below the elbows.



- Encourage a tripod pencil grasp (adult pencil grasp). Using chunky or triangular grip pencils will assist this grip. Use a sticker or rubber band or sticker to indicate where to hold the pencil, near the nib to improve pencil control.
- This is the maximum pencil/crayon size that should be used in relation to the child's hand.



- Encourage the child to hold the paper still with their other hand
- Before a child is ready to write they should be able to:
 - understand 'up' and 'down'
 - follow instructions
 - copy basic strokes and symbols, see below.

Mark making

Children first learn that they can 'make marks' using a variety of different tools/ mediums.

- Try finger painting or hand prints.
- Use stamps to make pictures, cards or wrapping paper.
- Try using a brush in messy play eg shaving foam or jelly.
- Get your child to make marks on a picture such as adding marks for eyes on a face or rain in the sky.

Scribbling

Children start with random scribbling that may not even stay on the page.



They then learn to contain their scribbling and progress to scribble patterns: vertical, horizontal and circular. At this point they may start to 'colour' keeping the scribble patterns over part of a picture.



Let them explore different types of scribbling during the activities below.

- Painting with large brushes. Encourage them to make big pictures that encourage scribble patterns eg rainbows with lots of different colours.
- Let your child 'draw' in large trays of shaving cream or salt. They can use brushes, combs or cars to make scribble patterns.
- Try scribbling with chalk on the pavement.
- Let them pretend they are 'painting' the wall using water on a brush in a vertical scribble.
- Encourage scribbling/ 'colouring' on large, simple pictures.
- Colour over textured objects such as leaves or stencils.

Drawing lines and shapes

During this developmental stage children learn to draw easier shapes first and progress onto harder ones:



Letters and numbers are essentially complex shapes. In general, only once children have learnt to integrate different lines to form more complex shapes such as a square and triangle are they ready to start learning letters and numbers.

- A multi-sensory approach will help your child to learn to draw their shapes. The following steps will be beneficial:
 1. **MOVE!** Let your child use their body or big

arm movements to practice shapes eg 'air drawing', making the shapes in the air with long ribbons or walking on a big outline of the shape.

2. **TOUCH!** Use lots of different textures for them to write in or feel eg a salt or sand tray, finger paints or shaving foam or let them form the shapes out of play dough or pipe cleaners.

3. **DRAW!** Try not to just practice on paper. Your child can draw on chalkboards, with chalk on the pavement, bath crayons or on a whiteboard.

- Encourage involvement in activities such as colouring in, tracing, dot-to-dot and mazes. Make your pictures interesting by gluing on different textures.



Resources

The 'Start Write, Stay Right' programme has further information and activities. We have a supply that can be loaned to individual schools to 'trial before buying'. The programme can be purchased from: www.thelocaltherapycompany.co.uk or www.specialdirect.com. Please see our 'How we work with schools leaflet' for more details.

The 'Jungle Journey' book is a whole class programme which focuses on developing fine and gross motor skills and has a focus on pre-writing shapes.

For further information please contact our advice email oxl-tr.otadvice@nhs.net

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