

Especially for preschoolers with disabilities

Write On

Drawing and Writing

Most young children think it's fun to draw and write. A preschool child with a disability may need extra help to do these things. This guide shows ways to help a child who has a hard time holding things how to use writing tools.

What is the practice?

Make it easier for a child to hold a pencil, crayon, or other tool to draw or write. The easier it is to hold the tool, the easier a child can use it.

What does the practice look like?

Think of a child who can't hold small things like crayons, but who can hold big things like cups. Help her learn to draw or write using large-handled paint brushes or pencils made wide for her hand.



How do you do the practice?

Here are some ideas to help a preschool child draw or write:

- Your child can hold a pencil, pen, or other tool when she is comfortable and stable. If she has a hard time sitting alone, place pillows or towels on each side of her. Secure in her seat, she can pay attention to drawing and writing.
- Give your child big pencils or crayons to write letters and draw. Add rubber grips or foam hair curlers to a crayon or pencil. It will not slip out of her hand. Markers with square barrels, instead of round ones, do not roll and will stay where she sets them down.
- Tape sheets of paper to the table top so they do not move. Let your child make a book by making letters on the paper. She can draw pictures for each page. Staple the pages together or tie them with string. You can also tape sheets of paper to a wall or door to provide a vertical writing experience.
- Hold a small white board so it's easy for your child to use markers or crayons. A slant board, or a 3-inch binder turned sideways, are angled surfaces. They can make it easier for your child to draw and write.
- A fun activity is making a greeting card for someone. Use big crayons or markers that are easy to hold and let her draw on a note card or paper. You can print her message in words under her drawing. Making e-cards on a computer is also fun for young children.
- Let your child write with her fingers in sand, shaving cream, or finger paint to try "writing."

How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child try to "write" on her own?
- Does your child "work hard" to draw or write?
- Is your child making letters or trying to make letters when writing?

Take a look at more fun with drawing and writing

Word Walks

Miguel and his older brother sometimes go for “word walks” in their neighborhood with their parents. Since Miguel has limited mobility, his brother likes to pull him in a wagon. The brothers have fun trying to find words on things in the neighborhood. Miguel uses easy-to-grasp crayons to make marks and scribbles on the paper on his clipboard. He “writes” many of the words he sees. Whether the words are on mailboxes or service trucks, Miguel and his brother add new words every day.



“Free Rein” Writing

Julie likes horses. One afternoon, she and her mother go to visit her uncle’s stable. Julie has fun petting the horses and feeding them oats. She leaves the stable happy and excited. When they get home, Julie’s mother asks if she wants to make a book about her visit. Julie eagerly agrees. Julie has difficulty with fine motor control. Her mom puts a foam curler around a pencil so Julie can easily grip it. She tapes a large sheet of paper to the table so that it won’t slide. Julie draws and makes marks on the paper as she tells her mother the story she’s “writing.” Her mom prints Julie’s words at the bottom of the page.

Get on the Stick!

Traycee and her family are at the park. Traycee is a 3-year-old who has trouble drawing or writing with a pen or pencil. While she’s playing on the baseball field, Traycee draws large circles in the soft clay with a big stick. Mom notices what Traycee’s doing. She leans over next to Traycee and makes the letter *T* in the clay. “Look!” she says. “It’s the first letter in your name. *T* is for *Traycee*!” Traycee watches her mom and copies what she does. She makes broad strokes with the stick. Traycee is really proud that she can draw the letter *T*.

