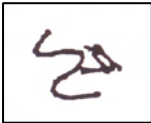


Stages of Writing Development

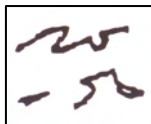
As children connections between spoken and written language, they extend their understanding to include symbolic forms that are used to capture speech. Preschool-age children typically engage in reading and writing activities in casual and playful ways. Sulzby, Teale, and Kamberelis (1989, p. 77) note that children who have had frequent opportunities to write and read at home are more likely to enter conventional literacy as confident, risk-taking readers and writers. For almost all children in a literate society, learning to write and read begins early in life. Early writing develops concurrently and interrelatedly with literacy in young children who actively engage in understanding how written language works (Schickedanz 1999).

The following illustrations were developed from the works of Temple, Nathan, Temple and Burris, (1992) and D. H. Graves (1989) and from drawings compiled by Helen Faul of the California Kindergarten Association. They show the broad milestones that children achieve in art, literacy, spelling, and writing. (These stages are interrelated in young children, who make no distinction between these subject areas.)

Prephonemic Stage



Random scribbling - The starting point is any place on the page.



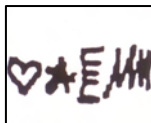
Controlled scribbling - Progression is from left to right.



Circular scribbling - Circles or ovals flow on the page.



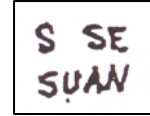
Drawing - Pictures tell a story or convey a message.



Mock letters – These can be personal or conventional symbols, such as a heart, star, or letters with extra lines.



Letter strings - These move from left to right and progress down the page of actual letters. They have no separations and no correlation with words or sounds.

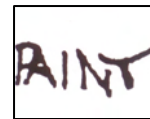


Separated words-Groups of letters have space in between to resemble words.

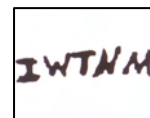
Early Phonemic Stage



Picture labeling - A picture's beginning sound is matched to a letter (*Dog*.)



Awareness of environmental print - Environmental print, such as names on cubbies, is copied.



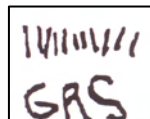
Transitional stage spelling or invented spelling - First letter of a word is used to represent the word (*I went to the nature museum*).

Letter-Name Stage



Beginning and ending letters are used to represent a word (*cat*).

Transitional Stage



Medial sound is a consonant (*grass*).



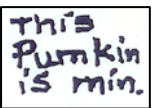
Medial sound is in correct position, but the vowel is wrong (*grass*).



A child hears beginning, medial, and ending letters (*I like to pick flowers*).



Phrase writing develops (*rabbit in the sun*).



Whole-sentence writing develops (*This pumpkin is mine*).

Conventional Writing Stage



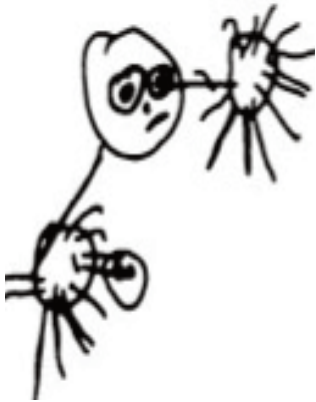
Transitional stage spelling (or invented spelling) is replaced by full, correct spelling of words.

Some teachers assess using sequences to make developmental checklists or portfolio inventory sheets. During choice time, the teacher observes and notes any writing behavior. These notes are later entered onto an inventory sheet in a child's portfolio. This compilation of records for each child shows growth over time and is a valuable tool for lesson planning, parent conferences, and statistics on student achievement. More information can be found in *The Beginnings of Writing and More Than the ABCs: The Early Stages of Reading and Writing*.

References

- Graves, D. H. 1989. "Writing: Teachers and Children at Work." In *Emerging Literacy: Young Children Learn to Read and Write*. Edited by D. S. Strickland and L. M. Morrow. Newark, Del.: International Reading Association.
- Schickedanz, J. 1999. *Much More Than the ABCs: The Early Stages of Reading and Writing*. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Sulzby, E.; W. H. Teale; and G. Kamberelis. 1989. "Emergent Writing in the Classroom: Home and School Connections," in *Emerging Literacy: Young Children Learn to Read and Write*. Edited by D. S. Strickland and L. M. Morrow. Newark, Del.: International Reading Association.
- Temple, C., et al. 1992. *The Beginnings of Writing* (Third edition). Needham Heights, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon.

HeidiSongs' Chart of the Developmental Progression of A Child's Writing



1. Pictures



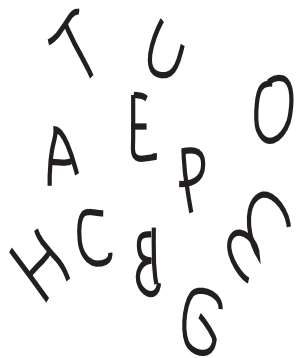
2. Random Scribbling



3. Scribble Writing
(Written in linear fashion to mimic real writing.)



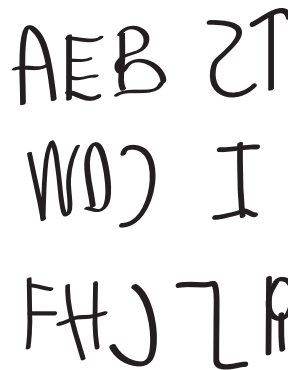
4. Symbols That Represent Letters



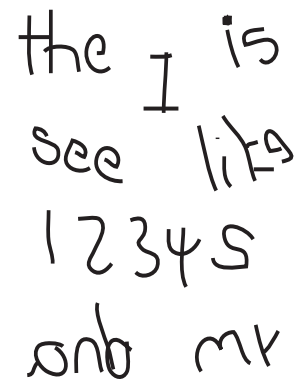
5. Random Letters
(No relationship between sounds of letters and what the child is trying to say.)



6. Letter Strings
(Progresses from left to right and top to bottom when the child "reads" his writing.)



7. Letter Groups
(The groups have spaces in between to resemble words.)



8. Environmental Print
(Child copies print found in the room, often without knowing what the words are.)

Thehcanr
(The horse can run.)

9. Beginning Sounds
(Child begins to write simple sentences using sight words and just the beginning sounds of words.)

We wn to the s
(We went to the store.)

10. Early Inventive Spelling
(Includes the same elements as the previous level, but with more consonant sounds represented and spaces between words.)

To daye i wot
to Play withf the
white board and
the shapex and
I won to play
with My feh
(Today I want to play with the white board and the shapes, and I want to play with my friend.)

11. Inventive Spelling
(Has the same elements as the previous level, but with more sounds per word written, including the vowels. Some conventional spelling patterns may appear.)

One day I saw
my Frid it was
Israel and Antonio
and Thay got lost
I fad Thim.
The end
(One day, I saw my friends. It was Israel and Anthony and they got lost. I found them. The end.)

12. Transitional Writing
(Includes all of the previous elements, plus some real spellings of words with silent letters and other spelling patterns. Punctuation is beginning to appear.)