

## Pre-Writing Skills Information Sheet



Writing is a complicated task that requires many different skills to be combined into one activity. Writing is a task that meaning is assigned too, as with all activities if the task has no meaning the child will not be motivated to participate.

The information to follow has been taken from "*Pre-Writing Skills*" by Marsha Dunn Klein (1995), Publisher: *The Psychological Corporation USA*.

The ability to learn to write is a sequence, children start with random scribbles and marks on the paper and then slowly move onto more precise imitation and initiation of writing/drawing.

### The prerequisites to learning to write are:

1. *The ability balance in sitting without using hands to hold on.* If a child in the class has poor balance in sitting his/her seating posture should be addressed and possibly more supportive seating provided.
2. *The ability to grasp and release voluntarily.* To learn to write the child does not need to start with a mature pencil grasp, all they need to do is reach for, pick up and put down the pencil/crayon
3. *The ability to use both hands together* This is important so that the child can stabilise the paper with the non-dominant hand. If the child is unable to stabilise the paper and show no signs of developing this skill options such as non-slip mats can be looked into.
4. *The ability to interact with the environment in the stage of constructive play.* This involves the awareness of 'parts' making up a 'whole' and the beginning of the understanding of how objects relate together in terms of size, colour, shape etc.
5. *The ability to coordinate eyes and hands.* This develops throughout the process of learning to write.

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6. *Exposure to a variety of sensory motor experiences.* Different experiences prepare a child for holding a pencil and the ability to manipulate the pencil in the hand. Through play the child learns to discriminate touch and to watch the hand movements to develop eye-hand coordination.

### Developmental Stages in Acquiring Pre-writing Skills:

1. *Mouthing and crinkling paper.* This is part of destructive play but shows the child that he/she is able to have a cause and effect result on the paper. If the child is at this stage they need to **develop more constructive play skills** before being ready to participate in constructive pre-writing activities.
2. *Bangs crayons on paper.* These children may be ready for pre-writing activities if banging is not characteristic of all their activities. Banging can lead to the first random marks on paper.
3. *Scribbles Randomly.* Children learn that crayons are for making marks by watching adults and banging on the paper. Once this learning has taken place they will begin to scribble randomly. **Encourage any attempt to at**



**pre-writing**

4. *Scribbles Horizontally.* Scribbling is a task through which children further develop their eye-hand coordination. **Encourage the child to watch the effect they are having on the paper, let the child practice this newly acquired skill.**



5. *Scribbles Vertically.* This stage may be interchanged with the horizontal scribbles. A child may start with vertical scribbles before horizontal scribbles.
6. *Circular Scribbles.* Generally this develops after horizontal and vertical scribbles have been mastered. **Encourage the child to watch the effect they are having on the paper, let the child practice this newly acquired skill.**



**Stages 4 - 6 are spontaneous where the child is practising control; they are not yet imitating, tracing or copying scribbles.**

**Imitation means** - Child watching an adult making a mark and then trying to repeat it

**Copying means** - Child making a mark that is shown to them **WITHOUT** receiving visual cues on how to make the mark

**Tracing means** - Child reproducing a mark by drawing over a mark that is already on the page.

7. *Imitates Horizontal Scribble.* At this stage they are able to imitate the teacher but are still in the repetitive stage of colouring and can not yet make single lines.

8. *Imitates Vertical Scribble.*

9. *Imitates Circular Scribble.*

10. *Imitates Horizontal Line.*



11. *Imitates Vertical Line.*

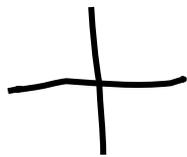


12. *Imitates Circles.*



13. *Copies Horizontal, Vertical and Circular Lines.*

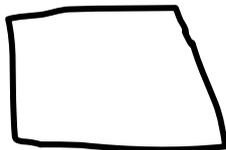
14. *Child Imitates and then copies a cross.*



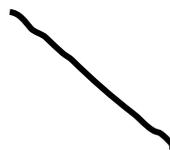
15. *Child Imitates and then copies a right/left diagonal*



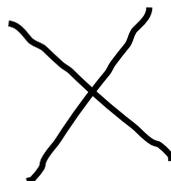
16. *Child Imitates and then copies a Square.*



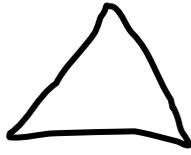
17. *Child Imitates and then copies a left/right diagonal*



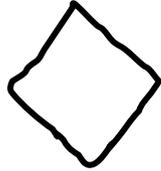
18. *Child Imitates and then copies a X*



19. *Child Imitates and then copies a Triangle*



20. *Child Imitates and then copies a Diamond*



Developmental Stages in learning to Colour

1. *Child covers a large page with colour.*
2. *Child covers a smaller page with colour*
3. *Child covers a picture with colour.* At this stage the child is developing fine motor control and is able to keep the marks contained to a picture area.
4. *Child covers a small area*
5. *Child covers a medium sized design*
6. *Child colours with attention to detail and with more accuracy.*

Right Hand Points to Remember

<p>1. Tilt page to left.</p> 	<p>4. Steady page with right hand.</p> 
<p>2. Keep right hand underneath writing line.</p> 	<p>5. Hold pencil a little further from the point approx 2 - 3cm).</p> 
<p>3. Keep page to left of mid-line.</p>	<p>6. Check posture and furniture.</p>

## Left Hand Points to Remember

<p>1. Tilt page to right.</p> 	<p>4. Steady page with right hand.</p> 
<p>2. Keep left hand underneath writing line.</p> 	<p>5. Hold pencil a little further from the point approx 2 - 3cm).</p> 
<p>3. Keep page to left of mid-line.</p>	<p>6. Check posture and furniture.</p>