

# Drawing - why it's important and how we can support children

## What do children learn by drawing often?

- When children draw, they learn to put their thoughts on paper. They learn that what is in their heads can become a picture or a story. This is preparation for later, when they put their thoughts on paper by writing.
- By drawing every day, children become more confident in using crayons and paper which is also good preparation for writing.
- Children learn that 3D objects can be represented in 2D
- Drawing gives children an opportunity to be creative and use their imagination.
- Children gradually become aware of the difference between drawing and writing – they realise that these “scribble marks” mean something – this is an important step in beginning to write
- Drawing helps develop the small muscles in children’s hands as they become more skilled at manipulating crayons – all good preparation for writing.



## How can you support children with their drawing?

- Find out what is appropriate for children at different ages, keeping in mind that children develop at different rates (see Body and Space booklet)
- Observe your child drawing over a few days, make notes in your journal, for example: Jenny is 5yrs old, she doesn't concentrate when she draws, only draws for 2 minutes and then runs off; she doesn't notice colours or know the names of different colours; she just draws the same sort of scribble always.

### How children learn to hold a pencil

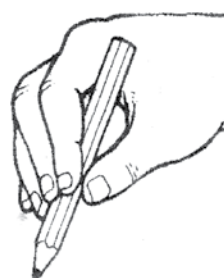
Child holding a pencil:



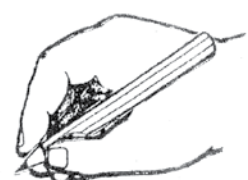
1 – 1 ½ years



2 – 3 years



3 ½ - 4 years



4 ½ - 6 years

# Drawing - why it's important and how we can support children *(continued)*

- **Take action!**

1. Sit with your child and encourage him to tell you about his drawing. Notice if he feels anxious or judged.
2. Talk about the picture and encourage your child to continue drawing, to do a little more. If he is attempting to draw a person, you could ask: *"Show me your head and your arms. Now show me your eyes. How many eyes? Can you make eyes for your person?"*
3. If the drawing of a person is very immature, ask him to feel his head, his body, 2 arms, 2 legs. Then go back and draw again. He could use a mirror to look at his body and then draw again. Always encourage – this is important brain work!
4. Name and notice different colours together – use mother tongue and school language. Encourage careful noticing and talk about what you see together.
5. Name and notice different shapes together, for example: an orange is round and a banana is long; we can make a house from a square and a triangle.
6. Provide many different opportunities for drawing and keep drawing and writing materials on hand for children to draw and write.
7. Construct things together using scrap, play dough or clay.
8. Encourage children to draw for a purpose, e.g. a birthday card.

## **Always encourage, never criticise!**

If one of the children in your care makes NO progress over several months, despite your input and encouragement then perhaps the child has general difficulties and you need to investigate further.

