



Pre-writing Skills for Children



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The skills involved in learning to write are called pre-writing skills. These include skills that help a child to hold a pencil, draw, copy, and colour in.

There are many ways to teach your child the line or shape that you want them to draw. These include:

1. Imitating

Your child watches you draw the scribble, line or shape first then they copy what they just watched you do.



2. Tracing

Your child moves their pencil over the top of a line or picture.

3. Copying

Your child is shown a picture of the shape and then they draw the shape on their own.

Once they've learned how to copy the shapes, they can then begin to remember how to draw the shape or picture by themselves.

Children often learn to draw in this order:

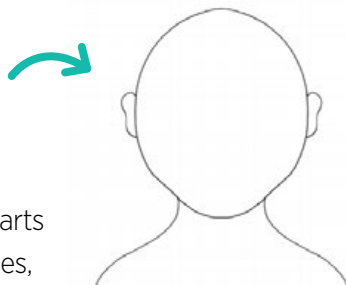
1. Up and down lines
2. Side-to-side lines
3. Circles
4. Plus signs (+)
5. Sloping lines
6. Cross (x)



Once your child is able to draw these lines they can progress to drawing shapes such as squares, triangles and rectangles, followed by more tricky shapes.

When your child is able to draw lines and circles by themselves, they can begin to practice drawing a face.

1. Begin by giving your child an outline of a face and ask them to fill in the eyes, ears, mouth, nose and hair.
2. Next, your child can practice drawing body parts such as the body, legs and arms using just lines, so the picture looks like a stick figure.
3. As your child practices and is comfortable drawing people without copying, they should be encouraged to add more detail to their drawing such as facial features.
4. Children can then be encouraged to draw tricky pictures such a house or a pet.



Other ideas to learn pre-writing and drawing include:

- tracing lines or shapes using the child's toys such as a car, train, horse or small ball.
- tracing, imitating, copying or drawing lines and shapes in items such as sand, shaving cream or paint.
- drawing lines and shapes using chalk on either a chalkboard or a concrete driveway.



- Doing activity sheets such as tracing lines, dot-to-dots, colour-in, colour-by-number, mazes, tracing paths
- Rolling play dough into snakes or worms. Ask your child to trace or imitate you tracing the snakes as straight lines using their pointer finger. Form trickier shapes such as a circle, + or x and run the pointer finger over these to trace.

