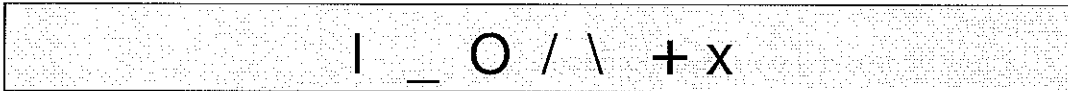


## 6. PRE-WRITING SKILLS (MULTISENSORY APPROACH)

- 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.**



- 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**