

PRE-WRITING SKILLS

EDUCATIONAL HANDOUT

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What is Pre-Writing skills?

Pre-writing skills serve as the building blocks for handwriting. They include coloring, drawing, and writing, and are essential for children to master before learning how to write the alphabet. These skills primarily involve mastering different types of lines and strokes.

Why is Pre-Writing skills important?

The letters of the alphabet, whether uppercase or lowercase, are composed of distinct elements, such as lines, curves, and circles. It's important for a child to understand these fundamental components to learn how to write the alphabet effectively.

What does research say?

- Writing skills in children progress through developmental stages that start with scribbling and advance to pre-writing strokes, eventually leading to mastering handwriting abilities.
- Pre-writing skills play a crucial role in helping children differentiate between writing and drawing.
- Pre-writing lines and shapes provide the formation strokes of most uppercase and lowercase letters .

What are the Pre-Writing building blocks?

Bilateral Coordination

- Coordinated use of both sides of the body working together.
- Example: Jumping jacks



Crossing Mid-line

- The ability of having body parts cross a imaginary line that divides the whole body by moving from one side of the body to the other.
- Example: Crossing mid-line to turn a page of a book



Hand-Eye Coordination

- The ability to process information received by the eyes to control, guide, and direct the hands to complete an activity.
- Example: Catching and throwing a ball



Hand Division

- The ability to isolate and use fingers and thumb of one hand to stabilize and manipulate items.
- Example: Picking up small size toys, like Legos and buttons



Hand Dominance

- The consistent use of one hand for completing activities
- Example: Using the same hand when coloring and writing



Hand & Finger Strength

- The ability to exert physical force using the muscles of the hand and fingers to complete controlled movements.
- Example: Writing



Pencil Grasp

- How a pencil is held for pencil movements to produce written or colored work.
- Example: Holding a pencil or crayon to write or color



Upper Body Strength

- The shoulder muscles providing the strength and stability to allow for controlled hand movement.
- Example: Handwriting or coloring at the table and laying on the ground



Visual Perception

- The ability to interpret, organize, and understand visual information received through the eyes.
- Example: Seeing letters and numbers, and understanding what is being seen



Pre-Writing Skills Expectations

1-2 years: Spontaneous	Scribble	
1-2 years: Imitate 3 years: Copies	Vertical Line	
2.5 years: Imitate 3 years: Copies	Horizontal Line	
2.5 years: Imitate 3 years: Copies	Circle Shape	
3.5 years: Imitate 4 years: Copies	Cross Shape	
4 years: Imitate 5 years: Copies	Square Shape	
4.5 years: Imitate 5 years: Copies	Right and Left Diagonal Lines	
5 years: Imitate 5.5-6 years: Copies	Triangle Shape	
5 years: Imitate 5.5-6 years: Copies	X Shape	

Potential signs that may arise when a child struggles with pre-writing skills:

- Behavior:
 - The child may avoid or shy away from fine motor, handwriting, or coloring tasks.
 - The child may prefer delegating the work to others. For example, "Dad can you draw me a car" while refusing to do it themselves.
- Self-esteem:
 - The child may compare their work with their peers, resulting in the child feeling less confident with their own skills and work.
- Academic Performance:
 - The child may struggle with handwriting tasks, leading to slower completion times or the tendency to rush through their work.

The following are examples of some activities to improve a child's pre-writing skills:

- Play dough
 - Play with play dough where the child may pinch, roll, or smash the play dough. Parent can hide small objects, like coins, in the play dough for the child to find.
- Tongs
 - The child may use tongs to pick up small objects, such as pom poms or cotton balls.
- Finger games
 - The child may practice finger movements to music, such as *The Itsy Bitsy Spider*.
- Construction games
 - The child may play with legos, blocks, or other construction toys.

For more information or concerns about your child's pre-writing skills, please consult your child's occupational therapist or contact your pediatrician. You may also refer to www.aota.org for additional information.

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