

EARLY CHILDHOOD WRITING DEVELOPMENT

Awareness Stage

GRIP

- Uses entire fist to grasp items
- Starts to explore fine motor movements through grabbing objects, such as hair, toys, or a bottle, but lacks real control and often requires adult supports

EXAMPLE:

An infant exploring grasp by gripping a finger

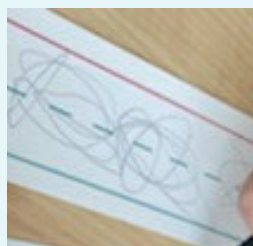


FORMATION & SPELLING

- Begins to use **random scribbling**—starts at any place on the page and includes random marks that do not resemble print or communicate a meaning

EXAMPLE:

Basic scribbles



COMPOSITION

- Begins to understand, through interactions with text and talk, the connection between spoken and written language (i.e., recognizes that written language communicates ideas, stories, and facts)
- Starts to recognize environmental print
- Uses a variety of writing tools to share messages

Pre-literate Stage

GRIP

- Attempts to mimic adults by grasping various tools (crayons, markers, Q-tips, clothespins, paintbrushes, etc.) with four fingers pointed toward palm

EXAMPLE:

A four-finger grip

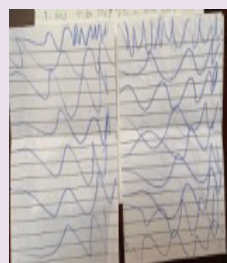


FORMATION & SPELLING

- Scribbles to imitate adult writing
- Improves fine motor skills by developing hand and finger strength, resulting in **controlled scribbling**—repeated marks on a page (e.g., open circle, diagonals, straight or curved lines, wavy lines written across the page).

EXAMPLE:

A To Do List (and the scripted meaning)



COMPOSITION

- Uses single drawings to represent written stories
- Believes that drawings and scribbles communicate a purposeful message
- Reads their drawings as if there were words on them
- Tells teacher or peers what a picture represents which may change with repeated explanations

EXAMPLE:

Yo puedo patear un balón de fútbol con mis pies.

“I can kick a soccer ball with my feet.”



Early Emergent Stage

GRIP

- Attempts five-finger grip including a grasp with index finger and thumb

EXAMPLE:

A five-finger grip

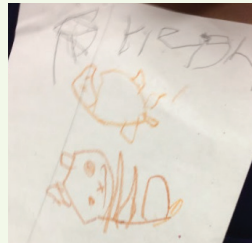


FORMATION & SPELLING

- Scribbles begin to indicate the child's understanding of basic writing conventions - left to right, top to bottom
- Makes letter-like forms and shapes, or individual letters, to represent words
- Attempts to write name
- Copies letters and words from environmental print

EXAMPLE:

Scribbles with letter-like forms



COMPOSITION

- Uses drawings across several pages to represent a clear message
- Includes story elements into drawings (e.g., character names, setting) to represent a story
- Adds meaningful labels to illustrations demonstrating the understanding that written words add meaning and context
- Shares meaning of pictures and labels with teachers and peers with consistency
- Starts to build awareness that messages (stories or individual pictures) need to make sense and will revise drawings and/or labels to make it happen

Emergent Stage

GRIP

- Uses **static** three-finger grip and whole arm movement to form letters (lacks control)

EXAMPLE:

A **static** three-finger grip, that uses the whole arm to make marks on the paper (and limits control)



FORMATION & SPELLING

- Strings random letters together in an attempt to create words
- Includes both upper and lowercase letters randomly
- Continues to develop conventions of writing - writes across the page, adds spaces to represent each word within a sentence

EXAMPLE:

Mi comida
"My food"



COMPOSITION

- Develops stories with a beginning and an ending, represented by drawings and corresponding phrases
- Continues to develop awareness that written stories follow a logical sequence
- Revises drawings and writings to ensure their message is clear to their audience

EXAMPLE:

A story about a student's feelings

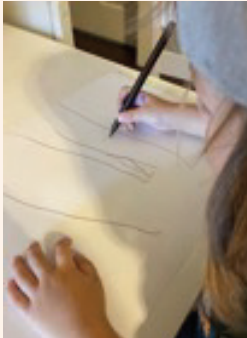


Transitional Stage

GRIP

- Uses **dynamic** three-finger grip resulting in more control as movement originates from the wrist

EXAMPLE:
A **dynamic** three-finger grip with more control at wrist

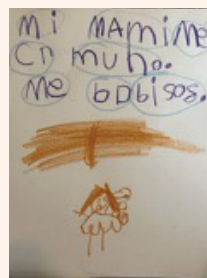


FORMATION & SPELLING

- Spells words by using letter-sound knowledge (approximation spelling) which may progress as follows
 - » Beginning and final sounds used to represent a word
 - » Medial consonant sounds are added
 - » Medial sounds (vowel), even if incorrect, may be represented
 - » All sounds are represented even if inaccurately spelled
 - » Writes known words (e.g., high-frequency words, sight words)
- Spells one word several different ways in one piece of writing, which illustrates that spelling is still developing (e.g., “like” might be spelled as “lik” and “liek” in the same story).
- Begins to use spacing to distinguish between words
- Adds random punctuation to writing

EXAMPLE:

A writing sample that includes a mix of approximated spelling and words from the word wall to convey meaning



The circled words represent that the child understands individual words make up a sentence.

COMPOSITION

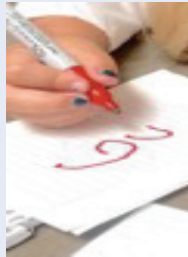
- Begins to convey messages more through written text than illustrations
- Writes sentences that correspond with each of the drawings in their stories
- Composes clear messages with meaning and context for a specific audience
- Includes a beginning, middle, and end when writing stories
- Begins to model compositions after familiar authors

Conventional Stage

GRIP

- Continues to develop control and personal style using a dynamic three-finger grip

EXAMPLE:
A **developed** three-finger grip



FORMATION & SPELLING

- Begins phrase writing
- Writes complete sentences
- Uses correct capitalization and punctuation more often
- Increasingly writes with conventional spelling and fewer instances of approximation spelling

EXAMPLE:

A writing sample that includes accurate use of capitalization and punctuation, with conventional spelling



COMPOSITION

- Writes sentences of varying lengths and structures to add coherence around a central topic or theme
- Consistently conveys messages through written text versus illustrations
- Uses writing to express personal ideas, thoughts, understandings, and learning
- Recognizes and imitates various genres of writing
- Uses mentor texts to develop composition skills and creativity in writing
- Writes for a variety of purposes, accurately using various features of writing (e.g., begins letters with "Dear," or "Estimado:"; begins writing fairy tales with "Había una vez"; makes lists with numbered lines or bullets)