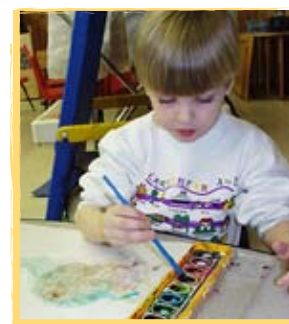


A child's interests are

# Windows of Opportunity

to fun and enjoyable learning

**Drawing** and  
**“writing”** are powerful  
 learning activities  
 for many young children



## Places to learn and activities to enjoy **AT HOME**

### Living room or family room

- For your very young writers, always choose crayons and markers labeled “non-toxic” and “washable.” It makes a big difference in terms of health and easy clean-up!
- You’ll be surprised by how many free “things to write or draw on” are easy to find all around your house. Instead of buying expensive note or art paper, set aside brown paper grocery bags, the insides of cardboard food packages (like dry cereal and cracker boxes, for example), and the backs of “junk” mail letters for your young scribbler’s use.
- When you’re doing household paperwork—like paying bills or writing letters—your child might enjoy mimicking your work with her own supply of scrap paper, recycled envelopes, and sticker “postage stamps”.

### Bathroom

- Use index fingers to draw on a steamy glass shower door or mirror.
- Colorful soap “crayons” are fun for writing and drawing on tile walls surrounding the bathtub or on the sides of the tub itself. Find them at children’s toy stores or bath-products retailers.

### Out in the yard

- Dip a large brush in a bucket of water to “paint” designs on a concrete or brick wall or the side of the house or garage. This short-term artwork vanishes as it dries.
- Thick sticks of “sidewalk” chalk are just right for little hands itching to “make their mark” outdoors on any paved surface—like patios, driveways, and paths. A good rainfall will wash everything away, leaving room for new artwork another day.

### Kitchen

- Spread pudding or whipped cream on a cookie sheet and have fun drawing with fingers in this yummy “finger paint.”
- Consider making one kitchen drawer a handy “art drawer” where you store all sorts of paper, scrap paper, crayons, pencils, and markers your child can use at the kitchen table while you prepare meals.
- Mix food coloring in egg white and use a small paintbrush to paint wiggly designs on the tops of sugar cookies just before baking. Exciting and delicious!

[More fun with drawing](#) ➔

# Places to learn and activities to enjoy **AWAY FROM HOME**

## On a walk or in a park

- Use your index finger to trace over letters and designs that catch your eye. Some examples are the raised letters on manhole covers and historical markers; signs or labels; street numbers on mailboxes; and the scroll patterns on old iron fences and gates.
- Crayon rubbings are fun to make outdoors, and they give even very young children the opportunity to make easy-to-identify images. Just bring along some plain, light-weight paper like copy paper or newsprint, several crayons in dark colors, and a roll of masking tape. Look around outdoors to find textured, “bumpy” objects that interest you, like leaves, tree bark, decorative sidewalk grates, engraved tombstones or cornerstones, brick walls or walkways, etc. Place a sheet of paper over the object (you might want to tape it down with masking tape), and rub the side of a crayon (with wrapping removed) over the paper. Your “rubbing” will capture an image of the object under the paper.



## Visiting yard sales

- Keep an eye out for interesting things to write and draw with—a child’s art easel, a set of finger paints, or an old-fashioned pencil sharpener. You never know what you might find!



## Concert, meeting, or religious service

- Small fingers and attentions might be happily (and quietly!) occupied during an adult event with a small supply of “special” writing and/or drawing supplies reserved for those kinds of occasions. Consider things like a set of scented, felt-tipped markers; a small pad of multicolored paper; a simple coloring book; or a handful of pens filled with metallic glitter or glossy gel inks.

## Out and about in the car or public transport

- Tidy take-along writing gear for little folks can be as simple as a clipboard and crayons or an old-fashioned cardboard “magic slate” (with lift-up acetate for erasing). Magnetic “pads” with a magnet-tipped stylus and metal filings are also light-weight, portable, and fun.
- Attach a strap to a bag or box so you can hang it from the front-seat back within reach of your child’s car seat. It can be a terrific place to store writing/drawing materials for your scribbler.

## Out to eat in a restaurant

- Bring along a small spiral notebook and pencil so your child can pretend to be taking meal orders as you wait to be served. Or ask your server for a couple of sheets from an order pad for an added note of realism!



- If the table set-up includes individual paper placemats, napkins, or menus, put your child to work coloring on them with a couple of crayons or marking pens you keep cleverly stashed in your purse or diaper bag.

