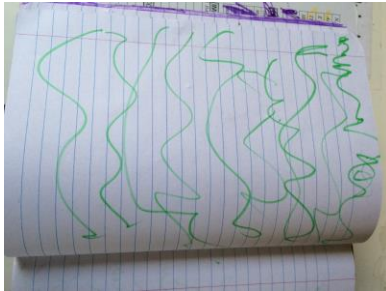


Beginning Stages of Writing

Print surrounds our environment and we interact with it daily. As children become aware that print contains meaning they begin to move through developmental stages as they learn to write. They see adults write and desire to do the same. They begin to take on the complexities of the task. While childrens scribbling and initial writing may see random and meaningless, it is far from it. Below is a brief description of each stage and what children are practicing in that stage.



Stage 1 – Random scribbling (ages 2-3) The child makes contact with the paper and begins to build fine motor skills required to write, while trying to imitate adult writing.



Stage 2 - Controlled scribbling (age 3) Pretend writing is produced as child scribbles across the paper. Patterns may be repeated over and over which is showing increase in fine motor control.



Stage 3 – Mock writing (ages 3-4) Writing includes letter-like forms or strings of letters that have been drawn. The child is beginning to pay close attention to letters and is trying to write them but they may be reversed, inverted or misshapen. The child is beginning to write for a purpose and they have distinguished between writing and drawing.



Stage 4 – Writing letters (ages 4-5) Children begin to write their name and other letters. Letters may continue to be reversed, inverted or misshapen. What they write has personal meaning and they begin to show awareness that sounds match letters.



Stage 5 – Writing words (ages 5-6) Children begin to use invented spelling by recording the letters they hear in the words they wish to write. Their pencil grip has matured and they have increased ability to write letters fluently. Hand dominance should now be established.

Remember that children move through developmental writing stages at their own pace. Those stages reflect the child's knowledge of literacy, including letters, sounds, spacing of print and other print features. The interactions children have with adults reading and writing in front of them and to them impact these stages tremendously. It is important to honor the child's writing efforts and find ways to share their work with others by displaying their work or talking about the child's accomplishments in front of him or her. Like everything in life we want to do more of it when we feel successful! So set your child up for success by reading and writing with them. Provide crayons, markers and plenty of paper. They will make you works of art you will cherish for your lifetime!