

Introduction

The making of marks that imitate another person's marks, is important because it helps a child learn eye-hand coordination. A child also learns that making marks can be meaningful and a form of communication. Drawing aids the development of pre-writing skills such as pencil control, ability to copy designs and correct posture.

Activities

- Try drawing on sandpaper, patterned wallpaper, in sand or mud.
- Draw in lotions, pudding, whipped cream, icing sugar, chocolate spread and shaving foam.
- Experiment with different colours of chalk, markers, crayons, pens, pencils and paints.
- Draw in shallow trays of sand.
- Draw on cakes with coloured icing tubes or draw with cheese spread on bread or crackers.
- Make scribble drawings with the child. After allowing time for the child to make their own marks, demonstrate making marks such as | — O.
- Encourage activities such as fuzzy felt and making pictures out of shapes.
- Draw on Aluminium foil
- Try attaching bells to make a noise while drawing

- Try outdoor activities such as such as rubbing over different textures e.g. concrete, brick or bark.
- Use thick paintbrushes and buckets of water to paint on out door surfaces.

Strategies

- High frequency sounds are alerting and help a child to orientate to what you are doing. If the child is attending use directional words, e.g. down, across, round.
- Praise the child if they look at the mark, as you make it. Praise any attempt, they make, that is approaching your example. If the child continues to make marks that do not resemble your line, say, "you did a..." and draw alongside them, imitating their marks, before introducing fresh paper and trying again.
- Use thick pencils, felt markers and crayons this helps the fingers relax and helps with control
- Use verbal cues or voice intonation when drawing

- Encourage large movements when making marks, this encourages use of the muscles of the whole arm and shoulder against gravity and helps to reinforce the "mental picture" of the pattern.
- Vary positions for mark-making activities, e.g. lying on tummy on floor, high kneeling at easel or paper attached to a wall etc.
- Throughout the day, reinforce awareness of shapes and point out to the child when their mark making resembles a particular shape, object or letter.
- To encourage visual attention to mark-making attract their attention to your demonstration e.g. "look..... zzzipp!".
- Ask the child open-ended questions to encourage them to describe their designs, e.g. "that's beautiful...tell me about your picture", or "what are you writing about?"
- Encourage the child to experience a wide range of different mark-makers and surfaces on which to make their patterns. Materials used to stimulate the senses, are excellent to reinforce learning and will help keep the child's interest.
- Take turns to complete pictures with the child e.g.; I'll draw the head then you draw the eyes.

Strategies

- If the child finds these activities challenging they are likely to need 1:1 support to help them practice and learn these skills. Choose the activity and work with the child for a short time encouraging them to achieve the task
- Grade how much help give the child. Initially you may need to use a hand over hand approach but try to reduce how much physical and verbal help you give the child so they become more independent. Praise and positively reward the child when they have achieved a part or all of the activity successfully.
- Vary positions for pre-writing activities, e.g. lying on tummy on floor, high kneeling at easel or low table, paper attached to a wall etc.
- If the child struggles with attention and perseverance, try doing the sensory activities before drawing with crayons or pens e.g. drawing in sand, play dough, as sensory input can help prepare a child to attend.
- Don't focus too quickly on forming letters, try to make drawing fun!
- Encourage activities where child's hand is not supported e.g. hand puppets and musical instruments

Frequency of activities

Engage the child with activities from this programme for up to 15 minutes for 3 focused sessions a week. Simply adjusting your current activities and encouraging the child's participation in activities they would not usually not normally choose will support development.

Complete activities from this sheet for 3 months

Improving our service

We continue to review our service to make sure that it meets the needs of those who are using it. We would appreciate any suggestions on how we may improve and also comments on what was good about the service.

If you have any compliments, suggestions or complaints, please write to or contact any member of staff in the first instance, or to the Occupational Therapy Service Lead if necessary.

Contact details: see part 1 of pack

BUSY HANDS PRE-WRITING SKILLS

Early Years Activity Sheet

PAEDIATRIC OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY SERVICES