

Before children learn to write, they need to have the skill and strength to do so. In school, we ensure we spend time taking part in 'finger gym' activities, which help children to build up their upper body strength (gross motor skills) and finger/hand strength and control (fine motor skills). There are a wealth of activities that you can do with your child to improve these skills and get them ready to write. Here are some ideas!

Pre-writing activities to get you started (finger gym):

- Complete activities whilst lying on their tummy, taking the weight through their elbows. E.g. watching TV, reading a book, puzzles.
- Climbing, seesaw, tug of war and swing activities with the child holding onto ropes.
- Craft activities – cutting, scrunching, gluing and ripping paper and bending pipe cleaners.
- Toy tools such as sawing, drilling, hammering, screws and bolts.
- Games involving flicking small objects e.g. flicking balls of paper of a table into a 'goal'.
- Dough gym – pinching, pressing, rolling, squeezing
- Holding a handful of items in hand and posting them into a jar one by one (buttons, coins)
- Picking up items with pegs, tongs, tweezers.
- Swimming
- Ribbon dancing
- Threading beads, straws etc.
- Walking fingers e.g. along tape placed on the table. Ring and little finger curled out of the way.
- Pop bubble wrap
- Turn keys in padlocks, undo catches.
- Tying knots into string and linking paper clips
- Posting items
- Picking up sequins off a table or stickers off a sticker sheet
- Interlocking construction—lego is great!
- Pegging things around a piece of paper, a plate or on a piece of string.



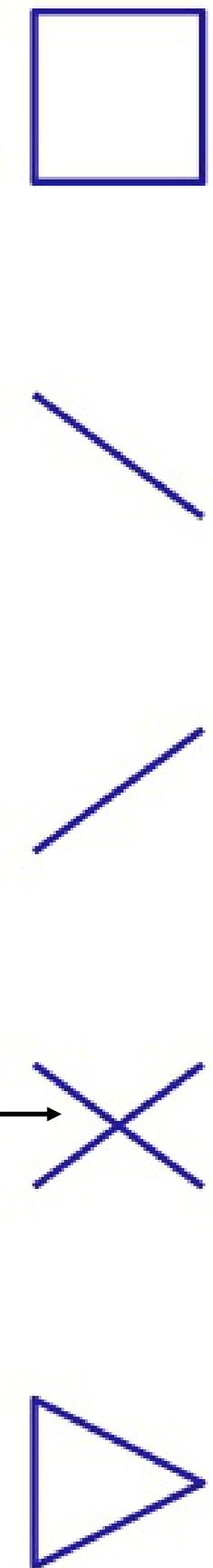
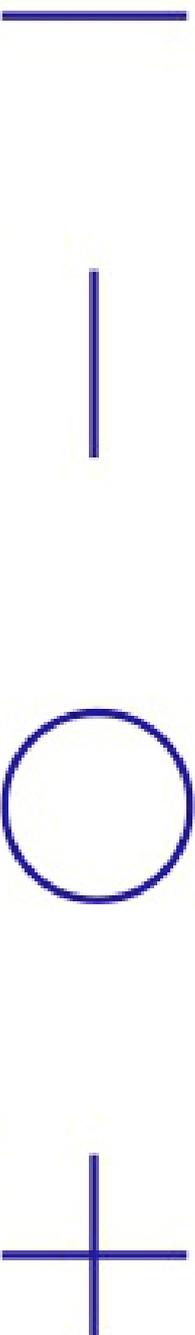
Early writing activities:

- Tracing and stencil activities
- Colouring in activities, staying inside the lines.
- Dot to dots
- Drawing letter shapes in the air to music
- Copying over letter shapes
- Recognition of letters through touch (stick letters, magnetic letters, fuzzy felt, sand paper letters).
- Drawing letters in sand or shaving foam spread thinly on a table.
- Write letters in the air with eyes shut.
- Drawing or writing on vertical surfaces (chalkboard, whiteboard, tiles at bath time with bath pens).
- Drawing or writing with chinks on the ground or pavement
- Water painting on outdoor walls with paintbrush.
- Write with chalk, crayons, finger paints, pencils, pens etc.



PRE-WRITING SHAPES

Before your child can learn to write, he or she needs to be able to draw these shapes



4 Years old.

Usually around school age.

Children who can draw an oblique cross are able to copy more letters and numbers than children who cannot