

## GETTING READY TO PRINT

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### Why is it important to be “ready” to print?

Children need a lot of practice before they can use a pencil to print. Scribbling, colouring and drawing all help to develop grasp, strength, and control that will be used when the time comes to print letters and numbers.

### How can I help the child?

A child's first marks on a page are usually scribbles, followed by vertical lines, horizontal lines, and circular shapes. Later, they can intersect lines (cross), change the direction of a line (square) and make diagonal lines. All of these skills are used when printing letters and numbers.

–, I, O, +, /, □, \, X, △

Adults can help kids build these skills

- First, allow a child to imitate you. Show them, then get them to try. Use words to guide their movements.
- Next, show them a shape, simple picture, or letter to look at and copy.
- Finally, they will be able to draw these shapes on their own.

We know that skills improve

- When kids are having fun
- With practice and opportunities to explore

### Things to try

Being able to feel, smell, touch, and move helps with learning. Activities that use more than one sense are usually more fun too!

- Use a placemat with shapes or letters to trace at dinner time.
- Form shapes with different materials. Try Plasticine, play dough, pipe cleaners, Wikki stix, wooden blocks, yarn, beads, stones, licorice.

- Practice drawing with a finger in sand, finger paint, cornmeal, flour, rice, salt, whipping cream, sugar, shaving cream, lotion, pudding or gel in a Ziploc bag. Use a rimmed baking sheet or foil taped to a table to contain the mess.
- Use a variety of marking tools. E.g. paintbrush, chalk, crayons, markers, Magna Doodle, grease pencils, pastels, scented markers, vibrating pen, toothbrush, fingers, sponge pieces, Q-tips®. Draw in sand with a stick. Use water on a blackboard or sidewalk.
- Use different kinds of paper: Construction paper, foil, cardboard, finger paint paper, watercolour paper, etc.
- Place paper on top of different textures: sandpaper, rubbing templates, leaves.
- Make shapes on your child's back and have them tell you what it is.
- On a sidewalk, draw large shapes with chalk or water, and walk along the lines.
- Have the child form a shape in the air using their whole arm. Use a flashlight in a dark room or tape a ribbon to the end of a pencil. Try with their eyes open, then with their eyes closed.

**These are general suggestions that may or may not be appropriate for your child's age and stage.**

If you have questions and are waiting for Occupational Therapy service, consider booking a Consultation Clinic appointment.