**Developmental Stages of Writing**

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| * **Stages:** | * **Pre-communicative stage (drawing and scribbling)** | * **Semi-phonetic stage (letters and letter-like forms)** | * **Phonetic stage (salient and initial sounds – beginning to invent spellings)** | * **Transitional stage (beginning and ending sounds – more confident invented spelling)** | * **Correct stage** |
| **Features of this stage:** | No distinction between drawing and writing  Children begin to make separate marks to represent ‘writing’  Directionless scribbles begin to take on features of text that they see, e.g. becoming horizontal, moving from left to right  Scribbles eventually evolve into separate, distinct characters | Writing with letter-like forms and a few letter shapes  May be producing random strings of letters (may not yet connect letters to the sounds in spoken language)  May start by reproducing the first letter of their name, then other name letters  May mix symbols and numbers with random letter-like forms and conventional letters  Often no sound/symbol match at this stage  Assign a meaning to what has been written | Starts to use a letter or group of letters to represent the sounds that they hear in a word.  Beginning to invent spellings but they are increasingly systematic and easily understood.  Often represent salient sounds (most prominent/distinct – either to hear or feel in the mouth as the word is spoken)  May confuse sounds because they feel the same, e.g. f and v  Children may move along a text according to stress units or syllables, getting off track on monosyllabic words | Beginning to represent beginning and ending sounds, e.g mp for map  Consistently write with spaces between words  May use a letter-name strategy, e.g. spelling ‘eight’ as ‘at’  Able to finger-point accurately to the words of a memorized rhyme and self-correct if they get off track  Use knowledge of letter sounds and names to help them identify words, but often guess based on initial and end sound without attending to the medial vowel sounds  Write their own name and other simple words from memory, including some irregular common words | The speller knows the English orthographic system and its basic rules. The correct speller fundamentally understands how to deal with such things as prefixes and suffixes, silent consonants, alternative spellings, and irregular spellings. A large number of learned words are accumulated, and the speller recognizes incorrect forms. The child's generalizations about spelling and knowledge of exceptions are usually correct. |
| **Children currently in this stage:** | | | | | |
| **Date:** |  |  |  |  |  |
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|  | Specific goals: | Opportunities during child/adult-initiated activities/In the environment: | Role of the practitioner: | Opportunities during adult-modelled writing: |
| **Pre-communicative stage (drawing and scribbling)** | * To distinguish writing as separate from drawing * To write with individual units * Expanding name writing from initial letter to complete name | * Large scale movements (horizontal/vertical) * Create sign-in for high-traffic centres. * Incorporate writing into play activities (e.g. take an order, sign for a package). * Initiate opportunities to write down the words children speak * Rhyming activities, rhyme strings etc * Sensory experiences, e.g. Gloop * Opportunities outdoors ,e.g. twigs in mud, large brushes and water, rolls of paper and thick pens * Writing on the move, e.g. clipboards, boxes and bags | Ask children to tell you about their drawing and write their words.  Ask children to sign their work, praising scribbles, letter-like scribbles, and initials.  Scribe what the child says about their mark making, drawing, painting and celebrate all achievements  Remind children to write every day  Make links with physical development, e.g. talk about circles/ straight lines when dancing | * Point out children's name letters in the message.   Invite children to respond to the daily writing challenge and take dictation from them, drawing attention to this process by stating that you are writing their words down.  Point to text as you read to develop understanding that text carries meaning |
| **Semi-phonetic stage (letters and letter-like forms)** | * To represent salient or beginning sounds in words * To make connections between print and sound | Provide play activities in which children write names (e.g., tour guide name tag, tickets for airplane, sign in at doctor's office).  Offer activities that promote letter–sound correspondence.  Brainstorm and write a list of words that begin with the same sound.  Display letters and alphabet friezes at child height  Ask children to identify initial sounds/letters in words and write those letters | Provide writing prompts that support children to draw and write about themselves, their family, and peers.  Provide a range of simple word books/word banks, stories and captions  Support children to verbalize what they will write first. Then ask what sounds they hear.  Plan observations of all children to identify next steps for purposeful mark making | * Emphasize beginning sounds in words while writing. * Draw attention to words in the message that begin with the same letter or sound, particularly name letters. * Invite children to write their name as they participate in interactive writing. |
| **Phonetic stage (salient and initial sounds – beginning to invent spellings)** | * To write beginning and ending sounds in words * Develop understanding of where spoken words begin and end in written text – finger spaces/finger pointing to words in memorized texts | Provide play activities in which children write words (e.g., signs for the zoo they built in blocks, label a map).  Sort picture cards with contrasting beginning sounds (e.g., /m/ and /s/) to solidify beginning sound knowledge.  Play games to recognize ending sounds; begin with children's names.  Phonics area with magnetic letters, letter mats, pens and whiteboards etc  Display and create alphabet books | Provide writing prompts that support children to draw and label.  Ask children to verbalize what they want to write. Have a child identify the initial sound, then say the word again and identify the ending sound.  Enunciate syllables and ending sounds to help children hear more than the initial sound in words.  “I want all the children with this letter (draw on board) in their names to line up/wash their hands/jump up…” | * Enunciate beginning and ending sounds in words as you model writing. * Invite children to respond to the written message and write their names and some words in their dictated sentence |
| **Transitional stage** | * To include the middle vowel sound * To write complete words | Sort simple word families (e.g., -at and -an)  Provide play activities for children to generate sentences (e.g., write a letter to a peer, a recipe, scientist notes) and encourage them to write down all the sounds they hear in each word.  Create meaningful opportunities for children to write, e.g. get well card for an ill child, sign-up sheets, invitation to parents to come in and see their Learning Journal/other work on display | * Draw attention to middle sounds and ask children which sounds they hear. * Ask children to illustrate their work to generate more detail for stories, then have children tell you about the details and write about them. As they write more words, children have more opportunity to practice stretching out the sounds in words. | * Invite children to share the pen by writing several words in their dictated sentences. * Draw horizontal lines to represent each letter of a word/use a phoneme frame to provide a cue for each sound/letter in the word. Support the child to listen for each sound in a word as they say the word. |