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Writing activities for toddlers pdf

While your 3-year-old probably isn't ready to write a full sentence (or even a single word), there are several activities you can do to help her get ready for writing. The following activities are simple, require very few supplies – and are a great way to spend quality time with your child. As an added bonus, they'll help prepare your child's hands and eyes for writing. Name Tracing Materials You Will Need: paper, highlighter, marker or pencil What To Do This fun activity will provide an opportunity for your child to learn how to write his/her name. Write your child's name on paper with a marker. Remember to write the first letter using a capital letter then the rest in lower case. Let your child trace over the name with a highlighter. By repeating this activity, your child will begin to understand how to write his/her own name! It will take time for your child to write his/her name legibly. Cutting Practice Materials You Will Need: pair of child sized scissors, pictures from magazines What To Do Have your child work on fine motor and pre-writing skills by inviting your child to cut out pictures from old magazines. Your child may choose to cut out toys, food, or just pictures of interest. Your child may also cut out letters or numbers that he/she recognizes. This activity is easier than trying to cut on lines, but still requires hand strength and more advanced fine motor skills. Play Doh Letters Materials You Will Need: Play Doh What To Do Have your child roll medium sized balls of Play Doh into 6 inch ropes. Ask your child to choose a letter to make, then see if your child can use the rope of Play Doh to do so. If this is challenging for your child, write the letter on paper first, then let your child form the Play Doh on top to match. Dot to Dot Materials You Will Need: piece of paper, markers What To Do Write your child's name on paper using dots, (5 or 6 per letter), instead of lines. Have your child start with the first dot and connect the dots. Hopefully your child will recognize his/her name! Try this with the names of other family members if your child enjoys this activity. Tally Marks Materials You Will Need: small number of objects, paper and pencil What To Do Today's activity will introduce tally marks to your child as a new way to represent quantities. This is especially good for a child who is challenged by writing numerals. Tally marks to show the numeral 4: //// Place 4 blocks or objects in front of your child. Show your child how to make a tally mark for each block. It's not important that you use a slash for the 5th object at this point, if you are counting that high. Want more? Visit Productive Parenting to see more than 60 pre-writing activities that you can do with your kids – from birth to age 5. While you're there, become a member (for free) and have activities emailed to you based on the developmental age of your child. Activities build on one another from infancy to age five to provide a solid foundation for learning and, at the same time, promote lasting parent-child relationships. You can also find Anna at My Life and Kids. Pre-writing skills are the fundamental skills children need to develop before they are able to write. These skills contribute to the child's ability to hold and use a pencil, and the ability to draw, write, copy, and colour. A major component of pre-writing skills are the pre-writing shapes. These are the pencil strokes that most letters, numbers and early drawings are comprised of. They are typically mastered in sequential order, and to an age specific level. These strokes include the following strokes: |, —, O, +, /, square, \, X, and Δ. Why are writing readiness (pre-writing) skills important? Pre-writing skills are essential for the child to be able to develop the ability to hold and move a pencil fluently and effectively and therefore produce legible writing. When these skills are underdeveloped it can lead to frustration and resistance due to the child not being able to produce legible writing or to 'keep up' in class due to fatigue. This can then result in poor self esteem and academic performance. What are the building blocks necessary to develop writing readiness (pre-writing)? Hand and finger strength: An ability to exert force against resistance using the hands and fingers that allows the necessary muscle power for controlled movement of the pencil. Crossing the mid-line: The ability to cross the imaginary line running from a person's nose to pelvis that divides the body into left and right sides. Pencil grasp: The efficiency of how the pencil is held, allowing age appropriate pencil movement generation. Hand eye coordination: The ability to process information received from the eyes to control, guide and direct the hands in the performance of a task such as handwriting. Bilateral integration: Using two hands together with one hand leading (e.g. holding and moving the pencil with the dominant hand while the other hand helps by holding the writing paper). Upper body strength: The strength and stability provided by the shoulder to allow controlled hand movement for good pencil control. Object manipulation: The ability to skilfully manipulate tools (including holding and moving pencils and scissors) and controlled use of everyday tools (such as a toothbrush, hairbrush, cutlery). Visual perception: The brain's ability to interpret and make sense of visual images seen by the eyes, such as letters and numbers. Hand dominance: The consistent use of one (usually the same) hand for task performance, which allows refined skills to develop. Hand division: Using just the thumb, index and middle finger for manipulation, leaving the fourth and little finger tucked into the palm stabilizing the other fingers but not participating. How can I tell if my child has problems with writing readiness (pre-writing) skills? If a child has difficulties with writing readiness they might: Have an awkward pencil grasp. Have difficulty controlling a pencil for colouring, drawing or writing. Show a tendency to use their whole hand to manipulate objects rather than just a few fingers. Have poor endurance for pencil based activities. Display messy and/or slow handwriting. Have difficulty staying within the lines when colouring. Apply inappropriate pressure to the paper for pencil based activities (either too heavy and frequently breaks the pencil, or too light and 'spidery'). Have poor upper limb strength (weak shoulders). Have difficulty coordinating both hands together for two handed tasks. Have poor hand-eye coordination. Be verbally skilled but has difficulty showing this on paper (i.e. writing, drawing or colouring). Not meet the pre-writing expectations outlined below. Age Pre-writing expectation 1 -2 years Randomly scribbles Spontaneously scribbles in vertical/horizontal and/or circular direction Imitates a horizontal/vertical/circular direction 2 - 3 years Imitates a horizontal line Imitates a vertical line Imitates a circle 3 - 4 years Copies a horizontal line Copies a vertical line Copies a circle Imitates + Imitates / and \ Imitates a square 4 -5 years Copies a + Traces a line Copies a square Copies a / and \ Imitates X Imitates Δ Grasps pencil in writing position 5 -6 years Copies X Copies Δ Recognises between a big and small line or curve What other problems can occur when a child has writing readiness (pre-writing) skill difficulties? When a child has writing readiness difficulties, they might also have difficulties with: Behaviour: The may avoid or refuse to participate in pencil and other fine motor tasks. Self esteem: when they compare their work against that of their peers. Academic performance: They find it more difficult and be slower completing these tasks, contributing to slower skills acquisition (e.g. learning to write their name, or draw a person). Self care: The ability to (age appropriately) master independence in everyday life activities (such as dressing, eating, cleaning teeth, brushing hair). Avoidance: Preferring to get others to perform fine motor tasks for them under their direction, rather than actually doing themselves (e.g. "Daddy, draw me a house", or "build me a rocket", with refusal to do it themselves). What can be done to improve writing readiness (pre-writing) skills? Hand dominance: Determine and reinforce the dominant hand use in precision task performance. Experience: Encourage participation in activities that involve grasping and manipulating small objects such drawing, puzzles, opening containers, threading or other related tasks. Poking and pointing: Practice tasks that use just one or two fingers (not all at once) e.g. poking games. Praise and encouragement when your child engages in fine motor activities, especially if they are persistent when finding an activity difficult. Hand and finger strength (e.g. scrunching, paper, using tweezers, play dough, pegs). Sensory play activities (e.g. rice play, finger painting) to assist the development of tactile awareness. Hand-eye coordination: Practice activities that involve hand-eye coordination (e.g. throwing and catching) and crossing the mid-line (e.g. reaching across the body to pick up items). Upper limb strength: Encourage play activities that develop upper limb strength (e.g. climbing ladders, wheelbarrow walking). What activities can help improve writing readiness (pre-writing) skills? Threading and lacing with a variety of sized laces. Play-doh (playdough) activities that may involve rolling with hands or a rolling pin, hiding objects such as coins in the play dough or just creative construction. Scissor projects that may involve cutting out geometric shapes to then paste them together to make pictures such as robots, trains or houses. Tongs or teabag squeezers to pick up objects. Drawing or writing on a vertical surface. Every day activities that require finger strength such as opening containers and jars. Pre writing shapes: Practice drawing the pre-writing shapes (l, —, O, +, /, square, \, X, and Δ). Finger games: that practice specific finger movements such as Incy wincy Spider. Craft: Make things using old boxes, egg cartons, wool, paper and sticky or masking tape. Construction: Building with duplo, lego, mobilo or other construction toys. Why should I seek therapy if I notice difficulties with writing readiness (pre-writing) skills in my child? Therapeutic intervention to help a child with writing readiness difficulties is important to: Improve ability in, and persistence with, fine motor tasks for academic performance. Increase school readiness skills for your child's emotional comfort and ease of transition into school. Help a child to develop age appropriate self care tasks such as doing up buttons and zips. Avoid my child becoming disengaged in an academic environment due to difficulties completing colouring, drawing and writing. Avoid frustrations experienced by parents, teachers and children when the child is struggling to remain engaged in academic activities. Help develop and maintain my child's positive sense of well being through belief in their pencil skills for academic and play tasks. Ensure that my child doesn't fall behind their peers in development of handwriting or drawing. If left untreated what can difficulties with writing readiness (pre-writing) skills lead to? When children have difficulties with writing readiness, they are might also have difficulties with: Meeting (preschool or school based academic criteria due to poor pencil skills and rapid fatigue. Difficulties mastering letter and number formation. Learning to write their own name or draw age appropriate pictures (pre-school age). Excessive pressure and anxiety in a school-aged child due to difficulties 'keeping up' in class. Completing worksheets or tests due to difficulty answering all written questions within the allocated time. Poor self esteem when a child compares their abilities with their peers. Difficulty manipulating items for construction (puzzles, lego). What type of therapy is recommended writing readiness (pre-writing) difficulties? If your child has difficulties with writing readiness (pre-writing) skills, it is recommended they consult an Occupational Therapist. Using a DIY salt tray is a fun way for preschoolers to practice their early-writing skills. Just fill a tray with salt and provide an instrument for your child to make marks in the salt with. A salt tray engages the senses, and is an exciting way for kids to learn how to letters, numbers and spell their name. This DIY salt tray can be made in minutes at home, for kids of all ages to practice pre-writing, spelling and math skills. Toddlers can practice mark-making, which helps to prepare them for printing one day. Preschoolers can practice number and letter formation, writing their name, and drawing pictures in the salt. Grade school kids can practice printing sight words, and simple math in the salt tray. You may also like our shaving cream writing tray and our candy sprinkles writing tray. Easy to Make I finally made our first salt tray the other day for my daycare hooligans. It was so simple, I couldn't believe I hadn't made one sooner. I poured a cup or so of table salt into a styrofoam produce tray, paired it with a paintbrush and called the preschooler over. She climbed up to the table, eager to see what this new activity was all about. Without saying a word, I simply wrote her name in the salt with the end of the paintbrush. Her face lit up as she read her name out loud. Then I shook the tray gently and she watched, fascinated, as the letters of her name disappeared. She was hooked! Why a salt tray? Kids love sensory activities, ; activities that appeal to their sense of touch, sight, sound... And studies have proven that our capability to learn and retain information increases when multiple senses are engaged. A salt tray does just that. The salt looks and feels interesting, and makes such a wonderful sound as your child scrapes through it with a paintbrush or a finger. Worried about waste? Once your finished with this activity, the salt doesn't have to go to waste. Pour it into a jar and store it for future activities like our Salt and Ice Excavation Activity and our Salt, Glue and Watercolour Activity. Letters, Numbers, Math and Doodles What better way for your child to learn and practice letter and number formation or to practice writing his or her name? Your child can also doodle and draw on a salt tray, and anytime they want to start over, they just give the tray a shake. Voila... a smooth, clean surface of salt to write in again. This wasn't our first time using salt for a letter-learning activity, but was our first time using an actual salt tray. It was a such a lovely experience! Seeing our drawings appear in the salt, and listening to the soft, scratchy sound it made was relaxing and therapeutic. My preschooler played with our salt tray off and on all afternoon. It's definitely an activity that we'll turn to again and again. How to Make a Salt Tray Supplies: a tray -a baking sheet, serving tray, styrofoam produce tray etc. salt an instrument for writing – end of a pencil or paintbrush, a chopstick or craft stick etc. Making and Using your Salt Tray For our tray, we started with a small styrofoam produce tray from the grocery store. Note: always run your styrofoam trays through the dishwasher before using them for crafts and activities. This will ensure they are sterilized. To contain spills, I set the produce tray on top of a baking sheet, and I provided a paintbrush for writing and drawing with. After drawing and writing in the salt tray for a good, long time, my hooligan asked if she could add some colour to the salt tray. This was because earlier in the day, we'd been dripping food colouring onto a tray of baking soda for this fizzing colour experiment. The food colouring from that experiment was still sitting on the kitchen counter, so I grabbed the blue and the red, and dripped them all over our salt tray. We tried using the ends of our paintbrushes to mash the colour into the salt, but that was a slow process, so I suggested that my hooligan just use her hands to mix it all up. She LOVES getting her hands messy so she jumped at that invitation. She pressed her hands into the salt and she squished and squeezed and mixed until the colours were blonded well into the salt. Then, so she would have a larger surface for drawing and writing on, we dumped the salt from the styrofoam tray onto the big baking sheet. Our larger tray required a little more salt, so she added some, and stirred it all in to the coloured salt. How Much Salt do you Need? A salt tray doesn't require much salt. A thin layer spread over your tray is enough. A Dark Tray is Best A dark or coloured tray works best because you'll really be able to see the letters that you write. Deborah from Teach Preschool often puts coloured construction paper at the bottom of her salt trays to add interest. You can see Deborah's colourful salt trays here. The large surface of the baking sheet was great for drawing big pictures on and it provided lots of room for letter practice. Your child can practice writing her name or any other letters she knows. Another thing you could do (we did it, but I didn't take pictures), is YOU can print several letters or numbers in the top half of the tray and have your child copy them on the bottom half. And of course, your salt tray activity can simply be used for making art. Shake to Erase Once your picture or writing is finished, just give the tray a shake to "erase" your work and start again. Or, if your child loves a good sensory experience like this little one does, hands can be used to clear the tray as well. More pre-writing activities for kids: Get the 3-5 Playful Preschool e-Book! 25+preschool activities by 25 bloggers, 10 printables, 50 links to activities not featured in the book all for \$8.99! Download your copy today: Follow the Hooligans on Facebook Facebook144Pinterest377Twitter

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