






Early Developmental Writing Stages

and
Suggested
Materials

RANDOM SCRIBBLING	CONTROLLED SCRIBBLING	MOCK LETTERS AND LETTERS IN NAME	LETTER STRINGS	FIRST-LETTER SOUNDS
<p>(15 months–2 years)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just starting to hold crayons with fist and making marks on paper • Uses just one color • Straight lines in scribble fashion 	<p>(2–3 years old)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better control of crayons and markers • Uses variety of colors and lines • Starts to draw circles 	<p>(3–4 years old)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes letter-like forms: sticks, round shapes, dots • Tries to write some letters in their name • May tell story about their writing if asked 	<p>(4–5 years old)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writes letters side by side or all over paper • May try to “read” their writing • Letters don’t match the sounds • Writes first name 	<p>(4–6 years old)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spells some high-frequency words right (<i>I, love, a</i>) • Uses letters to represent first (then last, and finally medial) sounds in words • Writes first and last name
				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thick short crayons and markers • Large blank white unlined paper • Bathtub markers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crayons, markers, pencils, chalk, shaving cream, paints or water and brushes, dry erase supplies • Large blank unlined paper (white or dark) • Paintbrushes and water or paints • Standing and using vertical surfaces (e.g., easel) or sitting and using horizontal surfaces (e.g., table) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pencils, markers, crayons, pens • Alphabet strip or name to trace • Blank white unlined paper • Pencil grips • Vertical or horizontal surfaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pencils, markers, pens, dry erase, stamps and pad • Blank white unlined paper • Special paper with drawing box and one to two lines (see printables online)

Note: A special thank you to the author’s grandchildren for appearing in these photos.