



Prewriting Skills

Before beginning to form letters, children need to:

- Have sufficient concentration to complete desktop tasks for at least 10 minutes at a time
- Be orientated to written language
- Be positioned well with feet on floor, sitting square onto a work surface which is the correct height
- Maintain a steady wrist position that will enable controlled finger movements
- Have a good ability to control pencil strokes
- Be shown how to form the shape, before being able to copy pre-drawn shapes, as children learn to imitate shapes first before copying them
- Be able to remember the movement patterns associated with forming shapes, to replicate the actions when copying
- Be able to form some basic shapes that are required to form all letters, such as a circle and vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines

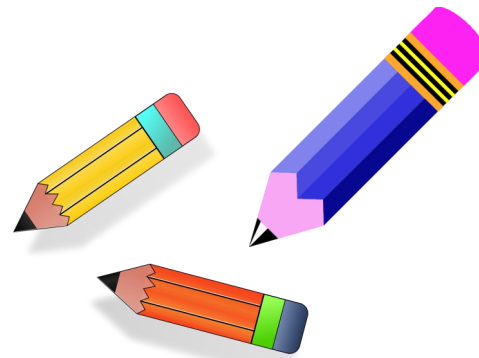
Below is the appropriate developmental sequence of shape production in children:



The developmental stages of prewriting skills:

1.	
Randomly scribbles	
Spontaneously scribbles in vertical/horizontal and/or circular direction	
Imitates a horizontal/vertical or circular direction	
2.	
Imitates a horizontal line	
Imitates a vertical line	
Imitates a O	
3.	
Copies a horizontal line	Imitates / and \
Copies a vertical line	Imitates □
Copies a O	Imitates +

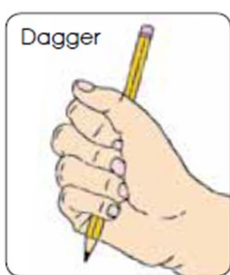
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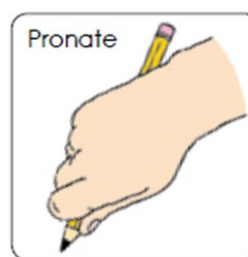
4.	
Copies +	Copies a / and \
Traces a line	Imitates Δ
Copies O	Imitates X
5.	
Copies X	
Copies Δ	
Recognises between a big and small line or curve	

* Imitating is to have the child watch you draw the shape. Copying is the child copying a pre-drawn shape.

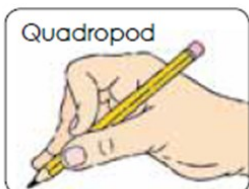
Pencil Grasp Development:



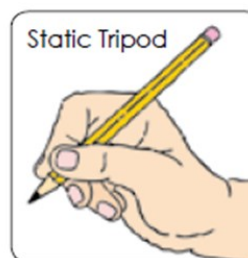
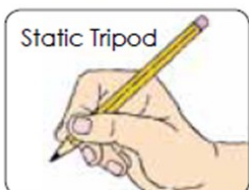
12 months to 2 years
Dagger or Palmar supinate grasp
Movement mainly occurs from the shoulder, the arm and hand move as a unit.



2 years to 3 years
Digital Pronate grasp
Movement mainly occurs at the elbow, the forearm and hand move as a unit.



3 years to 4 years
Movement can occur from the wrist and the hand moves as a unit with the fingers static.



4 years to 6 years
The thumb, index and middle fingers work as a unit and the ring and little fingers provide support. Horizontal movements across the page occurs at the wrist, elbow and shoulder.

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Multisensory Activity Ideas

The following are some activities and advice on how you can facilitate the development of pre-writing skills in your child:

Visual Media:

- Drawing on different kinds of paper, e.g. paper bag, brown paper, greaseproof paper, sugar paper, regular paper
- Use different writing tools e.g. paintbrush, chalk, crayons, felt-tips
- Drawing with a torch on a wall in a dark room

Tactile Media:

- Draw on sandpaper with crayons/paint
- Draw shapes with fingers on different textured surfaces
- Finger paint in paint, shaving-foam, cream, etc.
- Write on child's back and have them guess the letter

Olfactory Media:

- Use scented pens

Auditory Media:

- Attach bells to the end of a paintbrush
- Instruct the child verbally while drawing the shape. Encourage the child to repeat these instructions while drawing

Proprioceptive (Position sense) Media:

- These media involve joint/muscle feedback. They include activities with increased weight or resistance, or using a pre-writing implement with two hands
- Use a scarf or streamer to draw the shapes in the air
- Make the shape out of playdoh

Gustatory Media:

Even a sense of taste can be incorporated into pre-writing skills.

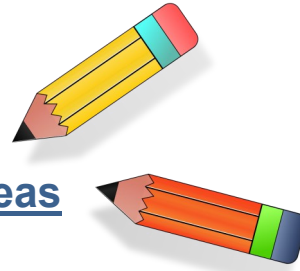
- Finger paint in cream or a flat dish of jelly
- Try drawing on frosted cake or in icing sugar
- Try drawing with cheese spread (in a tube) on crackers or bread



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Other Activity Ideas



Flour Painting

- Sit, kneel, half kneel or stand
- Finger paint on table or tray
- Letter shapes
- Shapes

Sand Drawing / Racetrack drawing

- Draw letter shapes or shapes
- Use stick to draw shapes
- Copy/ imitate shapes
- Use 1 or 2 hands to hold tool
- Draw race tracks to drive cars along

Stencil Drawing

- Give child a stencil - draw over with finger
- Feel shape with eyes closed
- Draw with different writing tools
- Remove stencil to see what they have done
- Repeat shape without a stencil

Circle Stopping

- Draw large circle on paper. Place on marker at beginning/end point
- Child starts and finishes at set marker (this helps stop circular scribbling)

Feely Shapes

- Make shapes on card - letters, shapes
- Child draws over these shapes with finger or with one/two hands
- Ask child to draw shape - use finger paint or crayons

Dot to Dot

- Make up designs with gummed shapes and number
- Ask child to join up the shapes (start with simple designs)

Simon Says

- Use instructions to 'draw' shapes in the air

Drawing in the Air

- Use streamers attached to toilet/ kitchen roll tubes
- Draw patterns/shapes in the air