

Especially for parents of young children!

Scribble Scribble

Scribbling and Drawing

At about the same time infants start to try to eat with a spoon, they often show an interest in how other kinds of tools and instruments can be used. Babies often become fascinated with writing instruments and how to mark and scribble with them.

What is the practice?

Crayons, pencils, markers, or any other writing tools that are easy for young children to grasp and hold will work best. Making marks and scribbles comes naturally to most children. Showing a child how to use drawing and writing instruments to scribble is often all it takes for her to try to do it on her own.

What does the practice look like?

A child is seated with her mother who has been writing notes in her calendar on the table in front of them. The baby girl's mother picks up a colored marker and starts scribbling while saying "Swish, swish! Look at what Mommy is drawing." The baby reaches for and grasps the marker. Her mother points to a page and says "Sweetie, scribble here." She gently guides her daughter's hand to the paper where she tries to make a mark. Mom helps put just enough pressure on the marker so that her daughter's efforts are successful. The little girl keeps trying until she finally does it on her own.



How do you do the practice?

There are many different ways to provide young children opportunities to scribble and draw. Here are some ideas you might find helpful with your child:

- Find a comfortable place for your child to sit where her hands are free to grasp a writing tool and move it easily. Sitting on your lap, sitting in a highchair, and sitting by herself on the floor are just a few positions that you may want to try.
- Big crayons, fat pencils, and adapted writing instruments are the first objects young children will use for scribbling. Search the Web for **adapted handles** and you will find a host of ideas about how to make it easy for your child to hold writing tools.
- Child-safe magic markers are generally easy for infants to hold and use. You might even try big pieces of chalk. The easier it is for a child to hold onto what she is scribbling with, the more likely she will be successful.
- Pick the right surface for the kind of writing tool your child is using: paper for crayons and pencils, white board for magic markers, and blackboard or sidewalk for chalk.
- Turn the scribbling activity into a conversation by talking about what your child is doing and by showing how excited you are by her efforts at "writing."

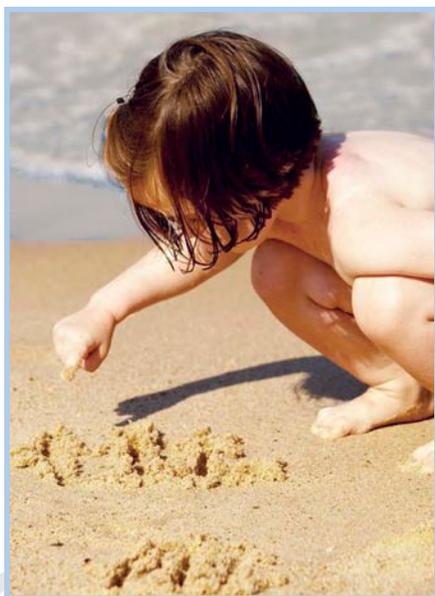
How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child show increased interest in scribbling and making marks?
- Is she getting better at picking up and holding a writing tool?
- Does she seem pleased at what she has done by smiling, vocalizing, and getting excited?

Take a look at more infant scribbling fun

Writing Just Like Mom

Anytime year-old Corrie's mother is writing a note or making a shopping list, Corrie reaches and grabs the pencil out of her mother's hand. She then tries to "write" like Mom. In the process Corrie makes scribbling marks on the paper. Mom knows that this will likely happen, so she now gives Corrie her own pencil and paper so she can do her own writing. Mom experiments with different writing instruments to find ones that Corrie can easily hold and use to make scribbling marks. Corrie's mother has turned this activity into a conversation time talking about who they are writing to or what they need to add to their shopping list.



Sand Writing

Rachel, 16 months old, and her father love being outside and playing. One of Rachel's favorite things is sand play, whether in her backyard sand box or at the beach near their home. She loves to dig, dump, move, and squeeze the sand. Dad notices how much his daughter loves having her hands in wet sand. He decides to see what Rachel will do if he pretends to write in the sand. He smooths out the sand and tells Rachel that he is going to write her name. He uses a stick and prints her name while repeating each letter. Rachel is fascinated by what she sees. Using her finger, she tries to write in the sand just like Dad. She does her best and makes a bunch of scribbles and lines. Dad shows his excitement by saying, "Rachel, you wrote your name! You are such a good writer!" Rachel beams with delight.

Computer Scribbling

Nine-month-old Jonah isn't able to hold onto writing tools like pens and pencils because of his motor impairment. His mother learned about a computer program that lets young children draw and write on a computer screen using a computer mouse. Mom sits Jonah on her lap in front of the computer and places his hand on the mouse. She helps him move it about as they watch scribbles and marks appear on the screen. Jonah nearly goes crazy with joy! In no time he is scribbling and making all kinds of marks. As soon as Mom clears the screen, Jonah is at it again.

