

# Get Ready to Write!

## Strategies to try:

- Encouraging pencil use too early is not helpful, there are plenty activities to do first which will work on their readiness for later.
- At this stage we want to encourage interest in paper activities and making marks with no reference to writing.
- Encouraging a child to mark make on vertical surfaces can help reinforce a well balanced upright body posture and strengthen the extended wrist position that is needed for writing.
- When ready, chalk and crayons are more resistive therefore giving more feedback to the child's hand and arm.

Writing is a complex skill for children to learn and there are lots of activities that you can do to support them in the early stages (3-5 years) before writing with a crayon/pencil. It is recommended that children do not concentrate on using a pencil in the early stages of mark making. It is more important to make sure they have a variety of bigger movement experiences first and learn how to use their hands for lots of different tasks before using a pencil. Skills required for writing can still be encouraged without a pencil or crayon.



Start with paints, shaving foam, sand with hands and fingers. Make shapes and marks on a table, on the bath tiles, in the sand tray, etc. Use both hands to help THEM work out which they prefer. Let your child decide.

Mark make with sticks on the ground in the garden or on a walk.

Use DIY paint brushes and small paint rollers on the fence and walls outside with water.

Using magnetic doodle boards, whiteboards and chalk boards is good as you can rub out with out having a sense of failure with lots of unsatisfactory results on paper.

Once your child is comfortable making freestyle marks you can play together copying lines and circles.

## USING TOOLS

Tools can be paint brushes, crayons, chunky pencils and pens, chalks. Don't worry which hand they chose, let them experiment.

Allow the child to mark make freely without looking for specific shapes, don't worry about the way they hold the tool when they start.

Play together with pencils, scribbling, copying lines and simple shapes.

