

STAGES OF NORMAL PRE-WRITING SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Pre-writing abilities such as mastering control of pencil and imitating and copying lines occur in a sequence and are acquired at different rates and degrees.

Stage 1

(8 – 12 months)

- Crinkles paper
- Bangs crayons or writing utensils on paper

Stage 2

(1 – 2 years)

- Randomly scribbles
- Spontaneously scribbles in vertical/horizontal and/or circular direction
- Imitates a horizontal/vertical/circular direction

Stage 3

(2 – 3 years)

- Imitates a horizontal line
- Imitates a vertical line
- Imitates a circle

Stage 4

(3 – 4 years)

- Copies a horizontal line
- Copies a vertical line
- Copies a circle
- Imitates a cross
- Imitates a right/left diagonal
- Imitates a square

Stage 5

(4 – 5 years)

- Copies a cross
- Traces a line
- Copies a square
- Copies a right/left diagonal
- Imitates an X
- Imitates a triangle
- Grasps pencil in writing position

Stage 6

(5 – 6 years)

- Copies an X
- Copies a triangle
- Recognizes between a big and small line or curve
- Displays a satisfactory level of attention and responsiveness

Other important prerequisites and consideration prior to the introduction to and assessment of handwriting include:

Cognition-attention span, memory, sequencing, generalization of learning, interest and self-concept

Sensory/Motor – postural control, visual regard, right/left discrimination, body awareness, motor planning, in-hand manipulation and bilateral integration

Handwriting Task

Scribbling, imitating,
copying lines/shapes, copying
name, letters and numerals,
recall and write name, letters and
numbers, independently produce
written communication

Cognitive Abilities

Attention span, memory, sequencing,
generalizing of learning, interest, self-concept,
visual perception

Sensory Motor

Postural control, visual regard, right/left discrimination,
body awareness, motor planning, in-hand manipulation,
bilateral holding, visual motor

Handwriting is a complex process that entails cognitive, perceptual and motor skills working in unison. When one or more of these fundamental components are compromised the ability to produce written output is significantly affected. An effective means of addressing such issues may include adapting the environment and/or modification of expectations/demands.