

Drawing Instruction Supports Handwriting Skills in Kindergarten

Kindergarten and Reading Recovery® teacher Laura Flocker develops children's ability to see and draw various shapes from the first day of school as a part of her amazing art-rich classroom. Inspired by Laura's work and generous sharing, other kindergarten teachers have discovered that this is "the missing link" for some young children who have difficulties learning to form letters - they **need more explicit, systematic instruction in seeing and drawing like an artist**. Laura weaves drawing and guided art instruction into every part of the kindergarten experience from the first day of school. She offers the following loose progression and guidelines:

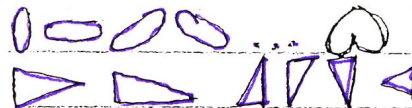
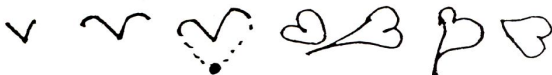
- **Begin teaching children about lines and shapes as they explore each new art media:** crayons, pencils, colored pencils, watercolors and markers. Use fat lines, thin lines, straight and curved lines, zigzags, horizontals and diagonals. Then explore making different sizes of circles and other basic shapes.




- **Teach children to sketch shapes** made from pattern blocks. (The concept of sketch is to draw lightly with pencil, and wait to erase. It's okay to have several lines. Later you choose the best line.)



- **Explore lines and shapes in picture books.** Notice Eric Carle's shapes are not perfectly symmetrical, they are more free form—or abstract.
- Learn to make a "close to perfect shape" and then explore "free form" drawing for fun and pleasure. **Hearts:** start with a V then curve it out on each side. Make a dot below the point of the V. If you want a fat heart, make the dot close; for a long heart, make it farther away. Free-form hearts are special, unique, each different.



- **Make shapes in different positions.**

 Give children the artist's voracious vocabulary - horizontal, diagonal, vertical, circle, oval, hexagon, realism, abstract, mural, zig-zag, slant, curve, symmetry, perspective, balance, shading, blending, etc.



Taken from *Art-Science-Literacy and the Kindergarten Child* by Laura Flocker and Nellie Edge. Currently the book is only available as part of Laura Flocker's workshop.

Access Laura's award-winning website from link at www.nellieedge.com under "Literacy Award Sites".