



## Draw It! Write It!

Children love to scribble, draw, and make dots, straight lines, or curly lines. During the preschool years, children begin to make marks that are the beginning steps for writing letters and words. Giving your child lots of opportunities to draw and write will help her as she learns to write letters and words.

- Help your child begin to understand that letters and words communicate information and that writing connects to reading. During your daily routines, point out all the ways that written words are a part of your day. From street signs, to grocery lists, to food labels, writing is everywhere.
- Create a writing box for your child. Gather pencils, washable markers, chalk, crayons, and paper in a box. Have him decorate the box. Keep it in a place where he can reach it and pull it out and explore writing on his own over and over again.
- Encourage your child to dictate stories to you. As you write down the words, he will see how his story becomes letters and words on the page. As you write, pause occasionally and invite your child to write a familiar letter or word.
- Introduce writing vocabulary and describe what letters look like as you write them. You might point out that the letter “L” goes straight down and then straight across like the corner of a table; an “O” goes around like a circle.
- Label your child’s belongings with her name. Let her see you form the letters and then give her the chance to try; help her write her name on a piece of paper. Tape her name labels on some of her own things—crayon box, stuffed animal, etc.
- Have your child help you create a grocery list using his own drawings or pictures from newspapers and magazines. He can glue or tape a picture for each item you need and you can add the word for the item.
- Let your child practice writing and identifying letters in fun ways. Take turns making and identifying letters, e.g., trace letters on the palm of her hand or on her back, or write on a steamy shower door. You can explore writing outdoors, too: gather pebbles and make letter shapes or use a stick to write in the mud or a shell to write in the sand.
- Give your child a special notebook that can be her writing journal. Encourage her to keep her journal in a place where she can pull it out at any time and draw, write, or dictate about her experiences, ideas, and things she wonders about.
- Chunky pencils make it easier for a child to gain pencil control. Help your child hold a pencil down low (near the tip). Use thick soft pencils, paint brushes, markers, or crayons to help develop her small hand/finger control.