

Sand Writing

Has your child started to show an interest in the letters of the alphabet? Using a stick is a great way to begin the journey towards writing.

How to Do It

Prepare your tray by adding a thin layer of dry sand or soil to cover the base. Using the stick, your child can begin to drag it through the sand to create patterns, marks and shapes.

Initially, simply encourage your child to 'take the stick for a walk' around the tray. This will help your child get used to holding the stick and see the result of their efforts. Making marks is the foundation for writing. You can help your child work towards being deliberate with their marks, starting with circles and straight lines, and eventually beginning to create and make shapes that form recognisable letters. Starting with the letters of your child's name is also a good idea. Once you have filled the tray with shapes and patterns, simply give it a little shake and you're ready to start again with a whole new blank canvas.

What Learning is Occurring?

- **Small muscle skill development** – strength and control in fingers and hands
- Language and communication, **literacy foundations**
- Early **mark making** and **writing skills**

Age Considerations

- **Babies:** sand is a much-loved sensory experience for babies – grab a flat tray or a surface you don't mind sand being on, and let baby move their hands through the sand. Copy their movement and encourage them to follow your movements.
- **Toddlers:** draw stick figures in the sand and ask your child to identify the figure. Draw pictures of your family or animals. Gather some twigs together and enhance your drawings.
- **Kinder or preschool:** create rainbow sand – place sand in some zip lock bags and drop a few drops of food colouring in the bag and shake it up. Dry on a flat tray overnight.
- **Transition to school:** write your child's name in the sand, can they copy the letters? What other words, letters, shapes or numbers can you practice together? Look at some indigenous symbols together and write a story with symbols.

Things you will need

- A stick
- Dry sand or fine soil from the garden.
- Old baking tray with sides

Tips

- If using soil from home, make sure you wash your hands afterwards.
- Stick writing can be taken into the great outdoors, too! Try the beach with a piece of driftwood or stick. Giant writing on the beach strengthens the shoulder to support the arm and hand in handwriting.
- Wet sand is a different surface and to make marks, your child might have to use their hand and finger muscles differently, strengthening them in new ways.
- You can also try the same experience with numbers.

