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| Stage of Emergent Writing | Description | Physical Development | Expressive Arts and Design |
| Drawing    Birth to Three | Scribbling, marks with no meaning  Drawing that represents writing | The child is beginning to develop manipulation and control  The child explores different materials and tools | The child starts to intentionally make marks  Explores paint, using fingers, their body as well as brushes and other tools  Explores ideas and feelings through making marks, and sometimes gives a meaning to the marks they make |
| Scribbling | Marks begin to become more purposeful, lines that go across/ up, down/ round and round  Will distinguish between marks |
| Shapes    3 & 4 Year Olds | Beginning to give meaning to marks but is not consistent  Begins to use representation to communicate  Begins to draw simple shapes such as lines and circles | Use one handed tools and equipment  Use a comfortable grip with good control when holding pens and pencils  Show a preference for a dominant hand | Create closed shapes with continuous lines, and begin to use these shapes to represent objects  Draw with increasing complexity and detail, such as representing a face with a circle and including detail  Use drawing to represent ideas like movement or loud noises  Show different emotions in their drawings and paintings |
| Shapes | May give short descriptions/meanings to their marks  Marks mainly consist of circles/ lines- no apparent logic  Meaning they ascribe for marks changes person to person/ minute to minute |
| Mock Handwriting | Marks appear to be more focused and purposeful  Give one to two-word descriptions  Wavy scribbles that imitate handwriting and have a left to right progression; child pretends to write words. |
| Letter like forms  3 & 4 Year Olds | Letters and marks that resemble letter like shapes  May copy some letters from their name |
| Letter strings | Copies some letters from their name/ may write all of name  Gives more detailed descriptions about the meaning of their marks  Marks/ drawings begin to look like what they are drawing  Meaning of marks is consistently the same  Strings of letters that do not create words, written left to right, including uppercase and lowercase letters |
| Transitional Writing | Letters with spaces in between to resemble words: letters/ words copied from environmental print; letters often reversed | Develop fine motor skills so that they can use a range of tools competently, safely and confidently  Develop the foundations of a handwriting style which is fast, accurate and efficient  **ELG: Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing- using the tripod grip in almost all cases**  **Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery**  **Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing** | Explore, use and refine a variety of artistic effects to express ideas and feelings  Return to and build on their previous learning, refining ideas and developing  **ELG: Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function** |
| Invented or phonetic spelling  Reception | Uses identifiable letters that match initial sounds/ ending sounds in words  Gives consistent meaning to their marks |
| Beginning word and phrase writing | Correctly writes many sounds in a word  Writes CVC/CVCC words independently  Writes simple keywords correctly  Can write their full name correctly |
| Conventional spelling | Writes short captions with phonetic spelling  Captions contain key words  Attempts to write short sentences in a meaningful context |
| Sentence writing | Children can write short sentences independently with known letter- sound correspondences that contain accurately spelt key words  Words are phonetically plausible  Can be read by themselves and others  Forms lower case and capital letters correctly  Uses a capital letter and full stop  **ELG: write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed**  **Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters**  **Write simple phrases or sentences that can be read by others** |

\*Information taken from NAEYC, Development Matters 2020, EYFS Framework 2021

Reception