

**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY  
ADVICE FOR FIRST SCHOOLS  
REGARDING HANDWRITING,  
SCISSOR, RULER, DRESSING  
SKILLS AND ATTENTION**

**PAEDIATRIC OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY  
DEPARTMENT**

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## **PURPOSE OF PACK**

As part of our work within Northumberland Children's Occupational Therapy we have developed a resource pack for parents and those working with children in school. The aim is to help identify why the child is having difficulty with a particular activity and to provide some ideas on how to deal with them.

The pack has been set out so you can find the area of difficulty (e.g. handwriting) and look at the questions to find the most relevant sheets (e.g. child unable to form letters correctly).

If after using the advice provided in the pack the child still continues to find tasks hard it may be appropriate for the child to be referred to the occupational therapy department. The strategies you try can then be used as part of the referral. We have also included a suggested format of how to log the strategies that have been tried. Please see page 58.

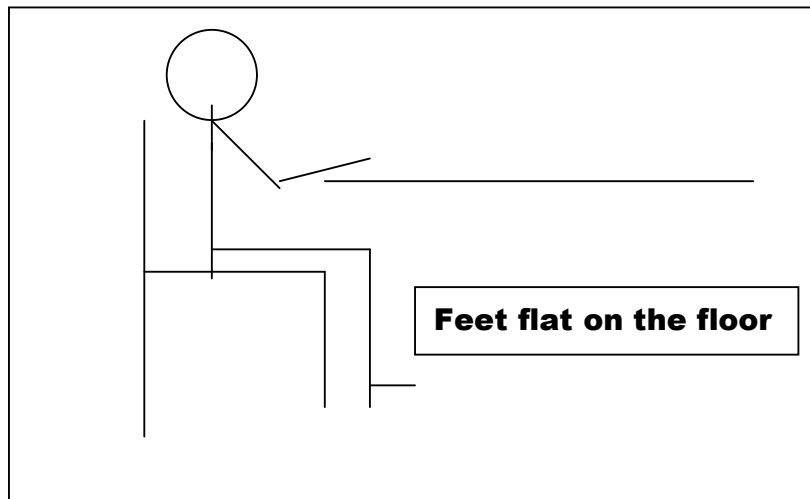
Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions, comments or suggestions about the pack. We would be grateful if you could use the feedback form (page 69) when you use the pack, this would help us to make any necessary improvements.

## 1. POSITIONING AT THE TABLE

A good position at the table will help the child to be stable and be able to concentrate and use their hands most effectively.

**Whatever chair the child is using, ensure that:**

- Feet are placed flat on the floor or appropriate support (e.g. foot block or phone book)
- Pelvis is at the back of the seat
- Hips and knees are bent approximately at 90°
- Arms are forward symmetrically
- The work surface is high enough to stabilize the shoulders
- A slanted work surface can help (e.g. posture pack or wide A4 Lever Arch folder or angled board available at IKEA)
- Make sure the child is directly facing the board.
- It may also be useful to check if the child has had a recent eye test and gain information on their reading age.



## Difficulties with handwriting

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Suggested advice</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Can the child hold the pencil correctly?</b>	<b>Finger isolation</b>	<b>9</b>
	<b>Pincer grip</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>Developing pencil grip</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Is the child left-handed?</b>	<b>Left handedness</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Can they draw prewriting shapes?</b>	<b>Pre-writing shapes</b>	<b>21</b>
	<b>Pencil control</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Do they reverse letters / numbers?</b>	<b>Multi sensory learning</b>	<b>21 - 31</b>
	<b>Letter formation</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Do they start the letter in the correct place?</b>	<b>Letter formation</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Can they stay on the line?</b>	<b>Pencil control</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>Writing on the line</b>	<b>39</b>
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<b>Do they have problems copying from the board or books?</b>	<b>Attention</b>	<b>56</b>
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<b>Do they swap hands when holding a pencil or when drawing a line across the page?</b>	<b>Hand dominance</b>	<b>36</b>
	<b>Two handed activities</b>	<b>37</b>
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<b>Does their handwriting look jerky?</b>	<b>Pencil control and fluency</b>	<b>12</b>

### Difficulties using scissors

Is the child left-handed?	Do they have left handed scissors?	
Can they hold the paper and scissors?	Scissor grip	43
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Can they rotate the paper	Hand dominance	35
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### Difficulties with attention / behaviour

Do they find the work too difficult?	Attention	56
Do noises, people, or objects distract them?		
Do they need more regular breaks?		
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### Difficulty with Dressing

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<b>Do they have problems with buttons or zips?</b>	<b>Buttons</b>	<b>53</b>
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	<b>Finger isolation</b>	<b>9</b>
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### Difficulty with cutlery

<b>Can they hold the knife and fork correctly?</b>	<b>Cutlery</b>	<b>55</b>
	<b>Finger isolation</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Can they use the knife and fork together?</b>	<b>Using two hands together</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Can they put adequate pressure through the utensils?</b>	<b>Arm and shoulder girdle strengthening</b>	<b>33 - 34</b>

# ADVICE SHEETS



## **1. FINGER ISOLATION**

**This is the ability to use one finger separately from the others, particularly the index or pointing finger.**

- Pointing songs or games – ‘twinkle, twinkle little star’, ‘two little dickie birds sitting on a wall’ or make up songs about ‘two little birds’ and use index finger and thumbs as the beaks of the birds singing.
- Popping bubbles with pointed finger.
- Using fingers like ‘tweezers’ to pick up objects, such as cotton wool, small blocks, pasta pieces, raisins, frozen peas, berries.
- Play with toys that have holes that need poking or probing.
- Play with telephones, dialling with auditory feedback, using the index finger when ‘dialing’
- Finger painting – encourage the child to use each finger but one at a time.
- Encourage the child to point to things in books / pictures e.g. ‘find the....’
- Encourage the child to turn the page in the book, by using his fingers rather than his whole hand.
- Finger puppets – move each finger independently.

## **2. PINCER GRIP**

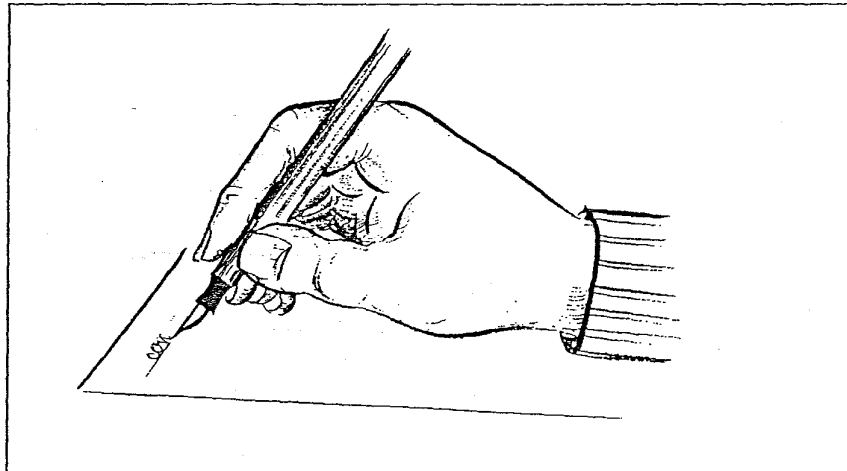
**Pincer grip is the ability to grasp small objects with thumb and forefinger. It is an important part of the child's fine motor development, and necessary for holding and manipulating a pencil.**

- Encourage the child to pick up small objects (toys, sweets etc.) with their thumb and first finger rather than her whole hand, or thumb and middle finger.
- Encourage the child to form these fingers into a 'beak' and pretend they are a bird picking up seed to encourage and promote the idea of tucking her other fingers away.
- Clothes pegs opened with the thumb and index finger help to strengthen pincer grip e.g. pegging out paintings to dry.
- Making play dough into small shapes, pinching a play dough sausage with thumb and first finger and flattening play dough balls into pancakes.
- Pick small items e.g. buttons beads out of play dough with the thumb and index finger.
- Pop popping plastic with index finger and thumb.
- While doing pincer grip activities place a small object (e.g. pencil grip / piece of play dough/ a rubber) in the child's palm to be held in place by the middle, index and little finger. This will help with pincer isolation i.e. only using thumb and first finger.

### 3. PENCIL GRIP

The most effective pencil grasp is the one shown, which allows the fingers to move without using the wrist, or whole arm. This means that less effort is used and writing can be more fluent. The forearm should be resting on the desk for stability.

- Use short (1"), wide pencils/crayons/chalk to encourage the child to hold the pencil correctly.
- Encourage the child to hold the pencil between the thumb pad and index finger pad (like a bird beak). The pencil then rests on the middle finger.



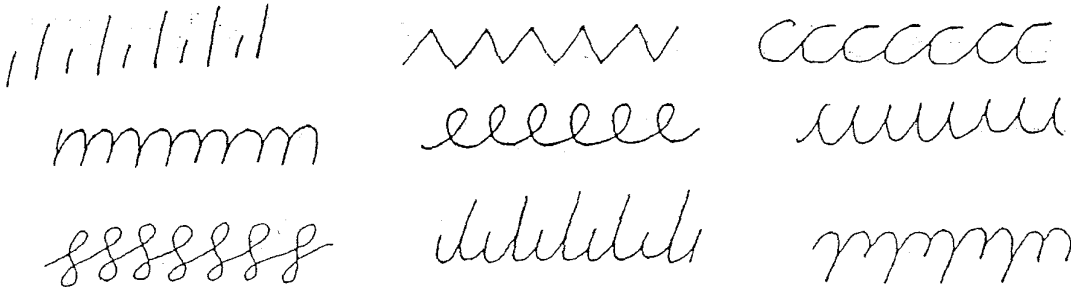
- Put a sticker or band around pencil to show to hold it near the tip.
- Place a grip on pencil to encourage a dynamic tripod grip (introduce use slowly), or try using a triangular pencil.

<b>Details for pencil grip and triangular pencils (see page 61-62)</b>
<b>Homecraft Rolyan</b> Nunn Brook Road, Huthwaite Sutton in Ashfield Nottinghamshire, NG17 2HU, UK UK Customer Services, Tel: 08702 423 305 Fax: 08701 660 211 <a href="http://www.homecraft-rolyan.com">www.homecraft-rolyan.com</a>

#### 4. PENCIL CONTROL AND FLUENCY

- Practise with activities such as (see attached examples):  
Dot to Dots  
Mazes  
Matching one object to another  
Drawing along roads (start with wide lines)
- Start with drawing between two wide 'Lines rather than along a single thin line, as this is harder.
- Some example sheets have been enclosed but you can use tasks relating to the part of the curriculum you are working on such as matching sounds, numbers of objects, or in art.
- Also good for fluency are trying to make a snail or tornado – going round and round but keeping wrist on the table and moving only the fingers.

Fluency can also be developed through practising letter patterns (it is easier to start large and then get smaller) e.g.:



- The Teodorescu Perceptuo -Motor Programme is a resource book that develops perceptual and fine motor control with the aim of developing fluency and accuracy.

**Details for the Teodorescu Perceptuo-Motor Programme see p63**

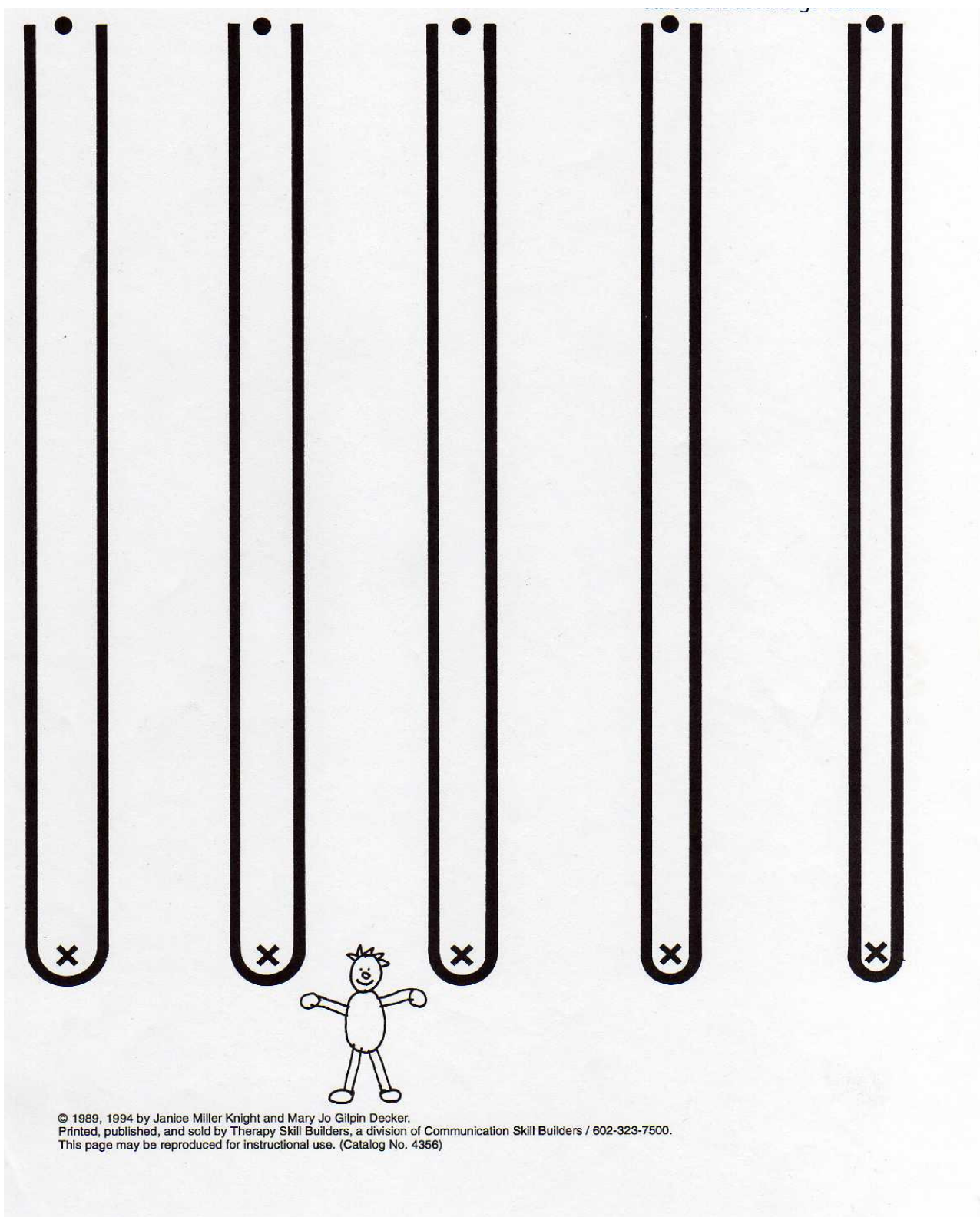
**Write from the Start (book 1 and 2)**

**By Lois Addy and John Teodorescu (1996)**

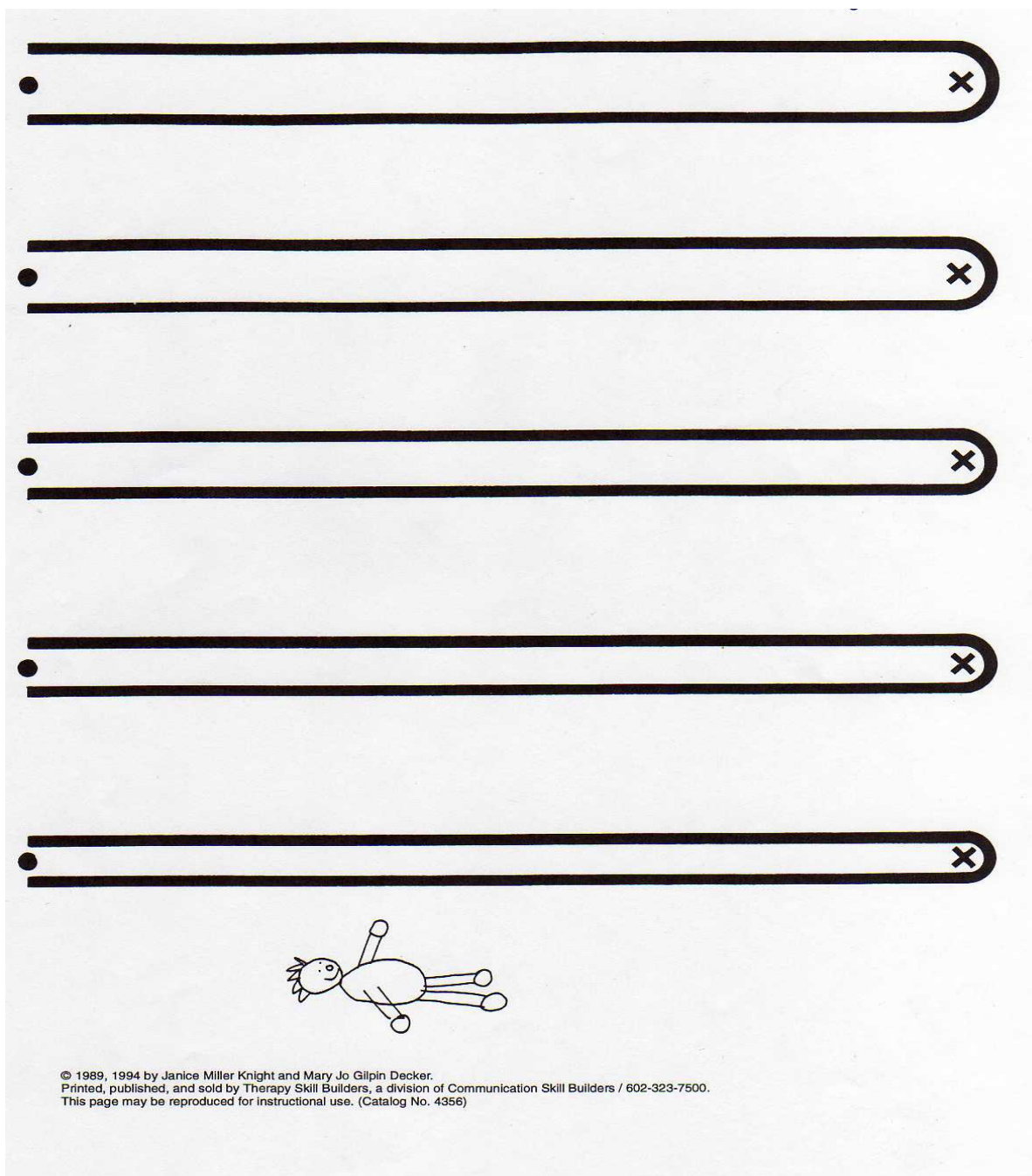
**Publishers: LDA:Cambs. isbn 1 88503 245 7**

## **Example activity sheets to develop pencil control and fluency**

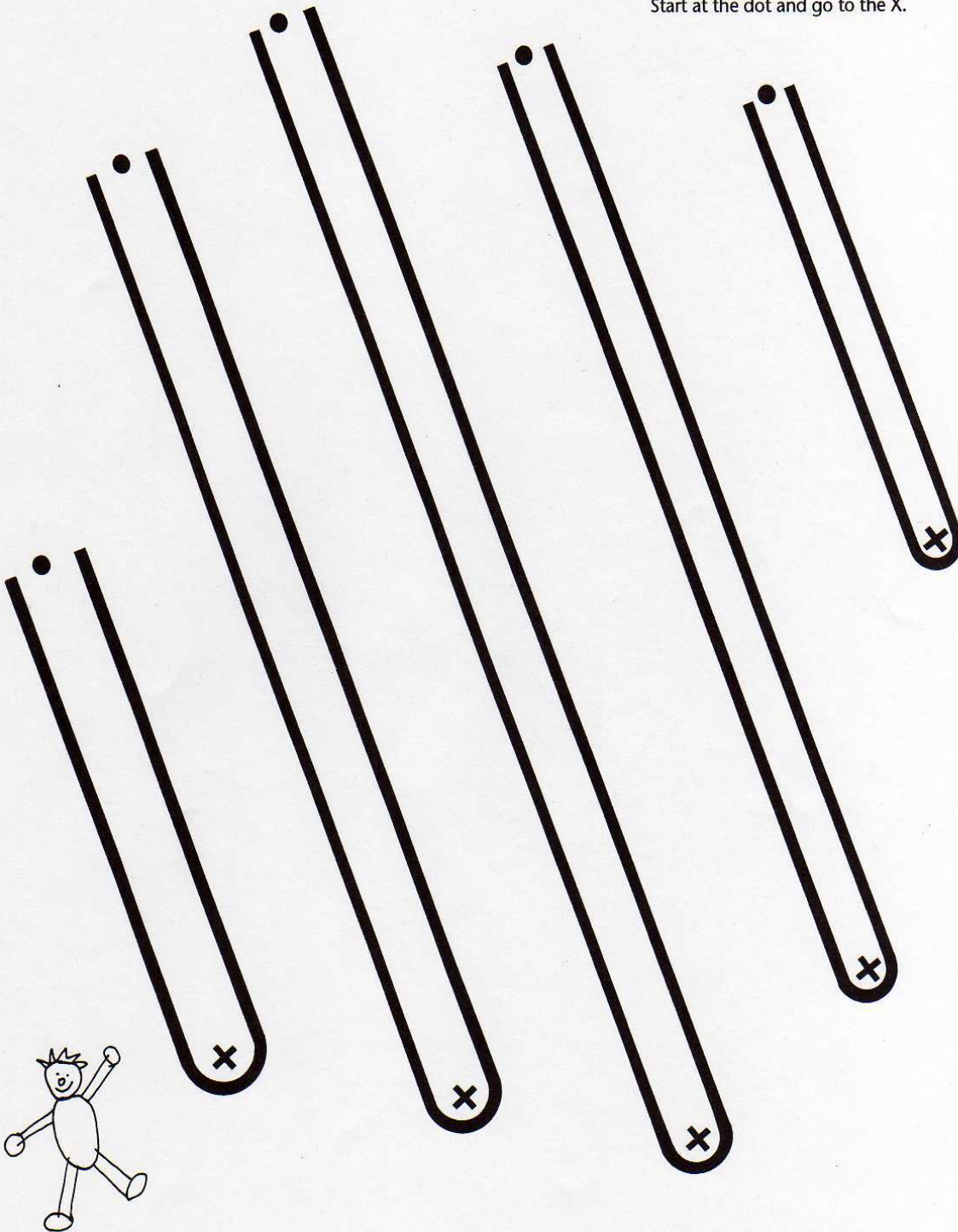
Start at the dot and go to the X



Start at the dot and go to the X



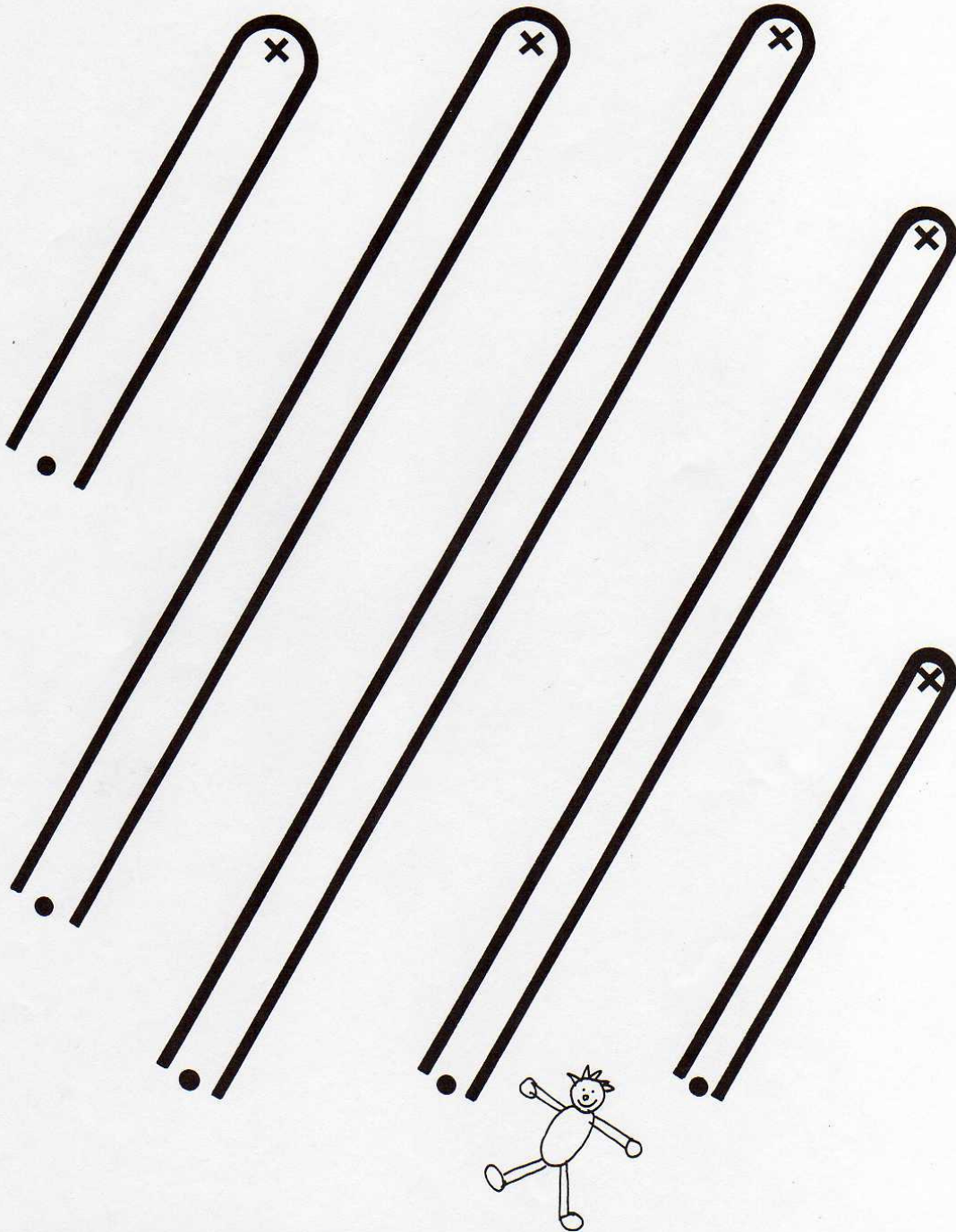
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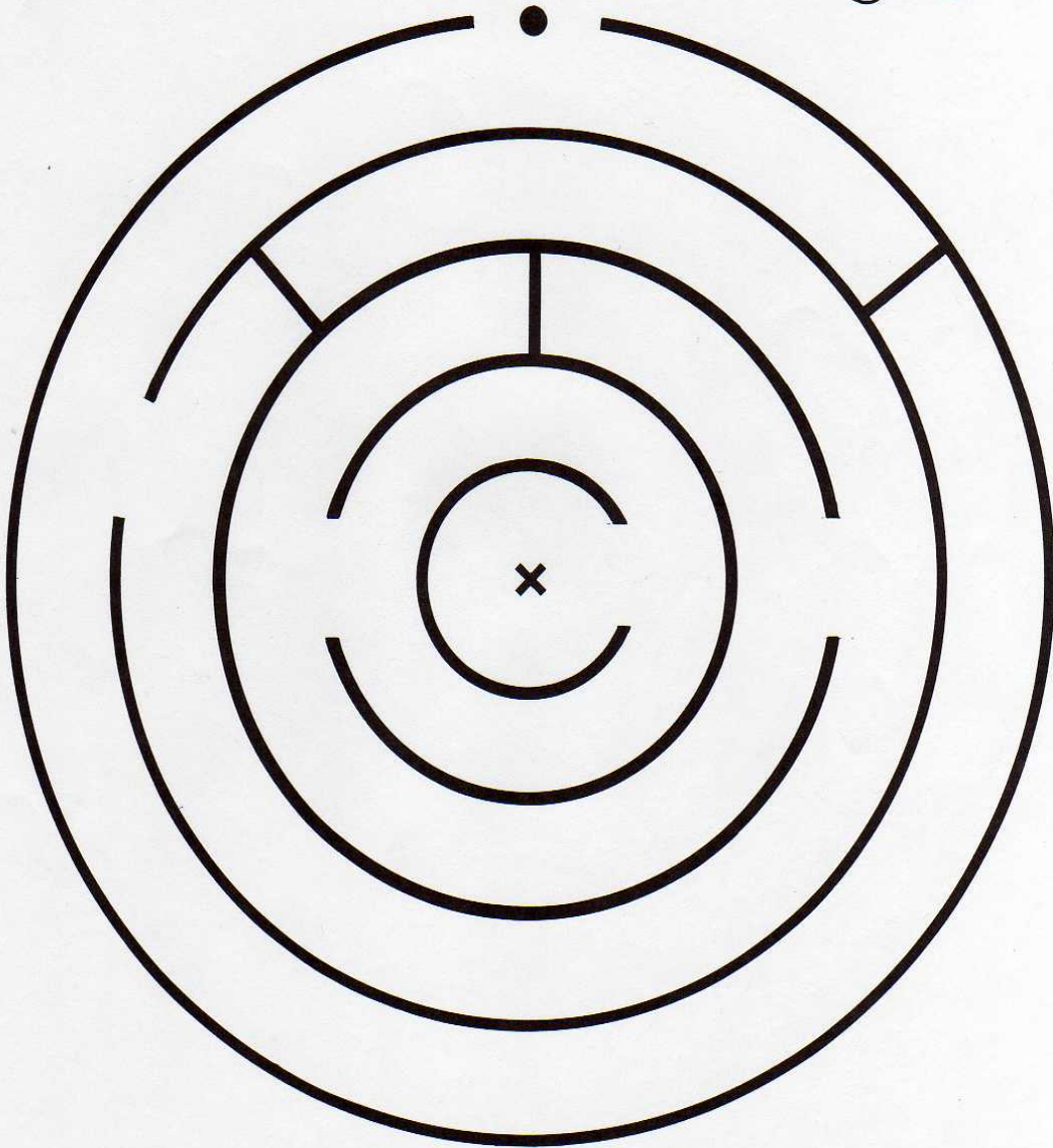
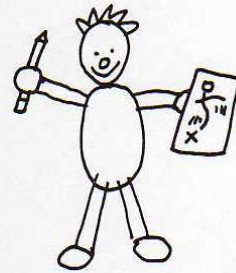


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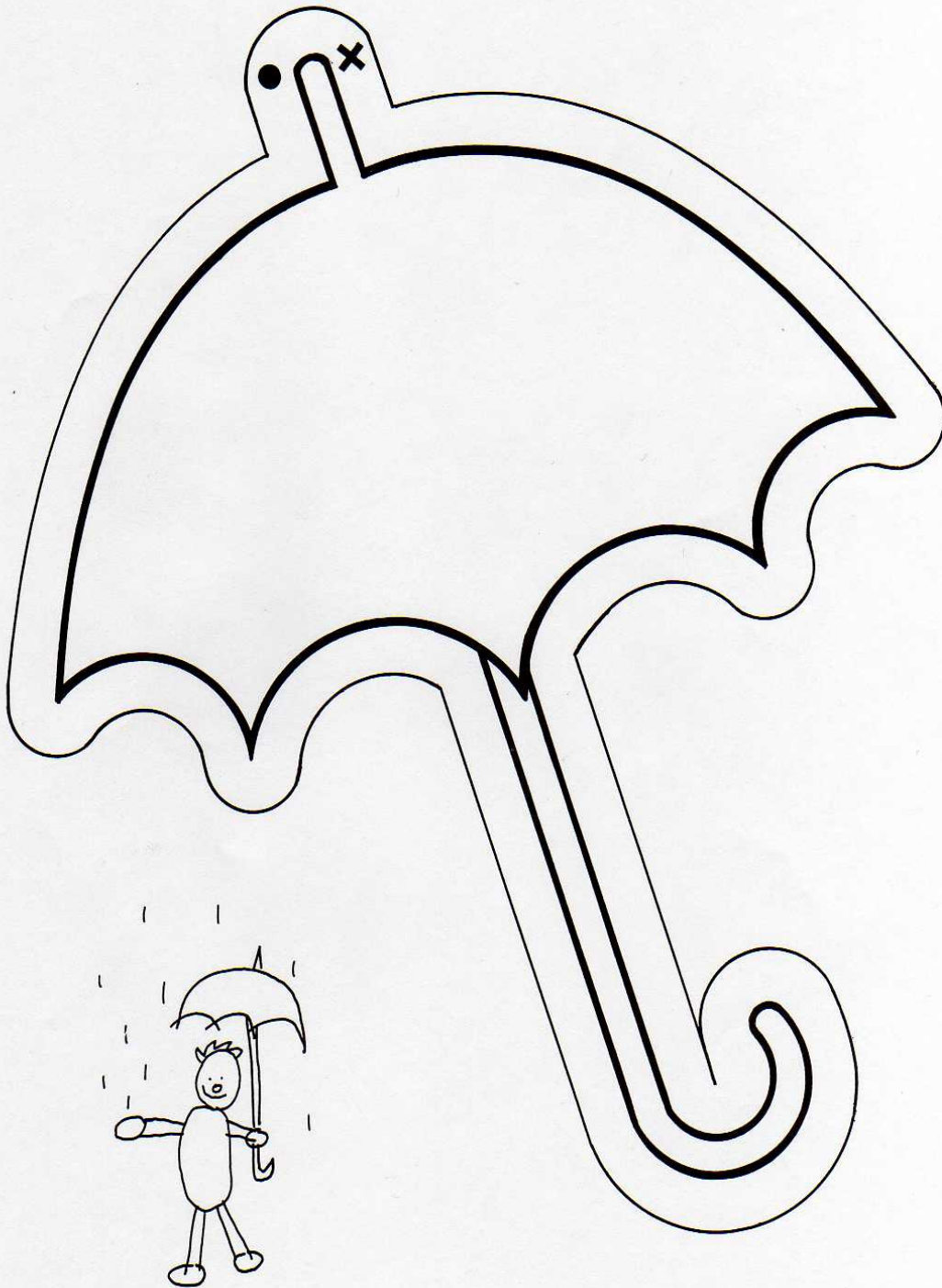
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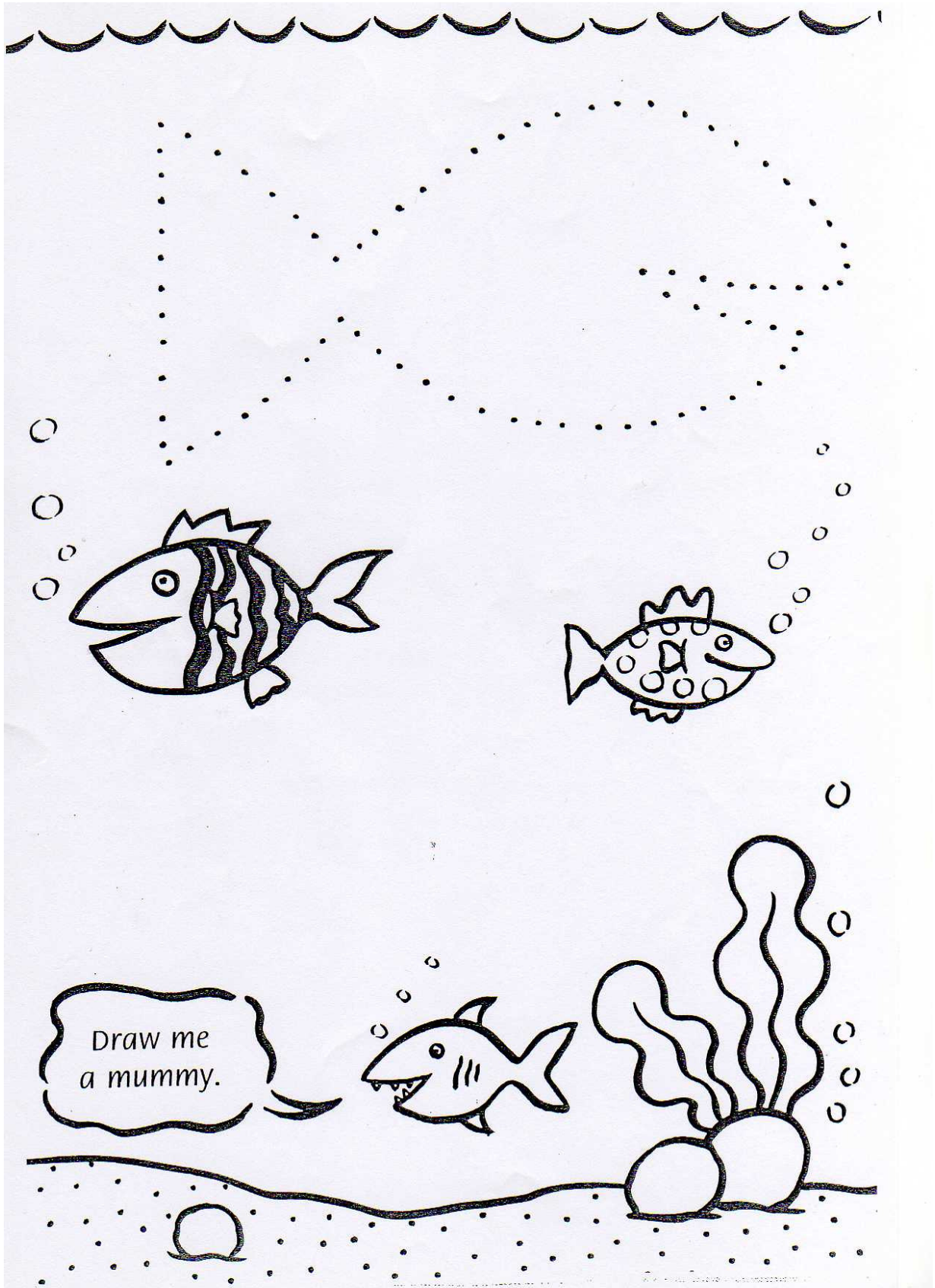
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## 6. PRE-WRITING SKILLS (MULTISENSORY APPROACH)

- Children need to be able to draw pre-writing shapes before they are able to form letters correctly. We first learn to go up and down, then side-to-side and then circles, then diagonals.
- **If a child cannot do these basic shapes then it is likely they will have difficulties with forming letters and numbers.**

I \_ O / \ + x

- Start with child imitating your movement so they learn how to make the movement.
- Start with large shapes e.g. in the air, on the white boards, floor or large piece of paper. Once they are able to form the shapes correctly then it will be easier for them to make the shapes smaller.
- This is often learnt best through a **MULTISENSORY APPROACH**. Various sensory media can be used in pre-writing activities in many different combinations.

### Visual:

- Write or scribble on different kinds of paper e.g. - regular, sugar, greaseproof, foil, and brown.
- Use different tools e.g. paintbrush, chalk, crayons, markers, and changeable markers or light up pen.
- Use special colouring books in which the colour appears when children paint with water.

### Tactile:

- Finger painting
- Using painting or crayons on sandpaper, around shapes, on textured surfaces.
- Write in sand, salt, foam, mud, talcum powder etc.
- Trace finger around shapes made of yarn, craft sticks or cut out of sand paper.
- Use magic pens to trace over shapes and the colour changes.
- Sometimes put the paint or markers in the refrigerator before the activity to change the temperature and lotion can be warmed in the microwave.

### Olfactory:

The sense of smell can be incorporated into pre-writing tasks:

- Try drawing with scented markers.
- Add vanilla, mint, cherry flavourings to finger paints (be careful- the smell may be too great that the child may want to taste the paint- use edible paint only).
- Add a few drops of bubble bath or scented oils to homemade finger paints or use scented lotions to draw in.

**Auditory:**

Pre-writing activities can even include an auditory component:

- Use musical toothbrush to paint.
- Attach bells to paintbrush.

**Gustatory:**

Even the sense of taste can be incorporated in pre-writing activities for young children.

- Draw on frosting on a cake to decorate it.
- Try finger painting in whipping cream on a flat pan of gelatine.
- Draw with cheese spread out on crackers.
- Use liquorice to form letters.

**Proprioception:**

Proprioceptive media are those that stimulate joint muscle feedback. They include activities in which there is increased weight or resistance to two-handed involvement with the pre-writing tool.

- Weighted pen or paint with weighted toothbrush.
- Vibrating pen.
- Write on a child's back or hand and get them to guess what letter you have drawn.
- Use rolled up paper as a wand to write in the air with both hands.
- Use a scarf as a streamer to make lines or circles in the air.

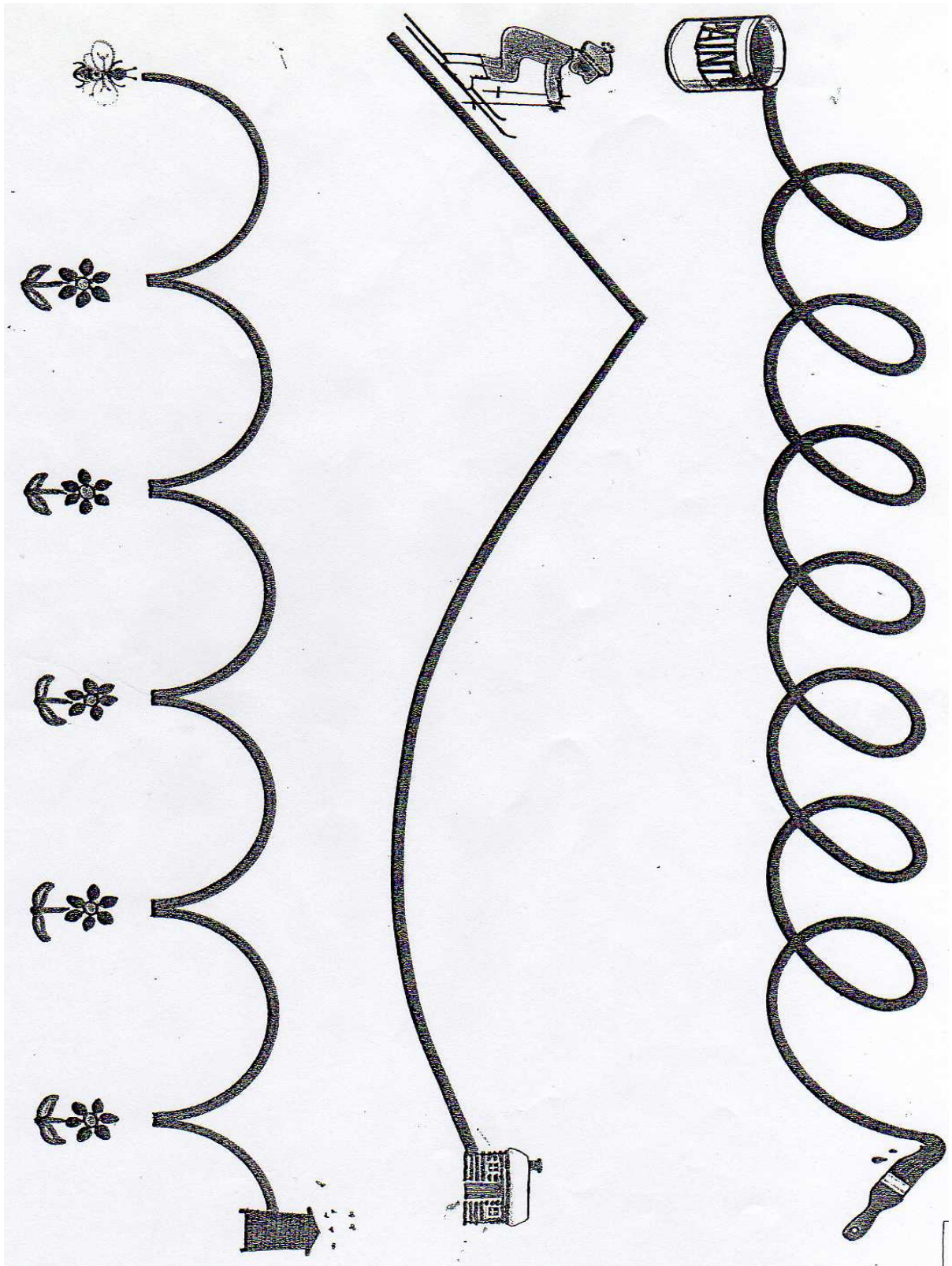
**Vestibular:**

Activities in which the child has to move and change positions also affect the vestibular or balancing system:

- Walk, run, skip, jump, knee walk - shapes on the floor, over string or rope, with or without shoes.
- Follow the leader to form letters, shapes.
- Imitate shapes with the body or blindfolded.

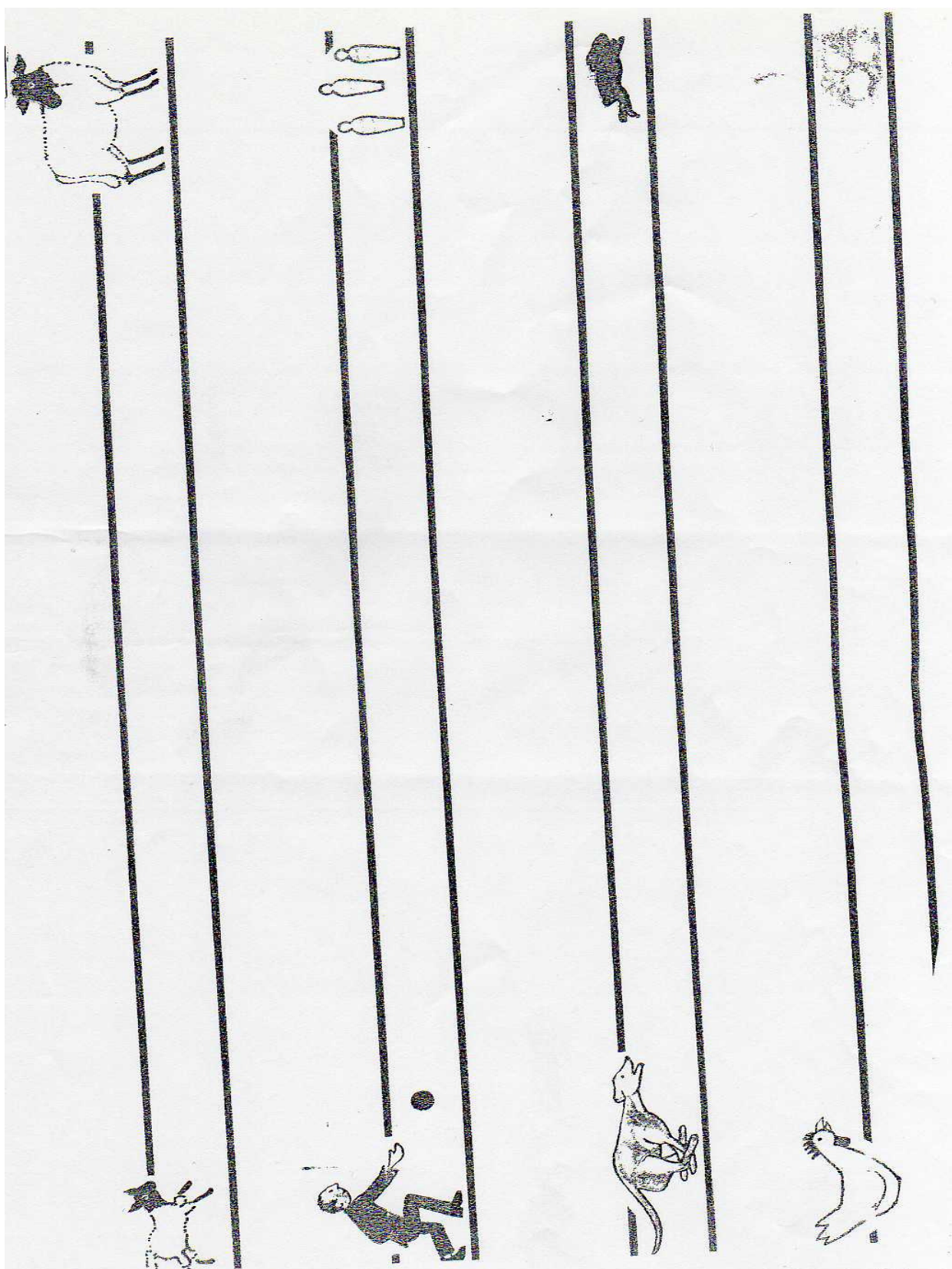
## **Examples of activity sheets to develop prewriting shapes**

Draw along the lines



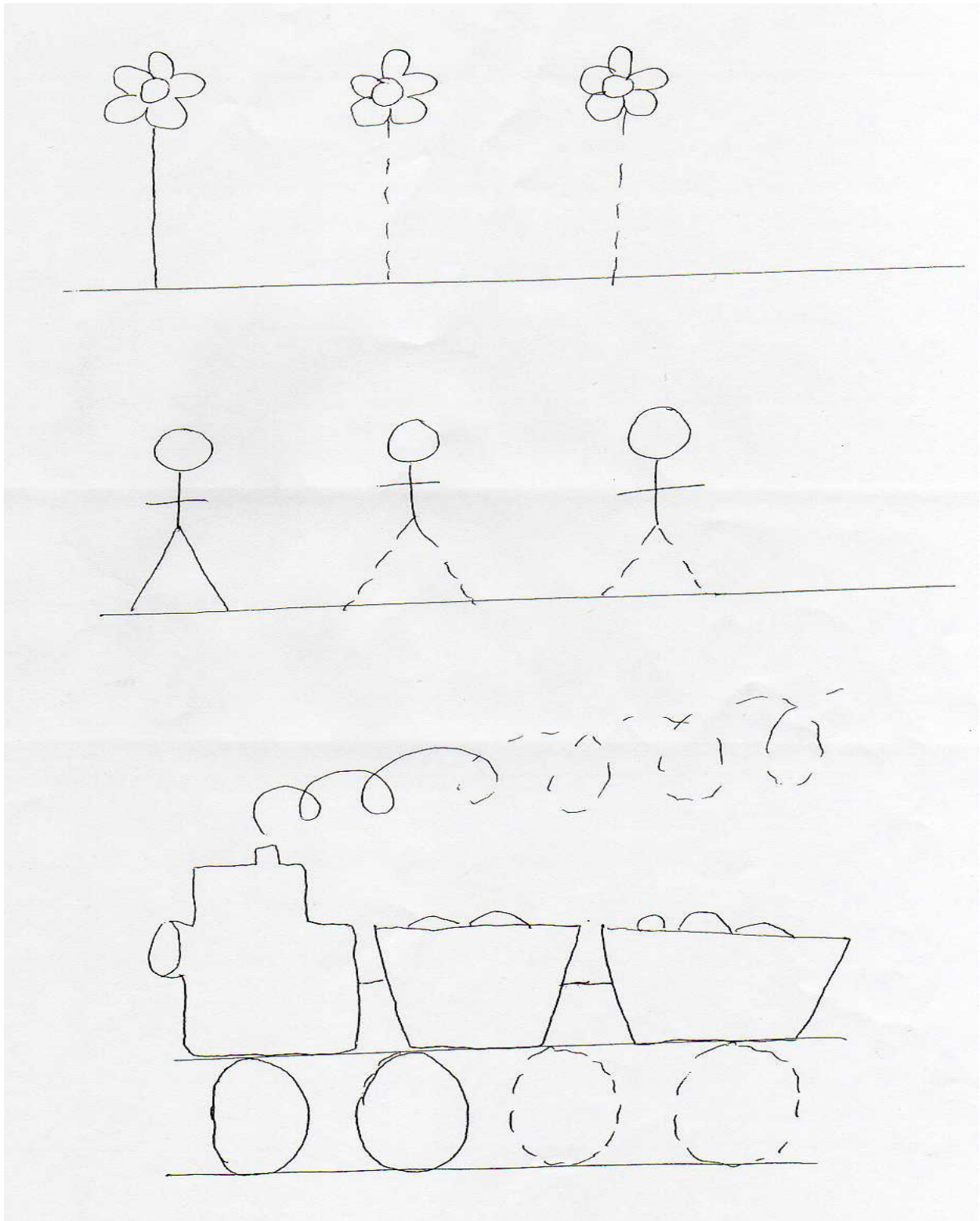


Draw along the lines

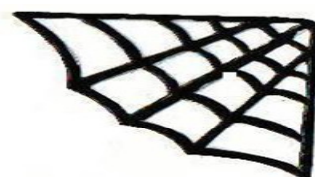




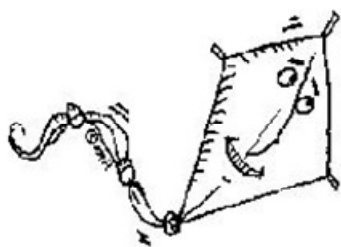
Draw along the lines, completing the pictures.



Connect the spiders to their webs.



Help the boy fly his kite.

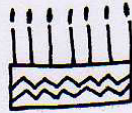


### Pre-Writing Patterns (A)

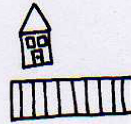
Practice the following by drawing on paper, the blackboard, in wet sand or shaving cream.

#### VERTICAL LINES

❖ Candles



Fence



❖ Flowers



Rain



#### HORIZONTAL LINES

❖ Hat



Ladder



Railway



#### OBLIQUE LINES

❖ Spiders Web



Indian Teepee



Mountains

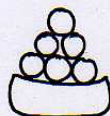


## CIRCLES

### ❖ Glasses



### Oranges



### ❖ Caterpillar



### Truck Wheels



## COILS

### ❖ Person



### Cat





### Pre-Writing Patterns (B)

Practice the following by drawing on paper, the blackboard, in wet sand or shaving cream.

#### Vertical lines

1.  Top to bottom attempting even spacing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fences</li> <li>Brick wall</li> <li>Ice-block sticks</li> <li>Designs</li> </ul>
---	---

#### Diagonal lines

2.  Top to bottom (even spacing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rain Clouds</li> <li>Echidna/Porcupine</li> </ul>
--	--

#### Horizontal lines

3.  Left to right (even spacing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zebra crossing</li> <li>Ladder</li> <li>Fence</li> </ul>
--	---

#### Diagonal lines

4.  Join dots from left to right, keeping the hand below the work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rooftops</li> <li>Mountains</li> </ul>
--	---

#### Circles

5.  Start at top Move in an anticlockwise direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bubbles</li> <li>Balls</li> <li>Faces</li> <li>Marionettes</li> <li>Marbles</li> </ul>
--	---

6.  Start at top Move in an anticlockwise direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bubbles</li> <li>Easter eggs</li> <li>Chicken</li> <li>Egg People</li> <li>Caterpillars</li> </ul>
--	---

#### Fluency Patterns

7.  No more than 3 to a pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knitting</li> <li>Truck wheels</li> <li>Bunch of grapes</li> </ul>
--	---

8. 'Up and down And up and down'  No more than 3 to a pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waves</li> <li>Worms</li> <li>Smoke</li> </ul>
---	---

9.  'Jack and Jill went up the hill'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Animals (e.g. Stegosaurus, Dragon, Comb of Chicken)</li> <li>Patterns</li> </ul>
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10.  Clockwise Loops 'Round and round and round'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Springwire</li> <li>Clouds</li> </ul>
---	--

11.  Anticlockwise Loops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curly hair</li> <li>Tree</li> <li>Headphones</li> <li>Telephone cord</li> </ul>
-----------------------------------	--

## 7. LETTER FORMATION

- Provide a visual cue to help with the size and spacing of letters e.g. lined paper, a margin to show where to start writing
- Use a multi-sensory approach when learning letter shapes (see previous sheet) and try getting the child to draw the letter with their eyes closed.
- Children often find it easier to learn letters shapes in groups. The Hand Writing Without Tears resource book provides a technique of teaching letters by similarity of formation. There is also a lot of information and details of how to get the books on their web site: [www.hwtears.com](http://www.hwtears.com). This way of learning letters can help to prevent reversals e.g. 'b' and 'd'.
- Ask the child to describe how the letter is formed before they draw it.
- You could get the child to correct a piece of work that you have written e.g. with letters formed incorrectly, not on the line or with incorrect use of capitals.

## 8. ARM AND SHOULDER GIRDLE STRENGTHENING

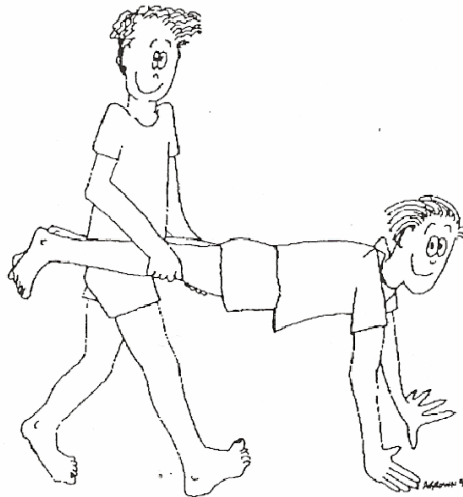
Children need to have stability at the trunk and shoulders so they can use their hands effectively. Think of a crane or a large digger – your hand is the end part of the crane or digger – the grasp part which is dependent on all the other parts being secure and firmly under control otherwise whatever you do with that hand, it will be very hard to make it behave the way you want it to.

### Sports:

- Any kind of climbing activities (e.g.: in adventure playgrounds, climbing walls) or that involves whole body and shoulder movement such as swimming. Tai Kwando, judo, tennis, cricket, baseball etc.

### Games and Exercises:

- Wheelbarrow walking: - walk forward on straight arms whilst support given at the lower part of the body - gradually move support down from thigh to knee. Try races and obstacle courses .



Wall Presses: Stand a short distance away from the wall. Place hands flat at shoulder height on the wall. Lean toward the wall, keeping feet in place. Stop just before your nose touches the wall. Hold for 10 seconds, see how many you can do - try 10 at first and then see if you can do 20!

Statues: Stand as still as a statue, get a helper to try and move you from your position. Take it in turns and get the statue to move. Sit facing ... on a chair and get ... to hold your thumbs with his arms out in front of him and elbows slightly bent. One of you should be like a statue and see if you can move the other's arms and cause him to wobble.

Chair Presses: Whilst seated, putting hands on the side of the chair and pushing to lift you up off the chair. Hold for 5 seconds.





### **Animal walks:**

Bear Walks: Walking on all fours with legs as straight as possible, bottom in the air

Crab walk: move from flat on your back, lift arms over head and push against the floor till your body is up in the air and you look like a crab. (Body, head and neck parallel to floor).

Walrus walk: lie on stomach on the floor and push body weight onto straight arms, keeping legs straight and on the floor. See if you can move forward 'walking on your hands' with legs dragging behind you.

### **Everyday school tasks:**

- Moving heavy items such as stacking chairs, moving PE equipment, carrying books, wiping the board, ringing the bell, holding door open etc.
- Complete activities where you have to reach up e.g. wipe the black board; paint a picture on paper stuck on the wall or put books away on high shelves.

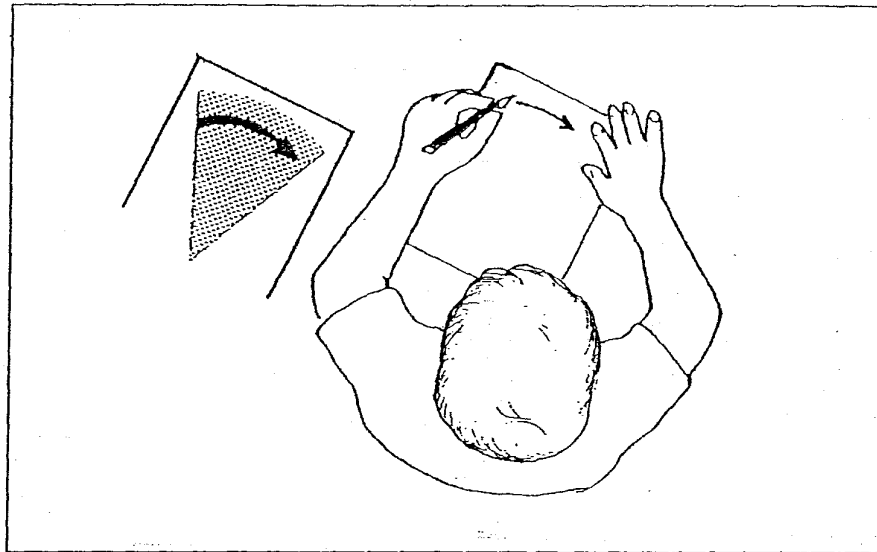
## 9. HAND DOMINANCE

**Children develop hand dominance at around 3 – 5 years (but some times later). Having hand dominance allows one hand to become the stabiliser and one to be active, which is required to complete many tasks e.g. handwriting or using scissors. To work out which hand is dominant ask them to pick up a pencil (from the middle of a desk), ask them to open a jar or ask which hand they brush their teeth with.**

- Encourage the child to use one hand as the stabiliser and the other as the lead hand (e.g. left hand is the stabiliser if you're right handed).
- If the child doesn't hold the paper still with one hand when writing cut out a picture of a hand as a reminder for them.
- Opening jars and containers, remind your child to hold the jar/container very still with one hand whilst turning with the other hand.
- Use stencils or rubbings, which the child has to hold very still with one hand.
- When using scissors encourage your child to rotate the paper with one hand whilst cutting with the other hand.
- Tasks that involve mixing (e.g. paint and glue or cooking) so the child has to use one hand to stabilise bowl and the other to mix/beat.
- Musical activities – e.g. hold a drum with one hand and beating with the other.
- Collecting items (e.g. pencils, brushes) from around the classroom – hold the pot in one hand and pick up with the other.
- Threading beads – hold the string with one hand and pick up and thread the beads with the other.

## 10. LEFT HANDEDNESS

- Try not to sit a left-hander on the right of a right-hander during writing activities or their arms will bump into each other and restrict movement.
- Place paper to the left of the body midline and tilt the paper clockwise to avoid the child's hand obscuring the view of the line. It may be useful to place a tape on the table to outline where it should be positioned until the child gets used to it.



- Encourage the child to steady the paper with their right hand in the middle or towards the right edge of the paper, not under the line where they are writing.
- The left fore arm should remain parallel with the sides of the paper to prevent development of a 'hooked' hand.
- Check the child has left handed scissors for cutting.
- Left handed products and advice: **[www.anythingleft-handed.co.uk](http://www.anythingleft-handed.co.uk)**
- Sometimes having a sloped surface can help maintain correct posture:

Details for supplier of desk slopes (see page 61)

Writing slope – IKEA, [www.LDAlearning.com](http://www.LDAlearning.com)

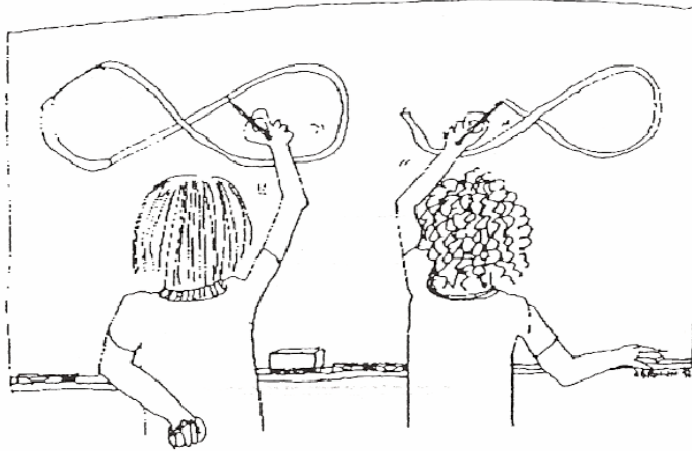
Phillip & Tracy 01634 332171

## **11. TWO HANDED ACTIVITIES**

- The hand dominance activities will also help (also see section 9).
- Tearing paper and pasting it with glue to make a collage
- Play with toys that need two hands, e.g. stickle bricks, Velcro fruit, Duplo blocks
- Use big toys that require two hands e.g. big balls, balloons, and big teddy bear.
- Use both hands during action songs e.g. head shoulders knees and toes.

## 12. CROSSING THE MIDLINE

- Children need to be able to use their arms (and legs) and eyes across their body (midline) e.g. to write across the page, read or use cutlery. The midline is an imaginarily line drawn vertically diving the body into two equal parts.



### At the table

- Encourage the child to use the same hand when drawing across the page / board rather than swapping hands (e.g. hold the other one behind their back).
- Position equipment / objects so the child has to cross the midline when reaching.
- Encourage the child to sit straight and not twist when drawing.
- On a board or easel or large pieces of paper tacked to the wall, stand in one place and draw right to left across the paper in large strokes, for example “Caging the lion” or join the dog’s lead to the owner.
- Diagonally do the same thing drawing lines joining kite strings to hands.
- These could include matching game (e.g. in maths or reading).
- Large dot to dots on the wall (keep the pencil in one hand and get them to stand still) so they have to cross their midline.

### Activities e.g. in PE

- Touching hands on knees on the same side of the body and then on the opposite knee as quickly as possible 10x daily.
- Throwing diagonally e.g. with the right hand to hit a target on the left.
- Stepping-stones – walk across the room on steeping stones (made out of paper) placed so the child has to cross their legs.

## 14. WRITING ON THE LINE

- Use visual and verbal cues e.g. coloured lines to encourage the child to place the letter in the correct place (see attached example):



Blue line symbolizes sky, green for grass, and brown for earth. E.g. for a 'p' start at the grass, go down to the earth and back up to the grass. This should give the idea of spacing and size of letters.

- As the child improves you can just put coloured dots at the start of the lines.
- Eventually s/he may only need one thick straight line margin for a visual cue:  
E.g. \_\_\_\_\_
- If this is difficult use wood or clear glue to make a line as a guide. The glue will provide a raised surface to give sensory feedback and help to write on a line.
- If the child is also having problems with forming the letters correctly it may be hard for them also to think about where the letter should be placed. You could use pictures to make learning more fun e.g. drawing the car or train wheels along the track / road or drawing stalks from the flowers to the soil (see attached sheets as examples).

## **15. WORD SPACING**

- Encourage the child to leave a finger space between the words.
- You could get the child to put a small sticker between the words.
- Use an ice cream stick between each word – the child could decorate and individualise the stick.
- Get the child to try and read a sentence where there are no spaces left between the words so show why spaces are needed.
- When the child has completed a body of work, get them to look through and mark where they could have used more space between words.

## **16. REDUCING PRESSURE**

- Play dough writing: flatten it on desk or table and use a pencil to write in it. For those that press too hard, the letters and lines come out all torn up so they get immediate feedback to lighten their pressure.
- Writing on corrugated cardboard – encourage the child not to flatten the bumps on the cardboard.
- Writing on tin foil backed with cardboard – encourage the child not to rip the foil when they write.
- Painting: using a soft bristled brush, have child paint lines of various colours from left to right across paper. Encourage child to use consistent pressure so that each line is the same width across the page (may need lines to 'stay between' drawn on paper). Also encourage child to only use the tip of the brush.
- Crayon rubbings: using template under paper, rub crayon over. If pressure too great, paper will often rip.



## 17. INCREASING PRESSURE

- Use crayon rubbings - If too little pressure is used, the image does not come through clearly onto paper. After achieving the 'perfect' pressure when watching, ask the child to maintain the same pressure with eyes closed.
- Get the child to rub wax over a square of paper and then turn it over onto another piece of paper. Get the child to press hard onto the paper and draw shapes so the wax leaves marks on the other piece of paper.
- Try using tracing paper or carbon paper.
- Try using a softer pencil; any artist's supply store sells pencils in a range of graphite density. The softer leads are B and the harder are H.

## 18. SCISSOR GRIP

- Practice grasp and release, use kitchen tongs or tweezers to sort objects.
- Shooting with a squirt gun or squirting water from a spray bottle
- When cutting with the scissors the thumb should always be up so that the child can see it (not pointing down towards the table). You can put a small sticker on the top of their thumb and tell them they always need to be able to see the sticker.
- Remember to keep both elbows on the table when cutting
- The child should open the scissors widely and close them fully when cutting, and not use small snips in a tearing fashion.
- Try different scissors depending on the problem:
  - Spring / flexi scissors open automatically after being squeezed.
  - Easy grip scissors automatically open when pressure is released.
  - Two-handed (dual control training) scissors can be used so that you hold and cut with the child at the same time.
  - Don't forget to use left-handed scissors for left-handers.

### **Details for scissors (– see page 64-65)**

Spring—approx£1.20 each

Easy grip approx£ 2.50 each

Dual control training – approx £5.95 each.

**Homecraft Rolyan**

**Nunn Brook Road, Huthwaite**

**Sutton in Ashfield**

**Nottinghamshire, NG17 2HU, UK**

**UK Customer Services**

**Tel: 08702 423 305**

**Fax: 08701 660 211**

**[www.homecraft-rolyan.com](http://www.homecraft-rolyan.com)**

## **19. SCISSOR SKILLS**

- Start with simple thick straight lines.
- Start with smaller (e.g. A5) pieces of card as this is easier to manipulate.
- In order to help cutting accuracy PVA glue can be drizzled either side of the line to be cut to provide sensory feedback
- Start by getting the child to snip e.g. to make a pretend comb with a piece of card.
- While starting to use scissors the child may find it easier if you hold the paper / card while they cut.
- Punch a hole or cluster of holes at the top and bottom of a sheet of paper and get the child to cut from one hole to toward the other holes
- Get the child to stick craft sticks parallel on card paper and cut the card paper between the sticks.
- Make a scrapbook or a collage of things cut out from magazines
- Make snowflakes from folded paper, using small cuts to create a design
- Make paper chains

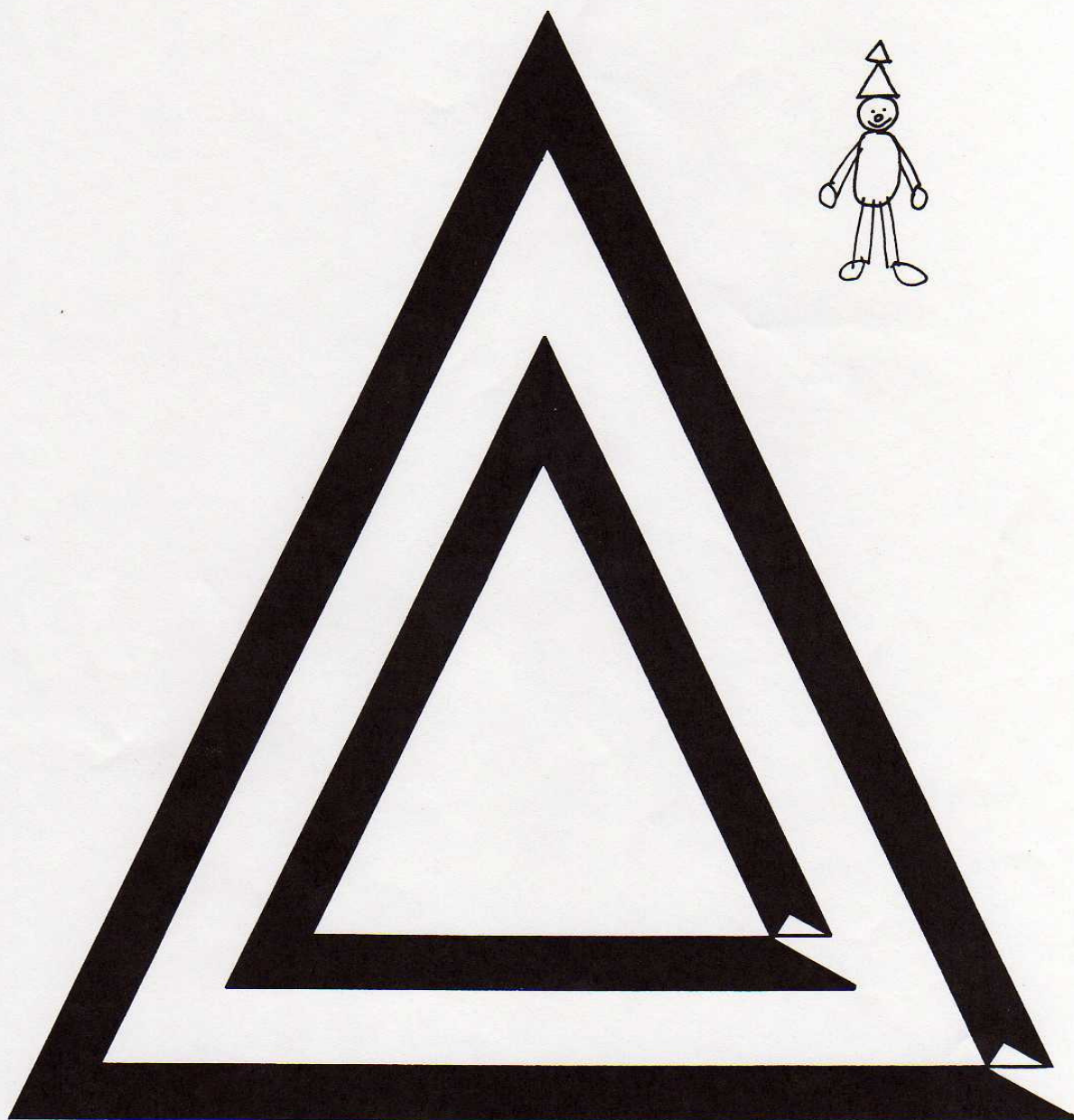
### **Curves**

- Start with wavy thick lines before moving onto harder shapes.
- Draw a circle on a sheet of paper and lines for sunbeams. Get the child to cut off the sunbeams by cutting the small curved segments.
- Remember that the left hand which is holding the paper needs to move around as s/he is cutting, in order to stabilise the paper properly

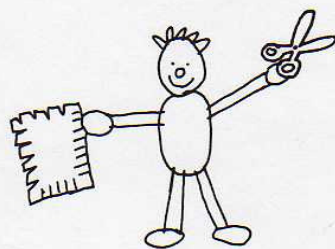
**Some example sheets are attached**

## **Scissor skills – example activity sheets**

Begin at the white triangle.



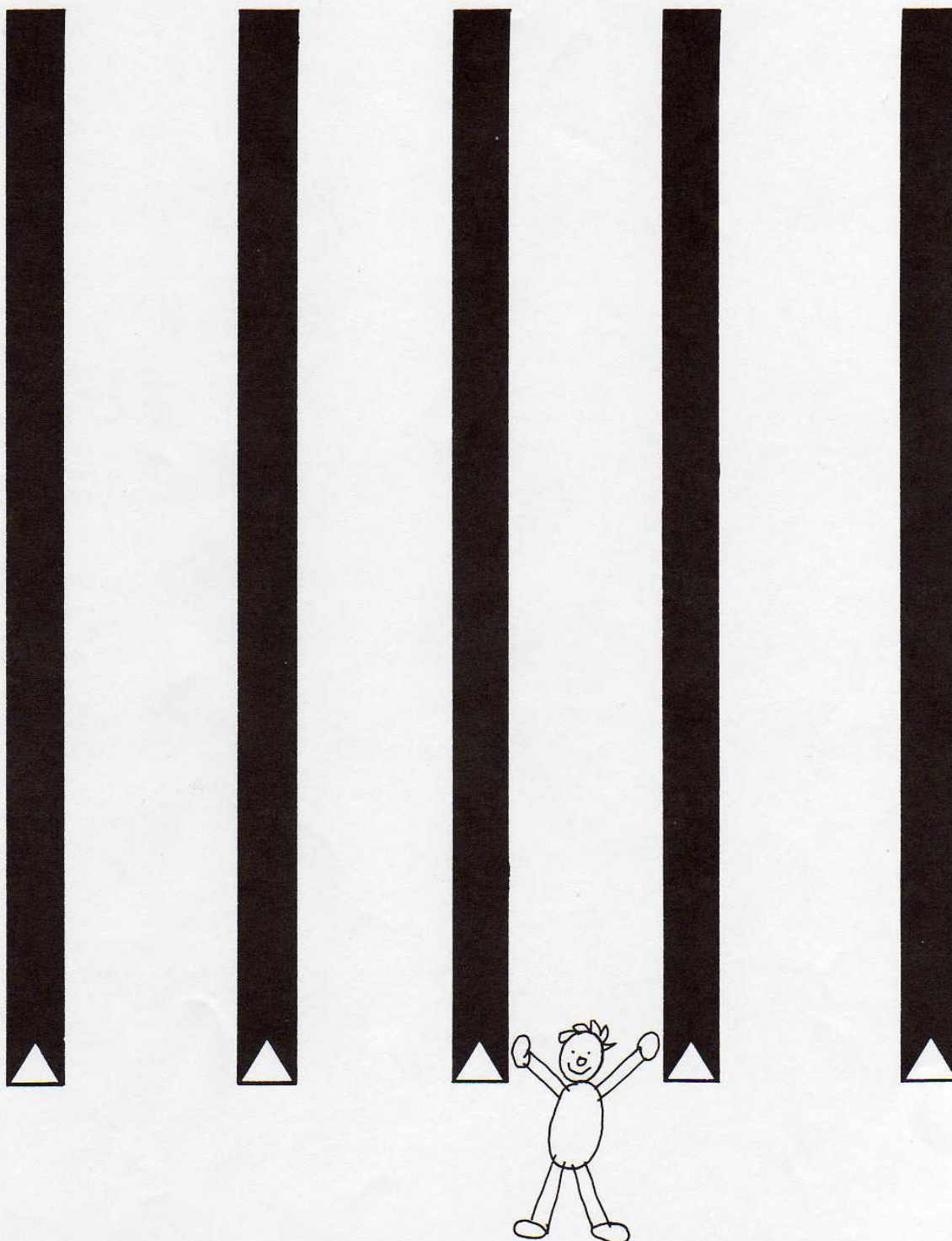
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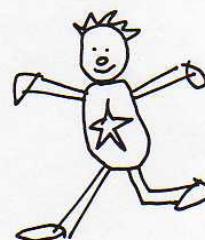
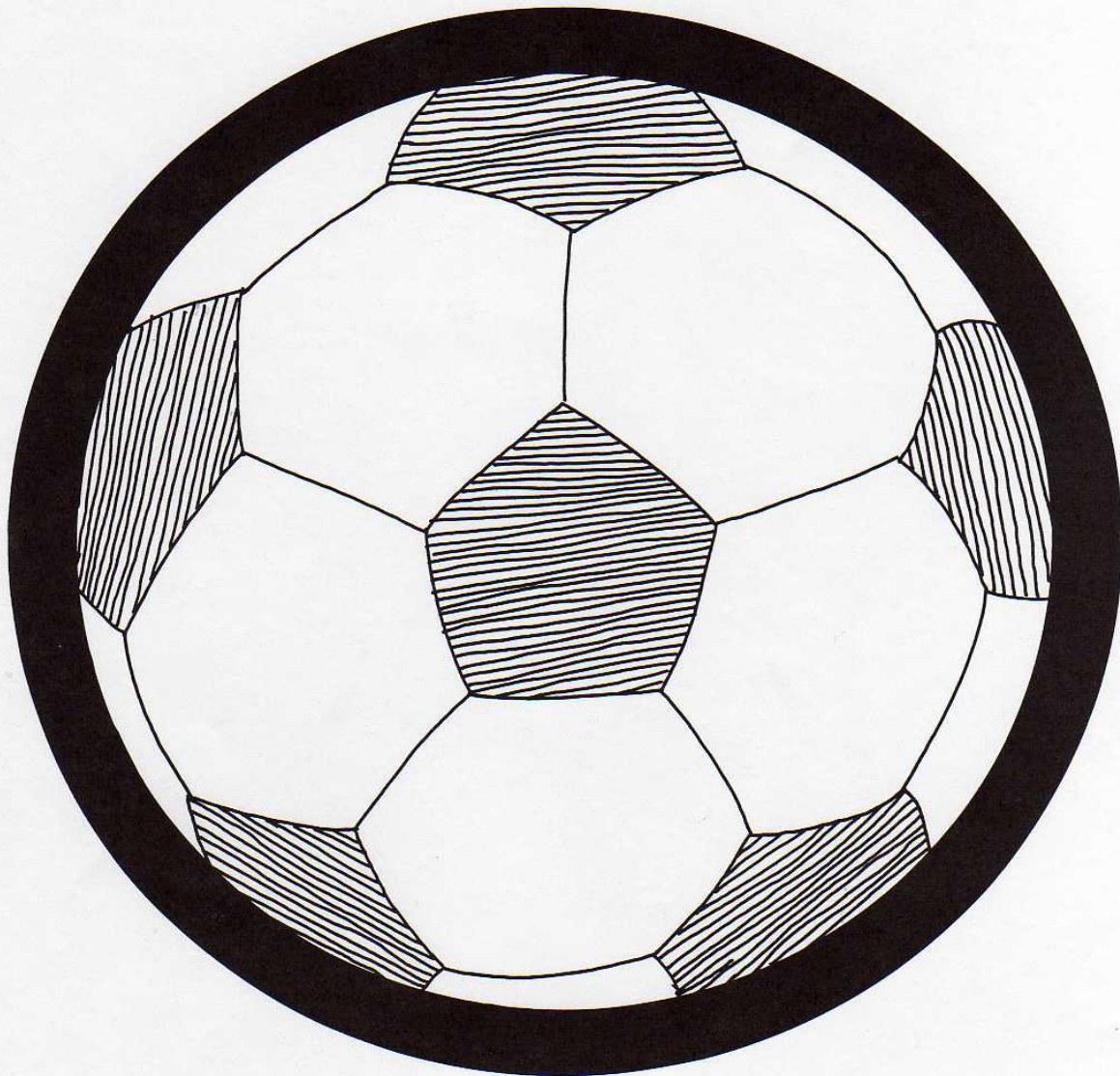
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Begin at the white triangle.

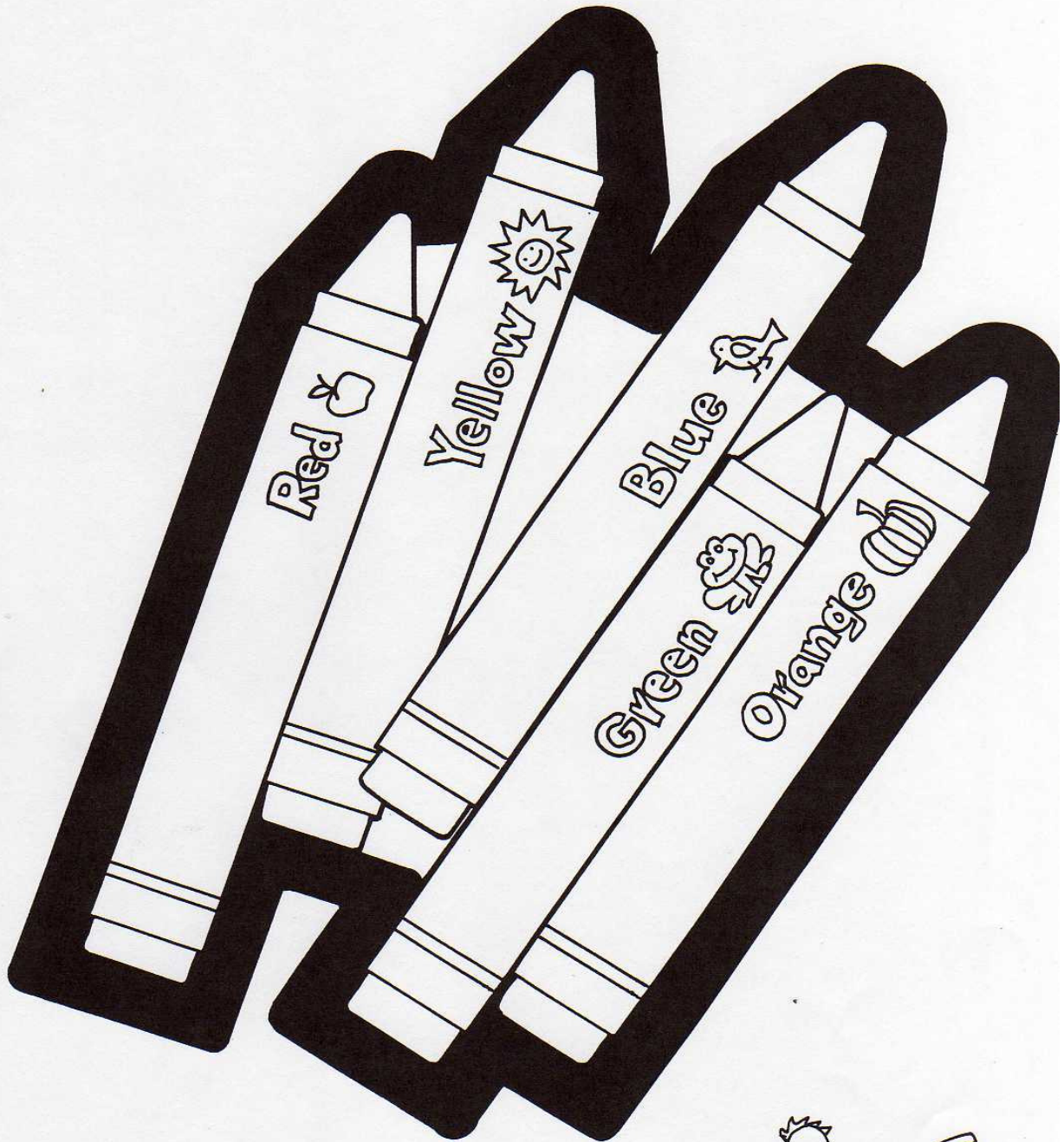


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## 20. RULER

- Encourage the child to hold the ruler very still with their stabilising hand (their left hand if they are right handed).
- Some times a ruler with a handle can help the child learn to do this more effectively:

**Details for rulers with handles (see page 46)**

Alligator Easy Grip Ruler (code PF088/201) – approx £13.99 for pack of 6.

**Hope Education, Hyde Buildings, Aston Road, Hyde,  
Cheshire, SK14 4SH**

**Tel: 08451 20 20 55 Fax: 0161 366 2909**

**[www.hope-education.co.uk](http://www.hope-education.co.uk)**

- If the ruler tends to move about a lot you could try putting a piece of Dycem under the ruler (this will prevent it from slipping):

**Details for Dycem roll (see page 47 for sample)**

20cm by 100cm roll (code NSO3/S1/1 - blue)

**Dycem Ltd, Ashley Hill Trading Estate, Bristol**

**Tel 0117 955 9921 Fax: 0117 954 1194**

## 21. DRESSING – BACKWARD CHAINING

- Back ward chaining can help develop the child's skills while still giving them a sense of achievement. You perform the majority of the task and the child completes the final step. As the child gets better at completing that one step of the task, the parent then makes it a bit harder by introducing an additional step for the child to complete.

- E.g. taking off a shirt:

**1<sup>st</sup> Step:** You take shirt off one arm and over the head and the child then takes out the other arm

**2<sup>nd</sup> Step:** You take shirt off one arm and the takes shirt off head and arm. Etc....

You then continue in this way until the child is able to do it by themselves.

- Loose fitting clothes are easier when practicing dressing.
- Clothes with Velcro / elasticised are easier than buttons, laces and zips.

## 22. BUTTONS

- Practice first doing buttons with the item off as this is easier e.g. on the back of a chair.
- Have the child sitting down.
- Then move onto buttons on his/her shirt.
- Use an old, large shirt with big buttons and buttonholes (you may need to adapt an old shirt for this) Adult size jackets or cardigans are good as the buttons are usually big and the buttonholes loose if it has been worn a few times.
- Talk through each stage of the task in terms of what the next step is – ‘find the button’, ‘open the hole’, ‘push it through’, ‘grab it’.
- **Backward chaining:** (completing the entire process, but leaving the last part for him to do).
  - Do all the buttons up for the child, leaving the very top one.
  - You may need to assist him/her by breaking the task down further:
    - ⇒ Have the child pull the buttonhole edge of the shirt over the button that is already halfway through
    - ⇒ Have the child pinch button and pull the buttonhole edge of the shirt over the button that is just started in the hole
    - ⇒ Have the child pinch button and start it through hole to button

## 23. ZIPS

- Use a jacket with a large zip, or you may like to add a large tab to the grasp part of the zip.
- Have the child sitting.
- **Backward chaining:** (completing the entire process, but leaving the last part for him to do). Start with the shank already inserted into the slide bottom, and then introduce the insertion procedure:
  - ⇒ Have the child zip zipper when three-fourths zipped
  - ⇒ Have the child zip zipper when one-fourth zipped
  - ⇒ Have the child zip zipper from bottom, with shank and slide bottom already fastened (he may need guidance to grasp the pull tab)
  - ⇒ The child holds slide bottom with one hand, and is guided to insert shank into slide bottom, and zips
  - ⇒ The child zips separating zipper independently



## 24. CUTLERY

- Encourage the child to hold the knife and fork in the correct hands with the index finger pointing out towards the front of the utensil. Some time 'caring cutlery' can help develop the correct grip as it has indents to guide where the index fingers go.

**Details for caring cutlery (see page 68)**

Junior caring cutlery: Knife (code: F21012), Fork (code: F21024), Spoon (code: F21036) all approx£ 4.75 each.

**Nottingham Rehab Supplies**

**Novara House, Excelsior Road, Ashby Park, Ashby de la Zouch,  
Leicestershire, LE65 1NG**

**Tel: 0845 606 0911 fax: 01530 419 150**

**[www.nrs-uk.co.uk](http://www.nrs-uk.co.uk)**

- Encourage the child to stab with the fork (to stabilise the food) and cut with the knife.
- You could practise on play dough or just cut one item up e.g. a potato on a separate plate.
- Start with just the fork if it is difficult to hold both at the same time.

## 25. ATTENTION

- Reduce distractions e.g.:
  - Visual: remove items not required off the desk, things hanging down from the ceiling or extra writing on the board. If the child is getting distracted by other things on the page try using ruler to guide what line they are reading from or block out other things with a frame (see attached example).
  - Noise: Is the radio on or the doors/windows open with noise coming in.
  - Place: look at where the child is sitting are they next to a notice board with lots of posters, or next to a window or door with people walking past. Could they be at the front of the class so they are facing forward and not looking at what other children are doing?
- Providing feedback as to whether the child has / hasn't been concentrating will help them be able to monitor themselves e.g. a star chart. And can also help develop self-esteem.
- Increase independence in attending to tasks e.g.:
  - Get the child to work on simpler tasks on their own.
  - Set time limits.
  - Gradually increase the complexity of tasks, for example start with ones that can be completed in a short time or break up larger tasks.
  - Increase the length of time the child works on tasks (e.g. by having shorter breaks or changing tasks less frequently or using an egg timer).
- Give short and clear instructions and give them once the child is concentrating on you. You could get the child to repeat back instructions so you know they understood what you said.
- Help the child to work out which part of the task she is finding difficult and then how to work through it – allow extra time for this.
- Have regular breaks e.g. handing out textbooks or collecting work.
- Use multi sensory approach.
- Games such as 'Kim's' game and 'I went to the market and bought' are also good to increase attention and memory.

## **26. SELF ESTEEM**

**There is increasing evidence of a link between a child's self esteem and their achievements (Birkett, 2003).**

- Strategies such as stickers, certificates, star charts, quiet individual praise (including body language such as smiling and nodding), supporting quieter children to contribute to the class and rewards such as extra time on the computer could be used.
- In addition giving children roles and responsibility can also help develop their sense of importance, integrate them into the class and shows that you trust them. For example being register monitor, handing out work or showing a visitor to the head teacher's office.

**Example sheets for recording what has been  
tried and whether it was useful.**



## **Record of Work/ Activities tried with Pupils**

To be completed by Teaching Assistants

<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Observations</b>	<b>Staff</b>

**Pupil's Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class** \_\_\_\_\_

**TA's Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hours per week** \_\_\_\_\_

**Further information / details about equipment  
suggested**



### Desk slopes

Writing slope – approx £17.50, Desk slope (A4) – 34.08

**Back In Action, 11 Whitcomb St, Trafalgar Sq, London, WC2H 7HA**  
**Tel 0207 930 8309**



### Pencil grips

Homecraft Rolyan Item #: 09-100-6816

Description: pen & pencil grip pack of 12



## **Triangular pencils**

Homecraft Rolyan Item #: 09-115-0655

Description: pencil handhugger black



**Homecraft Rolyan  
Nunn Brook Road, Huthwaite  
Sutton in Ashfield  
Nottinghamshire, NG17 2HU, UK**

**UK Customer Services  
Tel: 08702 423 305  
Fax: 08701 660 211**

**[www.homecraft-rolyan.com](http://www.homecraft-rolyan.com)**

**Teodorescu Percepulo-Motor Programme – Write from the Start**  
**(book 1 and 2)**

**By Lois Addy and John Teodorescu (1996)**  
**Publishers: LDA: Cambs. ISBN 1 88503 245 7**  
Tel: 0845 120 4776, web: [www.ldalearning.com](http://www.ldalearning.com)



Approx £32.99  
£38.76 inc VAT

Product Code:  
MT01082

## Scissors

Homecraft Rolyan Item #: 09-110-2805

Description: scissors self-opening right handed



Homecraft Rolyan Item #: 09-110-2789

Description: scissors easi grip 7.5cm pointed blade



Homecraft Rolyan Item #: 09-110-2847

Description: scissors training dual control left handed 7.5cm



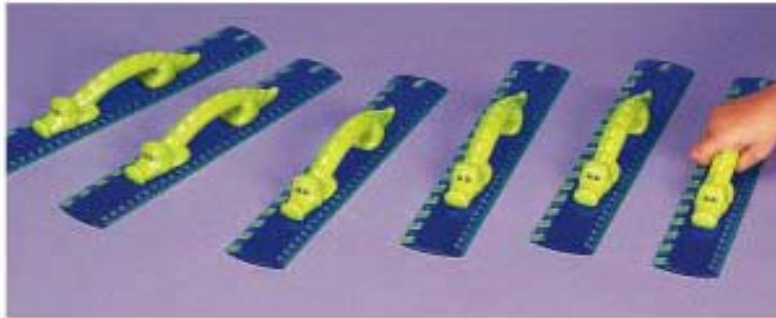
**Homecraft Rolyan  
Nunn Brook Road  
Huthwaite  
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Nottinghamshire  
NG17 2HU, UK**

**UK Customer Services  
Tel: 08702 423 305  
Fax: 08701 660 211**

**[www.homecraft-rolyan.com](http://www.homecraft-rolyan.com)**

### **Rulers with handles**

Alligator Easy Grip Ruler (code PF088/201) - approx£13.99 for pack of 6.



**Hope Education, Hyde Buildings, Aston Road, Hyde,  
Cheshire, SK14 4SH  
Tel: 08451 20 20 55 Fax: 0161 366 2909  
[www.hope-education.co.uk](http://www.hope-education.co.uk)**

## Dycem roll



**(available in variety of colours and sizes)**  
20cm by 100cm roll (code NSO3/S1/1 - blue)  
**Dycem Ltd, Ashley Hill Trading Estate, Bristol**  
**Tel 0117 955 9921 Fax: 0117 954 1194**



### **Caring cutlery**

Junior caring cutlery: Knife (code: F21012), Fork (code:), Spoon (code: F21036)  
all approx£ 4.75 each.



**Nottingham Rehab Supplies**  
**Novara House, Excelsior Road, Ashby Park, Ashby de la Zouch,**  
**Leicestershire, LE65 1NG**  
**Tel: 0845 606 0911 fax: 01530 419 150**  
**[www.nrs-uk.co.uk](http://www.nrs-uk.co.uk)**

## **Feedback sheet**

Please return to:

**PAEDIATRIC OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY**

**Child Health Centre,**

**Woodhorn Lane, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 9JJ**

Tel: 01670 564050      Fax: 01670 564053

## **Referral Protocol**

**For concerns at school the referral to Occupational Therapy must come from a health professional e.g. GP, Community Paediatrician, Social Worker, Physiotherapist, School Nurse (please see attached referral form).**

**Children should be attending main stream school and not requiring the input of a CAMH's or LD Occupational Therapist.**

**Referrals will also be accepted on a CAF form. If referring on a CAF form please ensure adequate information is included particularly in the sections relating to physical development, self care and independence and learning to enable the service to prioritise the referral.**

**In addition the following information must be enclosed with the referral form:**

- ☺ **Copy of child's IEP**
- ☺ **An example of child's handwriting**
- ☺ **Record of Work Activities tried with Pupils from this booklet**
- ☺ **A drawing sample**
- ☺ **Any relevant reports**

Children and their parents/carers will be contacted by the Occupational Therapy Service on receipt of referral and on a regular basis. If they do not respond to our contact we will discharge them and advise the referrer accordingly.

**Paediatric Occupational Therapy Service, Child Health Centre,  
Woodhorn Lane, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 9JJ**

## Paediatric Occupational Therapy Referral

### REFERRERS DETAILS

Full Name: ----- Title: ----- Email: -----	Address & Telephone No: ----- ----- -----
---	--

### CHILDS DETAILS

Childs Name: ----- Parents Name: ----- Date of Birth: -----	Address: ----- ----- ----- Postcode: -----
--	---

Hospital /SOSCIS Number: -----	Tel. No. of Parent/Carer: -----
-----------------------------------	------------------------------------

School Name & Address: ----- ----- -----	Teacher & SENCO Name: ----- School Telephone Number: -----
---	---

Consultant Name: ----- Address: ----- -----	GP Name & Address: ----- ----- -----
---	---

<u>Relevant Medical History/Medication and Precautions</u> , early development :

<u>Reason for Referral</u> Please relate to specific functional concerns in the following activities: Self care (e.g. dressing/eating/drinking toileting/bathing etc) School work (e.g. writing/cutting with scissors/PE etc) Play/Leisure (e.g. riding a bike/football etc)

Relevant Background Information including social situation i.e. transport issue, child protection, home visit precautions, living/caring arrangements, issues with non-compliance/attendance, looked after child

Other Relevant Information, including details of other Professionals involved:

Specific Child Information Does the child have difficulty with any of the following

General learning disability

Specific learning difficulty

Behaviour issue

Social Interaction

Communication skills

Does the child wear glasses

Does the child use a hearing aid

Additional Information for Environmental Assessment

Please tick type of housing currently		Private	Council
Please state problem(s) the child has experienced with current property, if any			
Please state what equipment, if any, the child uses			
Please state what the child/parent thinks is an acceptable solution to the difficulties being experienced			
Please give details stating whether the family have considered housing alternatives			
Additional comments			

Consent From the Parent/Carer for Occupational Therapy Referral Yes / No

	<b>Please complete both sides of the form fully to aid prioritisation.</b>
	<b><u>Incomplete forms will be returned to referrer.</u></b>
	<b>Referrers with an nhs.net account can e-mail referrals to: m.coulson@nhs.net</b>

Signature of Referrer:

## CHILDREN'S OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PRE-ASSESSMENT TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete **ALL** parts of the form

Name of child:	D.O.B:	Sex: M / F
Address:	Tel No:	
School / Nursery:	GP:	
Diagnosis (if known):	Surgery:	

**1. Year Group:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Key Stage:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Reading age** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Is the child receiving:**

	Tick
Undergoing a statement or Action Plus	
Has a statement	

Does the child receive any support, if yes please give details.

List any other professionals working with the child.

**3. Reasons for referral:**

What are the functional Occupational Therapy related difficulties for this child?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**What actions have been taken to address these issues at school?**

---



---



---

Has child seen an OT before?

Y  
☐

N  
☐

(If yes, please specify date seen and name of OT) \_\_\_\_\_

**WRITTEN WORK**

**Y N**

Holds pencil with tripod grasp

☐ ☐

Holds pencil with immature grasp e.g. thumb wrapped, fist

☐ ☐

Complains of aching hand/arm

☐ ☐

Has a strong dominant hand

☐ ☐

Knows names and sounds of letters

☐ ☐

Identifies appropriate starting and stopping points on paper or worksheet

☐ ☐

Writes on lines or within designated space on worksheet

☐ ☐

Can form letters correctly

☐ ☐

Writes numbers and letters of appropriate size

☐ ☐

Produces words and numbers (age appropriate)

☐ ☐

Copies material accurately from nearby source (e.g. text book)

☐ ☐

Leaves appropriate spaces between words

☐ ☐

Copies material accurately/legibly from a distance (e.g. blackboard)

☐ ☐

Produces written work at necessary speed to keep up with peers

☐ ☐

Write a piece of work independently

☐ ☐

Can use ruler to underline work and draw a margin

☐ ☐

**SITTING POSTURE**

Good sitting posture

☐ ☐

Props head in hands

☐ ☐

Wraps legs around chair legs

☐ ☐

Fidgets/twists on chair

☐ ☐

**5.TASK BEHAVIOUR/COMPLETION****Y****N**

Listens/attends for at least 5 minutes

☐☐

Attends quietly to/stays focussed on audio or visual info for at least 15 minutes

☐☐

Attends to directions/instructions given to a small group

☐☐

Unsure how to start an activity

☐☐

Stays on task at own work or play for at least 15 minutes

☐☐

Has an organised approach to constructional activities e.g. jigsaws, Lego, block patterns

☐☐

Able to complete set tasks independently

☐☐**6. BEHAVIOUR**

Easily distracted in a busy class environment (e.g. audibly &amp; visually)

☐☐

Easily frustrated with challenging tasks

☐☐

Tires easily

☐☐

Worries about not doing things right

☐☐

Avoidance/refusal to do some tasks

☐☐

Adopts avoidance strategies (e.g. emotional outbursts, class clown, constant chattering, self-deprecating "I'm rubbish")

☐☐**7. SELF-CARE ACTIVITIES****Y****N**Able to dress and undress independently e.g. for PE  
If No, what are the difficulties?☐☐

Able to use cutlery to eat

☐☐

Able to go toilet independently

☐☐

Able to clean self after toileting

☐☐



**Have parents/guardian/carers consented to this referral?**

Y ☐ N ☐

**Have parents/guardian/carers received a copy of this referral?**

Y ☐ N ☐

**Language/s spoken at**

**home:**.....

**If English is a second language** please tick proficiency level of the parent:

**Fluent** ☐ **Adequate** ☐ **Non-fluent** ☐

**Is parent able to access written information?**

Y ☐ N ☐

**Are you aware of any risks of visiting home?**

Y ☐ N ☐

**QUESTIONNAIRE COMPLETED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DESIGNATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Feedback Form for OT Advice Pack to Schools**

Please fill out this form to help us improve our pack

1) Was the pack helpful and useful to you? YES/NO

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2) Was the information clear? YES/NO

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3) Have you put any of the advice into practice? YES/NO

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4) Is there anything you felt that should have been explained more? YES/NO

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5) Is there any other information you felt should have been included? YES/NO

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please make any additional comments on the reverse of this form.

Thank you for completing it.

## **References**

Addy, L & Teodorescu, J (1996) Teodorescu Perceptuo-Motor Programme (book 1 and 2), LDA: Cambs.

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Olsen, J (2001), Handwriting Without Tears, MacArthur Blvd Cabin John: MD 20818.