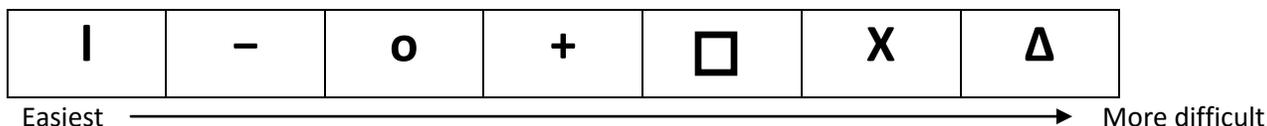


From Scribbles to Shapes and Drawing

Start with easy shapes: The typical developmental sequence of shapes is:



The order in which a child learns to draw shapes usually progresses by:

- 1) Constructing the shape with objects (combining sticks, making shapes out of playdoh snakes)
- 2) Tracing (drawing overtop the shape)
- 3) Imitating shapes (watching the shape being drawn, then drawing by themselves)
- 4) Copy the shape (from a picture)
- 5) Finally, draw the shape from memory (no picture to look at)

These shapes are the basic components of all letters. Learning to copy these figures increases the child's likelihood of success when beginning to print.

Teach good habits: Children should be encouraged to draw lines and shapes from top to bottom, left to right and counterclockwise. This will support good habits for printing top-to-bottom, and left-to-right, and reduce the likelihood of letter reversals. Sometimes placing a small happy face in the top, left hand corner will cue where to start. For older children, they may benefit from a green highlighted top line (start) and red highlighted bottom line (stop).

Words to support learning: Use verbal reminders to support the child in learning to draw shapes/letters. For example: "Line down, and line across. That makes a cross!" Emphasise the words as you draw the shapes.

Moving is learning: Kids love to learn by moving their bodies. Make shapes in the air using scarves, use their bodies to make the shape, or walk on shape outlines tapes to the ground.

Start big and then get small: It is okay to have large shapes until more refined pencil control develops.

Trace-erase- and draw to learn how the shape is formed. Using a whiteboard or chalkboard: Adult draws shape, child erases shape with finger (using correct formation), and then child practices drawing the shape.

Make it fun:

- Make shapes in sensory materials (i.e. draw a shape on tray or shallow container with rice or cornmeal, draw shapes in wet materials- pudding, shaving cream or finger paint)
- Draw with chalk on the sidewalk, on windows with window markers, or in bathtub with tub crayons.
- Draw together- pick something your child is interested in. Adult can draw the majority of the picture and have child add lines or circles for details. For example, adult can draw a train, and child can add lines underneath for the tracks.
- Keep it short, keep it fun, and finish when the child is still having fun.