

**MOVING ON TO SCHOOL
INFORMATION SHEET**

Pre-Writing Shapes

When children first start to explore mark making they will produce scribbles on the page. These usually start as linear scribbles that go up and down the page, or from side to side. Then they will move on to circular scribbles.



Next children will stop scribbling and start to draw in a more controlled and creative way. They will start by copying others and then learn to draw different shapes independently. Before children learn to form letters and numbers, they should be able to draw the 9 pre-writing shapes. Children typically learn these shapes in this order .

	1. Vertical Line		2. Horizontal Line		3. Circle
	4. Intersecting Cross		5. Square		6. Diagonal Line (Right to Left)
	7. Diagonal Line (Left to Right)		8. Diagonal Cross		9. Triangle

When learning how to form these shapes, using different senses is often helpful. It is more likely that the child will remember the shapes this way and it also helps with keeping activities fun!

Taste	Touch	Smell	Vestibular	Sight	Proprioception	Hearing

Here are some ideas of different activities you can do with your child to help them with practicing these shapes. These activities can also be used when children move on to learning how to form numbers and letters.

The activities can be completed in different positions. It is useful to encourage this as it can help to develop other skills required for handwriting.



Squatting/Kneeling



Standing at Vertical Surface



Sitting at a Table



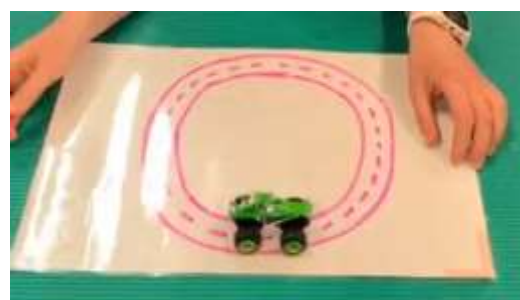
Lying on Tummy and Propped on Elbows

Car Road Activity

Draw or build road/train track in one of the prewriting shapes. Using a toy car or train get your child to drive the car/train around the shape. Carrying out this activity can help your child learn the movement required to form the shape by following the track.

What you need:

- Toy train track, paper and pen or pavement and chalk.
- Toy train or car etc.



Drawing in Flour Activity

Ask your child to draw one of the shapes in the messy tray using their pointer finger. If they don't like the feeling they could use a tool. Encouraging your child to practice shapes during messy play is a great activity and uses lots of senses! This can include drawing in things like sand, flour, mud, shaving foam and many more! Doing activities whilst lying on their tummy helps your child build their core strength which is important to help them sit in an upright position.



What you need:

- A tray or a shallow box.
- Flour, sand, shaving foam, foam soap, dry rice, mud, anything messy!
- A paint brush, pencil or spoon.

Playdough Activity

Ask your child to roll out the playdough/plasticine into a sausage shape. Mould it into a pre-writing shape. Get your child to pinch or poke around the shape. Making shapes out of playdough or Plasticine can help children learn more about the shape they are forming. They can then practice forming the shape by pinching or poking around the Playdoh.



What you need:

Playdough, plasticine or [homemade playdough](#).

Paint in Bag Activity

If your child doesn't like getting messy hands, pour some paint, glitter glue or hair gel into the sandwich bag, squeeze out the air and seal it closed (you can use tape to make sure it won't leak). Place the bag on a flat surface in front of your child. Get your child to draw the shapes with their pointer finger.



What you need:

- Paint, glitter glue or hair gel.
- Sandwich bag
- Duct tape

Foam on Mirror Activity

Squirt foam onto the mirror at your child's level (roughly their shoulder height) and spread it out to make a drawing area **or** attach the paper to the wall or easel using the blu tac. You can also try this at bath time by drawing on the tiles or the sides of the bath. Now get your child to draw the shapes using their pointer finger.

Writing or drawing on paper attached to the wall or in shaving foam on a mirror can strengthen shoulder muscles and encourages a good hand position.



What you need:

- Wall, easel or bathroom tiles.
- Shaving foam or foam soap (be careful to choose something that won't irritate your child's skin or anything that is too highly perfumed) and a mirror.
- Paper, blu tac, pencils, pens, crayons or paint and paint brush.
- Bathroom tiles or side of bath.

Picture Joining Activity

Another activity you can try is placing pictures or characters your child is interested in, in different positions and ask your child to draw lines to join them. This can be done on a mirror, on paper at a table or outside on the pavement with chalk. You can change the position of the pictures to encourage them to draw in different directions.



What you need:

- Pictures or toys your child is interested in.
- Mirror, whiteboard, paper or an area of pavement.
- Whiteboard markers, pencil, pens, crayons or chalk.

Wet Dry Try Activity

Wet, Dry, Try is a good activity to keep children interested as they get older. In this activity draw one of the prewriting shapes first. Then your child then 'draws' over the shape using a WET sponge. Ask your child to dry it off using the DRY sponge and then ask your child to TRY the shape again themselves using the chalk.



What you need:

- Chalkboard.
- Chalk.
- Wet sponge, tissue or wipe.
- Dry sponge or tissue.

Rainbow Shapes Activity

Draw one of the prewriting shapes on the paper. Get your child to trace over the top with lots of different colours. Once your child is confident with the shape they can draw their own rainbow shapes.



Drawing over shapes in lots of different colours gives children a good opportunity to practice forming a shape repeatedly.

What you need:

- Paper.
- Pens, pencils or crayons in different colours.

Magnadoodle or Sand Paper Activity

Get your child to draw the prewriting shapes using the different tools and surfaces.

Using different surfaces to draw on such as a Magnadoodle or drawing on sand paper can keep children motivated and offer additional sensory feedback when learning new shapes. Changing the different tools a child writes with can also help keep drawing activities fun, using felt tips, crayons, chalks, scented pens and paints are all great ideas.



What you need:

- Magna Doodle, Aqua Draw, Mega Sketcher or similar.
- Sandpaper and chalk or crayons.
- Paper and scented pens.
- Bubble wrap and felt tip pens.
- Paper and paints with fingers, sponge, brush, toy car or large bead.

Once your child is confident with making these shapes, you can start to practice activities which will help them further develop their pencil control. Why not try activity books, join the dots, mazes or the Ready Steady Write Programme ([Level 1](#) and [Level 2](#)) - you can find link for this below.