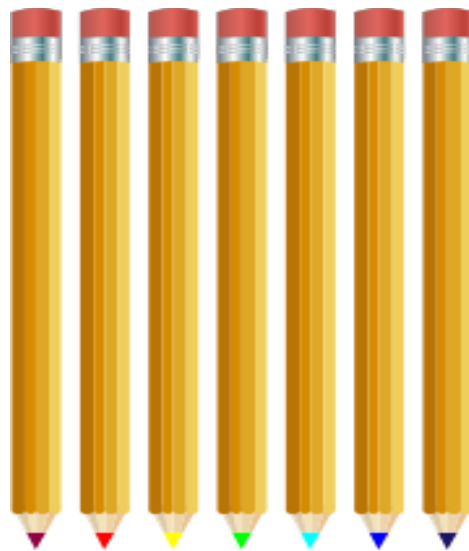


Writing and Drawing of Children Aged 4-6 Years

Beginning and end-of-year exemplars
from the NOW Play Project



By: Shelley Stagg Peterson, Andrea Liendo, and Miriam Semeniuk

Writing and Drawing of Children Aged 4-6 Years: Beginning and end-of-year exemplars from the NOW Play Project
© 2019 Shelley Stagg Peterson

NOW Play Publications
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto,
Toronto, Ontario
now-play.org

All rights reserved. This book is intended for personal and classroom use.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews, certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law, and personal or classroom use.

A free digital version of this book is available from the now-play.org website or by contacting the authors.

For permission requests, contact:
shelleystagg.peterson@utoronto.ca
Subject: "Attention: Permissions"

Or write to:
Shelley Stagg Peterson, NOW Play Project Director and Professor
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning OISE/University of
Toronto
Office: 10-276 252 Bloor
St. West
Toronto, ON, Canada M5S 1V6

Editing by Anita Cloutier. Illustration and book design by NOW Play.

This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
References	6
Four-Year-Olds: Common Features of their Writing and Exemplars from Fall and Spring	7
Four-Year-Olds—Fall Session: Most common features across all the drawing and writing of four-year-old children in our study.....	8
Exemplars	9
Isabella – Fall: 4-year-old	9
Harmony – Fall: 4-year-old	10
Four-Year-Olds—Spring Session: Most common features across all the drawing and writing of four-year-old children in our study	11
Exemplars	12
Rory – Spring: 4-year-old	12
Shannon – Spring: 4-year-old	13
Five-Year-Olds in their First Year of Kindergarten: Common Features of their Writing and Exemplars from Fall and Spring	14
Five-Year-Olds in First Year of Kindergarten—Fall Session: Most common features across all the drawing and writing of five-year-old children in our study who are in their first year of kindergarten.....	15
Exemplars	16
Katie – Fall: 5-year-old in first year of kindergarten	16
Lydia – Fall: 5-year-old in first year of kindergarten	17
Five-Year-Olds in their Second Year of Kindergarten: Common Features of their Writing and Exemplars.....	18
Five-Year-Olds in Second Year of Kindergarten—Fall Session: Most common features across all the drawing and writing of five-year-old children in our study who are in their second year of kindergarten	19
Exemplars	20
Annalee – Fall: 5-year-old in second year of kindergarten	20
Abbygail – Fall: 5-year-old in second year of kindergarten	21
Five-Year-Olds in First and Second Years of Kindergarten: Common Features of their Writing and Exemplars.....	22
Five-Year-Olds—Spring Session: Most common features across all the drawing and writing of five-year-old children in our study (regardless of whether they are in their first or second year of kindergarten)	23

Exemplars	24
George – Spring 5-year-old in first year of kindergarten.....	24
Sebastian – Spring: 5-year-old in first year of kindergarten.....	25
Erika Lyn – Spring: 5-year-old in second year of kindergarten.....	26
Jidaa – Spring: 5-year-old in second year of kindergarten	27
Six-Year-Olds: Common Features of their Writing and Exemplars.....	28
6-Year-olds—Fall Session: Most common features across all the drawing and writing of six-year-old children in our study.....	29
Exemplars	30
Abdallah – Fall: 6-year-old	30
Brielle – Fall: 6-year-old	31
Evander – Fall: 6-year-old	32
6-Year-olds—Spring Session: Most common features across all the drawing and writing of six-year-old children in our study	33
Exemplars	34
Aiden – Fall: 6-year-old	34
Cole – Fall: 6-year-old.....	35
Appendix	36
Writing Task Protocol: Supplementary Dynamic Assessment.....	36

Introduction

This book is for kindergarten and grade one teachers seeking ways to assess students' written communication—how they represent meaning using marks, scribbles, letters and letter-like forms, and drawings. The assessment tasks and samples of written communication come from a two-year project involving 137 children from Alberta and Ontario, Canada. More information about the development and piloting of the assessment tasks can be found in research articles (see Friedrich, Peterson & Portier, 2019; Peterson, Friedrich & Portier, 2018).

In this book, we describe samples of the most frequently-occurring responses to the Writing Task Protocol for 4-year-olds in their first year of kindergarten, for 5-year-olds in their first and second years of kindergarten, and for 6-year-olds in grade one.

All 4-year-old samples are from children in Ontario, where kindergarten begins at the age of 4 and all 6-year-old samples are from children in Alberta, as all but three of the participating grade one children were from Alberta. One set of samples of 5-year-old children's writing and drawing is from Ontario, where children have already been in kindergarten for one year. The other set of 5-year-old children's samples is from Alberta, where children begin kindergarten at the age of 5 years. This assessment project is part of a larger Partnership Grant project, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Northern Oral language and Writing through Play (NOW Play), with the goal of using collaborative action research to support young children's language and writing.

Following a pilot in 2017-2017, the following **Writing Task Protocol** was administered in the Fall of 2017 and the Spring of 2018 to generate the samples in this book.

Name Writing

Administrator says: *Please write your name on the paper.*

Drawing a Picture

Administrator: *Please draw a picture about what you like to do with your family.*

After the child draws:

Administrator: *Please tell me about your picture.*

The administrator scribes while the student speaks.

Writing in Response to a Question

Administrator: *Please write that down for me.* (If the child said many sentences, then the administrator chooses one of the sentences and asks the child to write that sentence.)

After the child writes:

Administrator: *Please read your writing to me.*

The administrator notes how closely what the child says matches what is written.

References

- Friedrich, N., Portier, C., & Peterson, S.S. (2019). Identifying patterns in and relationships between graphic representations and talk of northern Canadian rural and Indigenous children. *Language and Literacy*, 21(1), 39-56.
- Peterson, S.S., Friedrich, N., Portier, C. (2018). Developing a multimodal observation tool: Teachers and researchers working together. *Alberta Voices*, 14(1), 3-9.

Four-Year-Olds: Common Features of their Writing and Exemplars from Fall and Spring

Four-Year-Olds—Fall Session: Most common features across all the drawing and writing of four-year-old children in our study

Name Writing:

- Uses marks and/or letter-like forms

Drawing:

- Details in images that make people, objects and animals recognizable (e.g., people include circle head for a with dots for eyes, horizontal line for mouth, stick arms, stick legs, may or may not have body, house has rectangle or square base, with triangle roof).
- Size differences to show relationships
- Positionality (e.g., random, placed in horizontal line)

Writing:

- Marks/shapes/letter-like forms/letters/no writing

Exemplars

Isabella – Fall: 4-year-old

- Name**
- Uses marks that move up and down similar to zigzag lines that span half of the page horizontally
- Writing:**
- Drawing:**
- All adults and children are drawn with a circle representing a head, two circles for eyes, a circle for a nose, and a line for a mouth
 - Two stick legs come directly from the head
 - First character has two horizontal lines drawn at the bottom of the stick legs to represent feet
 - Heads of adults (nana and papa) are drawn bigger than heads of both children
 - Horizontal line of family members
- Writing:**
- When asked to write, Isabella drew a square around her picture



Harmony – Fall: 4-year-old

Name

- Uses letter-like forms resembling circles and t's

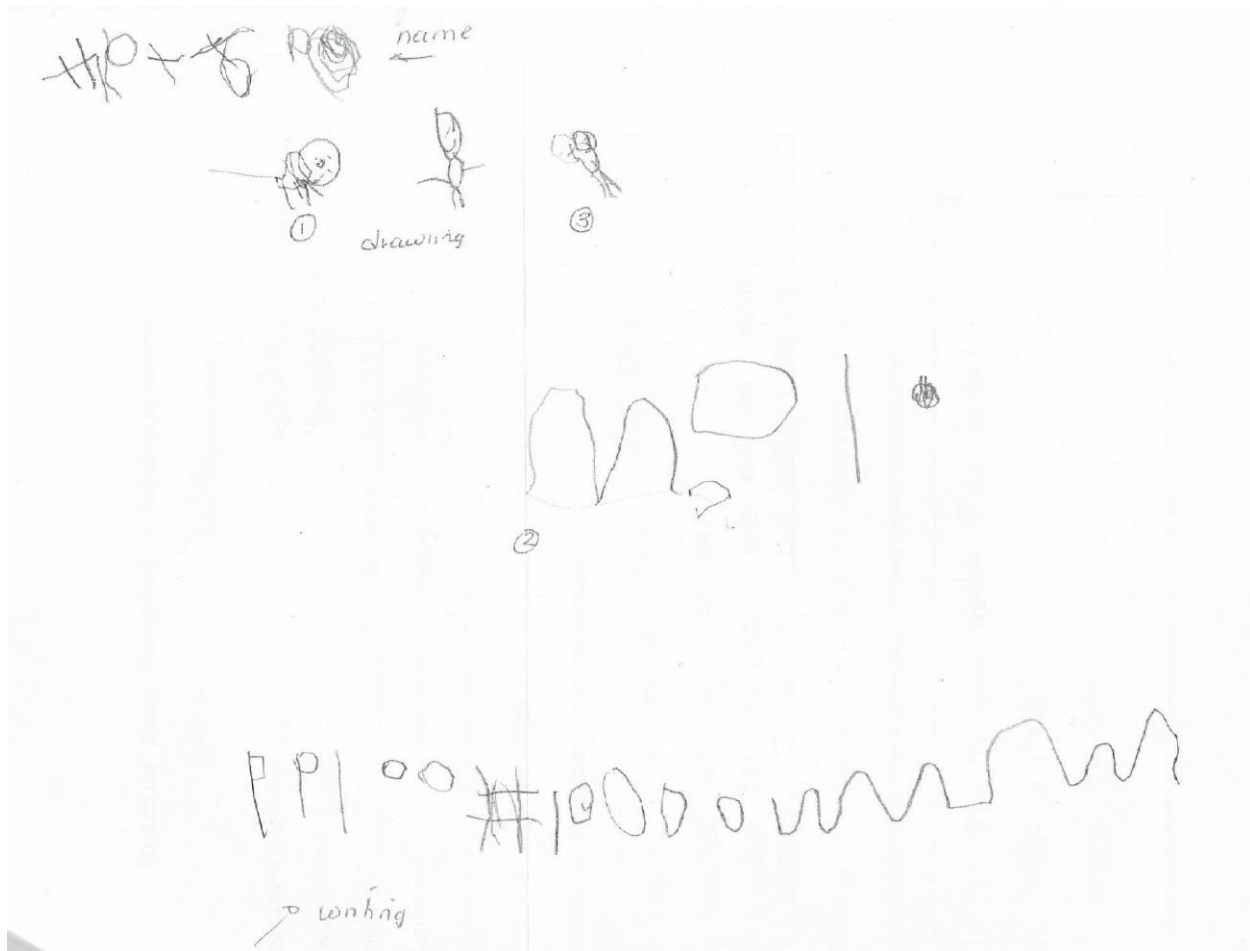
Writing:

Drawing:

- Dog with circle head and body and 2 dots for eyes, 4 stick legs and one long line for tail (Angus)
- Two very tiny characters have a circle for a head, two dots for eyes and a single line for a smile (Harmony and monster)
- Harmony and monster have oval body with two stick legs
- Harmony has two stick arms
- Dog is somewhat smaller than the person and monster
- Horizontal line of dog, person, monster

Writing:

- Makes letter-like marks and non-letter-like marks (e.g., pploo#loooo, MOI) and a continuous wavy line after the marks



Four-Year-Olds—Spring Session: Most common features across all the drawing and writing of four-year-old children in our study

Name Writing:

- Writes all letters of name using left-to-right directionality (some letters may not be conventional)
- Mixed size and case of letters

Drawing:

- Size differences to show relationships
- Details in images that make people, objects and animals recognizable (e.g., facial features, hair, feet/hands, houses with doors, windows)
- Positionality (e.g., random, placed in horizontal line)

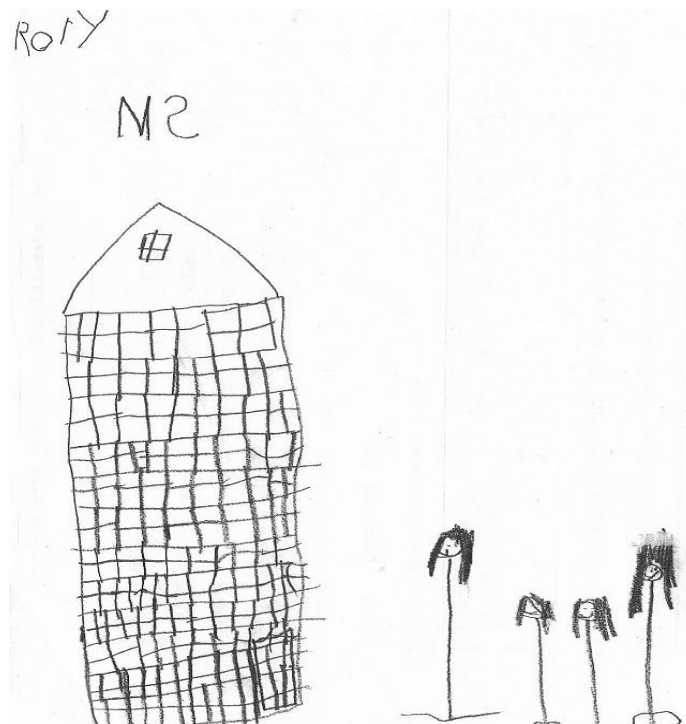
Writing:

- String of letters that may or may not match verbal descriptions of their picture

Exemplars

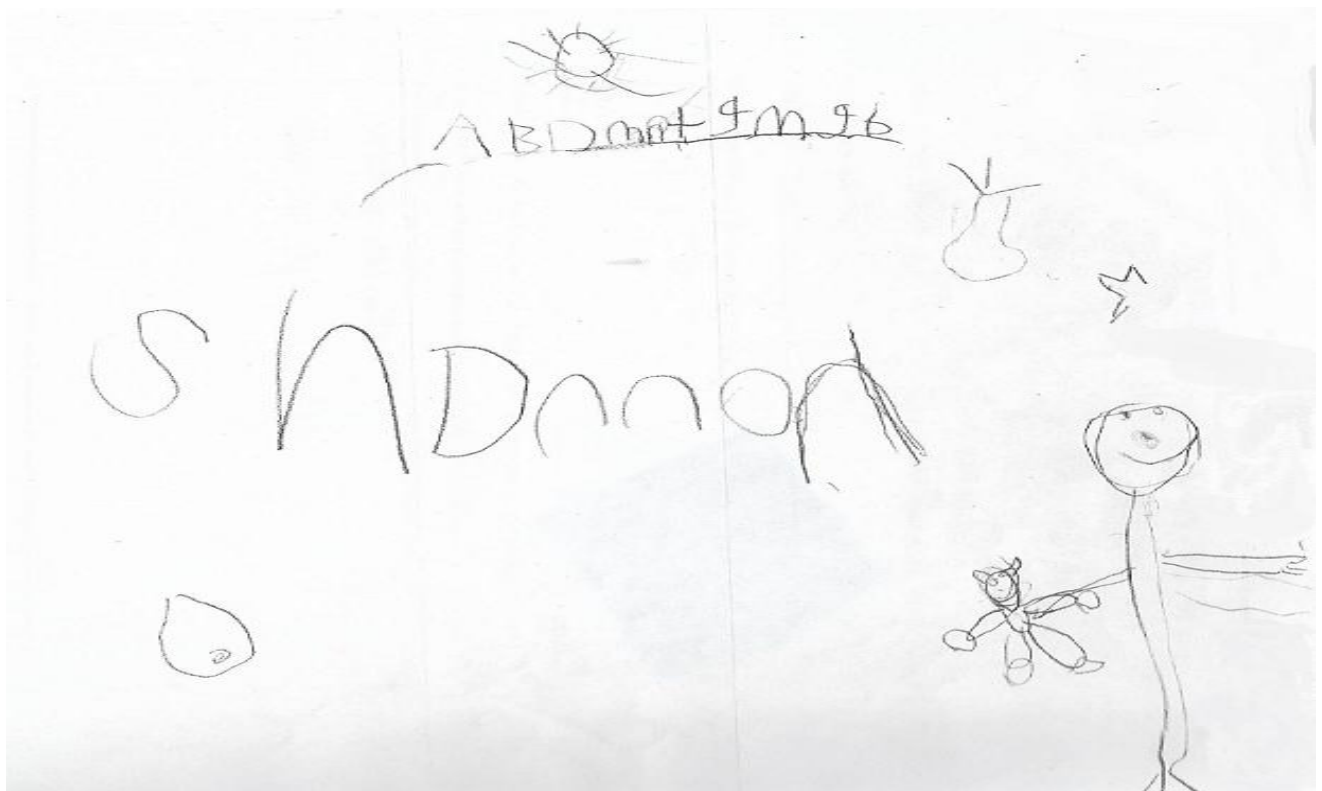
Rory – Spring: 4-year-old

- Name**
- Prints 4 letters of name correctly from left to right
- Writing:**
- Uses capital at beginning of the name
 - Lower case 'r' same size as upper case 'R'
 - Lower case 'y' is larger than upper case 'R'
- Drawing:**
- Mom and dad are drawn twice the size of both children
 - Hotel is twice the height of the adults
 - Hotel is a tall rectangle with a triangle roof, filled with squares that look like bricks.
 - Inside the roof of the hotel is a square window divided into four sections
 - All characters all have a circular face, with two eyes, a mouth and hair with a single vertical line for the body and two straight horizontal lines as the feet.
 - Family members placed side by side to the right of hotel
- Writing:**
- An upper case 'M' followed by a reversed upper case 'S' printed above hotel roof
 - Both the 'M' and 'S' are the same height 'M' is for 'mom' and 'S' is for 'sister'



Shannon – Spring: 4-year-old

- Name**
- Uses correct letters of name in appropriate order with left to right directionality
- Writing:**
- No capital at beginning of the name
 - Lower case 'h' has a short stick and could be confused with an 'n'
 - Lower case 'a' and 'n' printed in reverse
- Drawing:**
- Shannon has drawn herself with a circular head with two eyes, a nose and smiling mouth
 - A long skinny rectangular body is attached to the head, with two arms
 - In the left hand is a small teddy bear with legs, arms, circular feet and hands, two ears, two eyes, a nose and a smiling mouth
 - Circle with line represents sun and its rays
 - Gummy bear that is about one-quarter the size of Shannon
 - Sun at top of page, above all other drawings
 - Small bear in left hand beside character
 - Other objects randomly place around the page
- Writing:**
- Line of letters written 'ABDmntgmb'
 - Reads back sentence by memory: "My dad gives me gummy bears."



Five-Year-Olds in their First Year of Kindergarten: Common Features of their Writing and Exemplars from Fall and Spring

Five-Year-Olds in First Year of Kindergarten—Fall Session: Most common features across all the drawing and writing of five-year-old children in our study who are in their first year of kindergarten

Name Writing:

- Writes all letters of name using left-to-right directionality
- Mixed size and case of letters

Drawing:

- Slight or no size differences to show relationships
- Details in images that make people, objects and animals recognizable (e.g., facial features, arms/legs, houses with doors, windows)
- Positionality (e.g., random, placed in horizontal line)

Writing:

- Draws additional picture/voices some letter sounds when asked to write but does not print letters

Exemplars

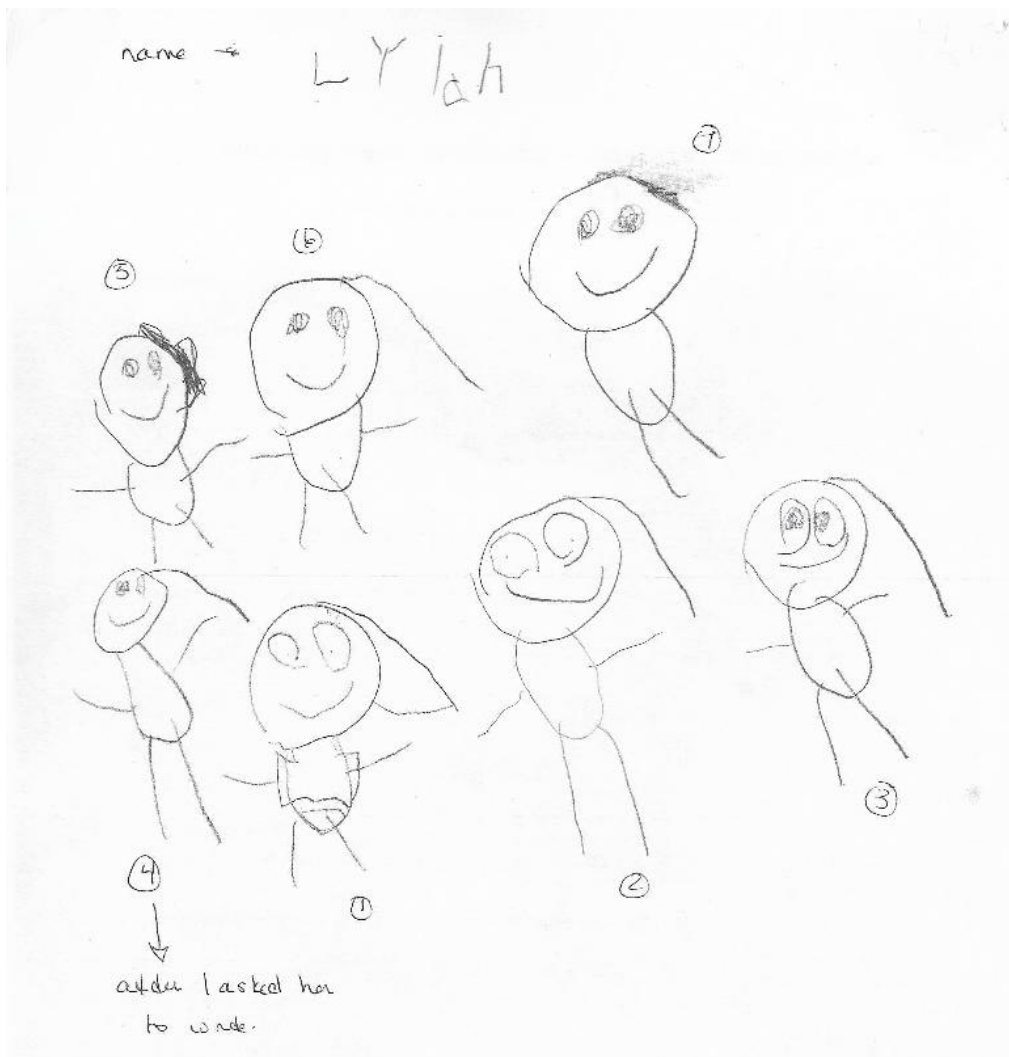
Katie – Fall: 5-year-old in first year of kindergarten

- Name**
- Prints name correctly from left to right
- Writing:**
- Uses capital at beginning of the name
 - Lower case 'a' same size as lower case 't'
 - Lower case 'e' is printed larger than upper case 'k' and has no tail
- Drawing:**
- Paint easel is drawn the same size as both children
 - Paint easel square with the paint, with two lines representing the legs and a separate square with the paint
 - All characters have a circular head, with facial features, hair with bangs and a long pony tail, attached to a triangular body, with two arms, one with a paintbrush, two legs with feet
 - All characters and objects placed side by side
- Writing:**
- Orally produced the sounds 'p' and 't' for painting, but did not print anything (writing of "painting" is administrator's way of recording what Katie said)



Lydia – Fall: 5-year-old in first year of kindergarten

- Name**
- Prints name correctly from left to right
- Writing:**
- Uses capital at beginning of the name
 - Upper case 'y'
 - Lower case 'i' same size as upper case 'L' and 'Y'
- Drawing:**
- Adults drawn slightly bigger than children
 - All 6 characters have a circular head, with two eyes and a smiling mouth, hair, attached to an oval body, with two stick arms, two stick legs
 - All characters and objects placed side by side in two separate rows
- Writing:**
- Voiced the sound “fff” for family,
 - Drew another family member when asked to write



Five-Year-Olds in their Second Year of Kindergarten: Common Features of their Writing and Exemplars

Five-Year-Olds in Second Year of Kindergarten—Fall Session: Most common features across all the drawing and writing of five-year-old children in our study who are in their second year of kindergarten

Name Writing:

- Writes all letters of name using left-to-right directionality
- Mixed size and case of letters

Drawing:

- Size differences to show relationships
- Details in images that make people, objects and animals recognizable (e.g., facial features, arms/legs, houses with doors, windows)
- Positionality (e.g., random, placed in horizontal line)

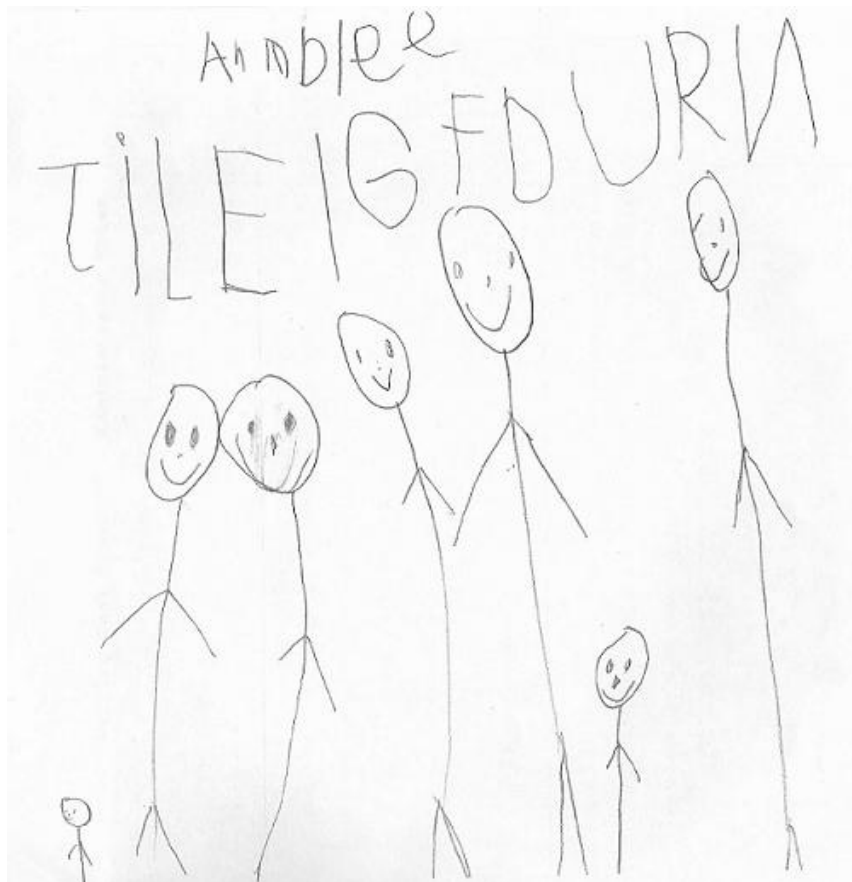
Writing:

- String of letters that may or may not match verbal descriptions of their picture

Exemplars

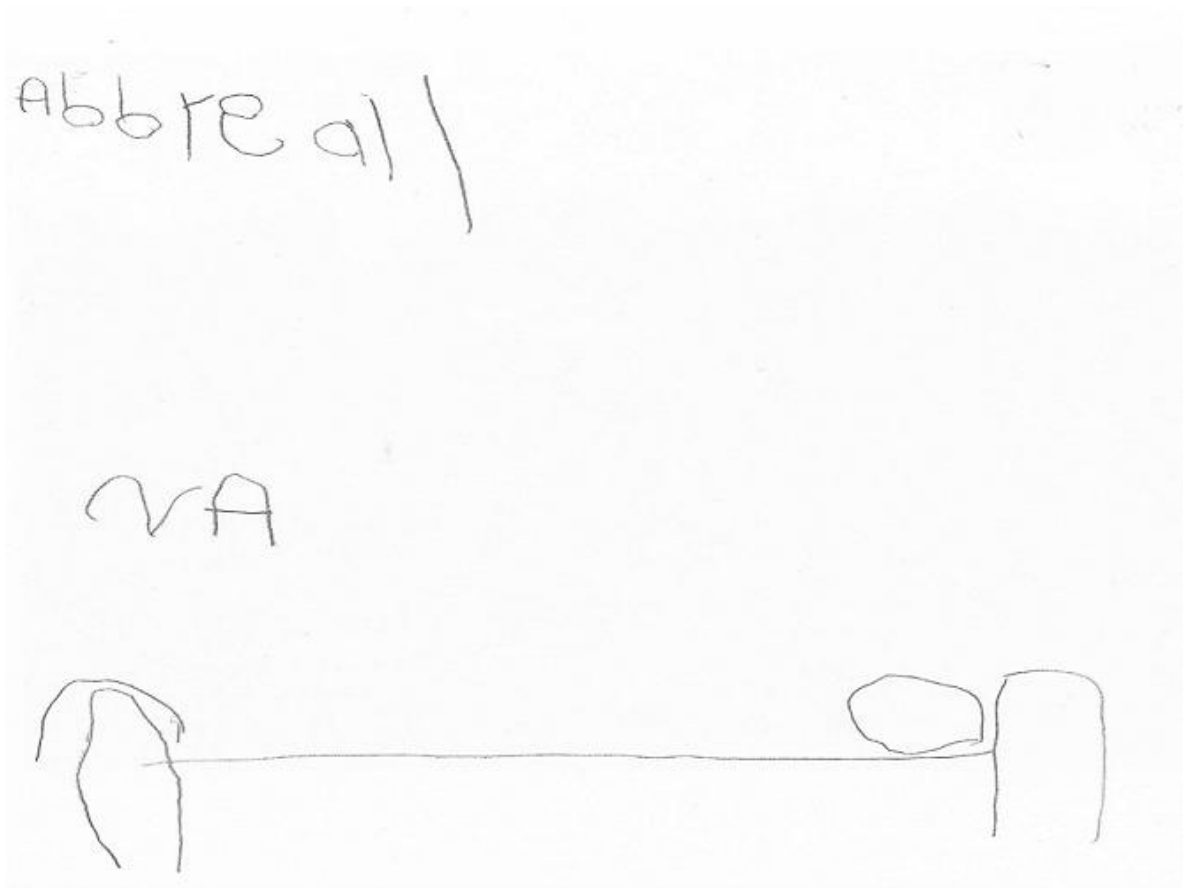
Annalee – Fall: 5-year-old in second year of kindergarten

- Name**
- Prints name correctly from left to right
- Writing:**
- Capital at beginning of the name
 - Lower case 'a' has a long stick and is reversed
- Drawing:**
- The character is holding a gummy bear that is about a quarter of the size of the character holding it
 - All seven characters have a circular head with facial features
 - A long skinny line attached to the head represents the body; two stick arms and two stick legs are attached
 - All characters placed side by side
- Writing:**
- Line of letters written 'J(reversed)iLEIGFDURN(reversed)'
 - Unable to read back sentence



Abbygail – Fall: 5-year-old in second year of kindergarten

- Name**
- Prints name correctly from left to right
- Writing:**
- Capital at beginning of the name
 - Lower case 'y', 'i' and 'g' same size as capital 'A'
 - Lower case 'l' almost twice the size of all other letters
- Drawing:**
- Pillow is smaller than the bed
 - Mattress of bed is drawn with horizontal line with headboard at top and bottom at end
 - Pillow at head of the bed
 - Pillow on top of the mattress
- Writing:**
- Two letters in a line 'NA' are printed to represent the words 'My bedroom'.



Five-Year-Olds in First and Second Years of Kindergarten: Common Features of their Writing and Exemplars

Five-Year-Olds—Spring Session: Most common features across all the drawing and writing of five-year-old children in our study (regardless of whether they are in their first or second year of kindergarten)

Name Writing:

- Writes name with conventional letter forms, sizes and directionality

Drawing:

- Size differences to show relationships
- Details in images that make people, objects and animals recognizable (e.g., facial features, arms/legs, houses with doors, windows)
- Positionality (e.g., random, placed in horizontal line)

Writing:

- Uses initial and/or final consonants, may include some vowels/high frequency words

Exemplars

George – Spring 5-year-old in first year of kindergarten

Drawing:

- Adults bigger than children
- Children bigger than baby
- All characters have a head, stick body, stick arms and stick legs
- Three vertical rectangles with shapes on top represent trees with leaves, and clouds
- Rectangular frame around all drawings to represent family portrait
- Characters are in semi-circle

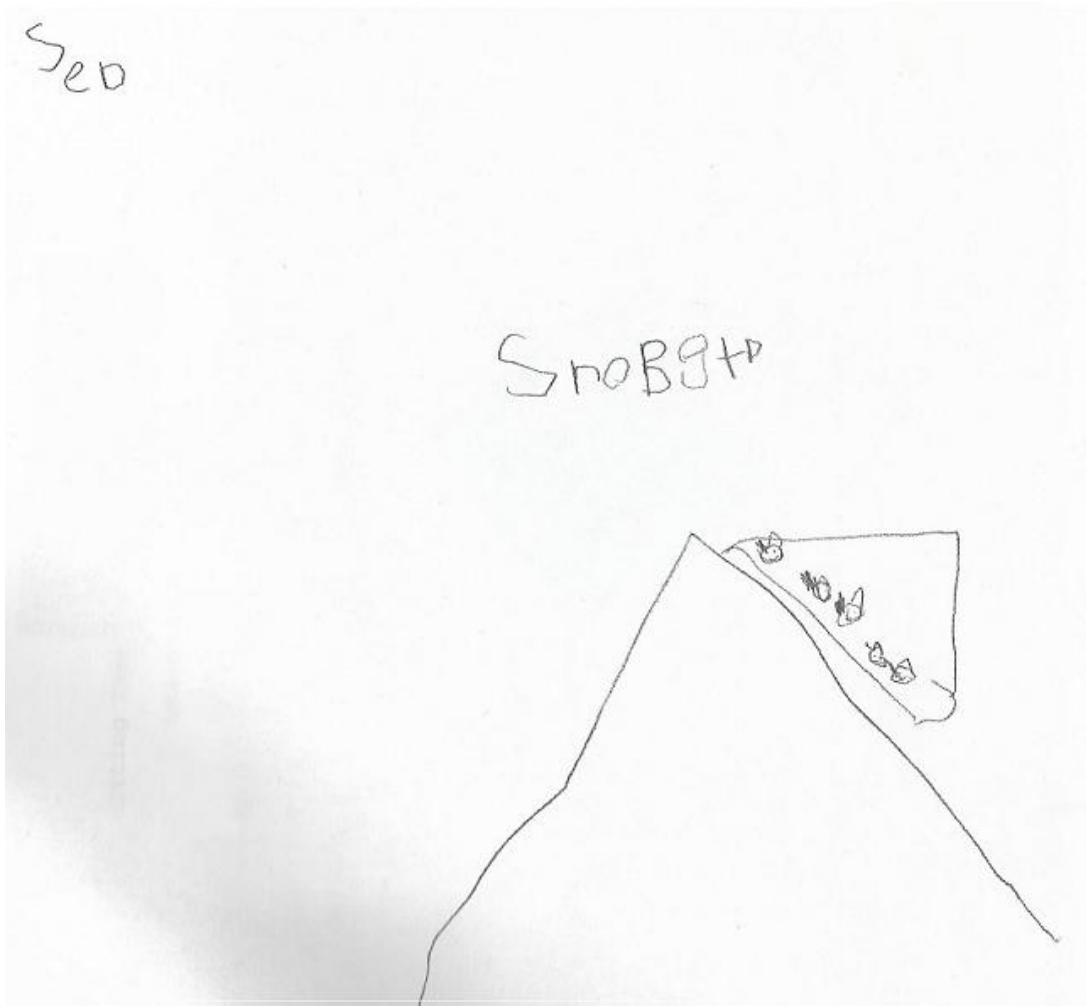
Writing:

- Printed “FALePeKsr” for ‘Family Picture’
- Uses initial and final consonants with vowels ‘a’ and ‘e’
- Reads back, “Family picture”
- Says, “Dad, mom, the baby. We are taking a family picture with” and names all family members.



Sebastian – Spring: 5-year-old in first year of kindergarten

- Drawing:**
- Toboggan and characters are in proportion to large hill
 - Tiny characters have a head, two eyes, a smiling mouth, sitting on a large triangular toboggan
 - Large triangle represents toboggan hill
 - Characters are side by side in a line sliding down the hill
- Writing:**
- Printed “SnoBgtD” to represent ‘snowtoboggan’
 - Uses initial and final consonants, with vowel ‘o’
 - Reads back, “snowbogganing”
 - Says “I used to go tobogganing. My dad made the toboggan. I went tobogganing in the winter.”



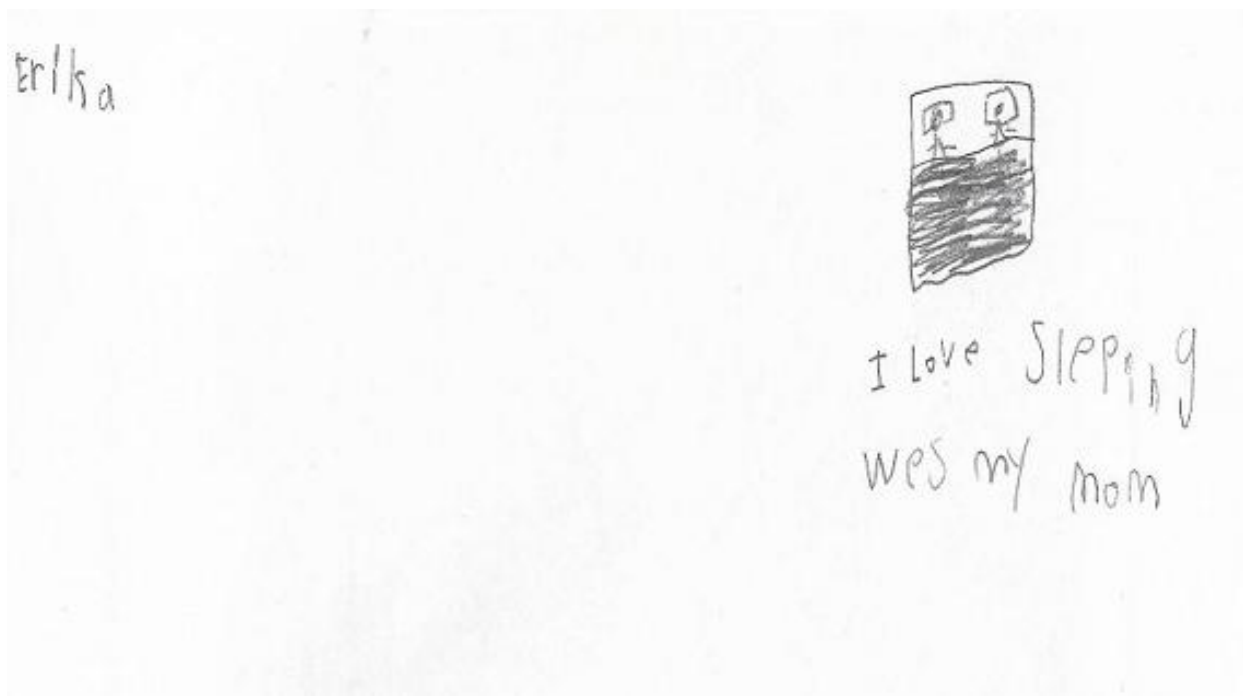
Erika Lyn – Spring: 5-year-old in second year of kindergarten

Drawing:

- Adult slightly bigger than child
- Characters appropriate size for bed
- Draws a rectangular bed, with coloured cover with mom and child sleeping.
- Two characters have small circle for a head, tiny eyes, a triangular body, arms, blanket covers rest of body
- Characters are side by side in a line

Writing:

- Printed “I love sleping wes my mom”.
- Uses initial and final consonants, with some vowels
- High frequency words, ‘I’, ‘my’, ‘mom’
- Reads back, “I love sleeping with my mom.”



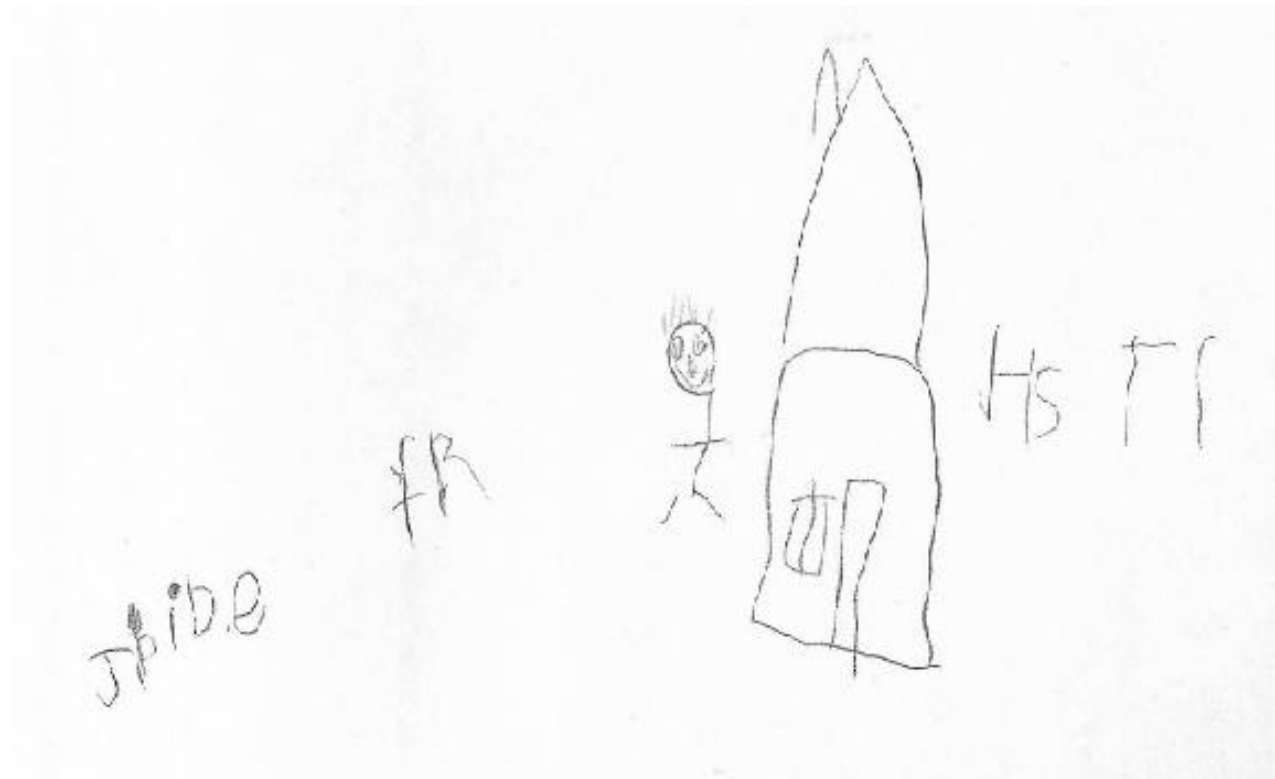
Jidae – Spring: 5-year-old in second year of kindergarten

Drawing:

- Character (brother) half the size of the house
- Draws a square for the base of the house, with a triangle for the roof
- Inside the square is a rectangular door and a square window split in half with one line
- Small rectangular chimney on top of roof
- One character who has a small circle for a head, with facial features and hair
- Head attached to stick body with stick arms and legs
- Character and house are side by side in a line

Writing:

- Printed “fR”, representing the ‘for a walk’.
- Printed “HS”, representing the word ‘house’
- Printed “TI”
- Uses initial and final consonants
- Reads back, “house”
- Says, “That’s my house. That’s my brother.”



Six-Year-Olds: Common Features of their Writing and Exemplars

6-Year-olds—Fall Session: Most common features across all the drawing and writing of six-year-old children in our study

While name-writing by this stage is an expected convention for all students, the following characteristics are expected by the time the child is 6 years old:

Drawing

- Identifiable images
- Details in images that make people, objects and animals recognizable (e.g., facial features, hair, feet/hands, houses with doors, windows)
- More details in images (e.g., facial features, hair, feet/arms, houses with doors, windows)
- Positionality (e.g., random, placed in horizontal line)

Writing

- Writes high-frequency words
- Words spelled at mid- to late letter-name stage (initial and final consonants and some vowels)
- Reading sentence or words/talking about the picture

Exemplars

Abdallah – Fall: 6-year-old

Drawing:

- Both characters have circle heads, with two eyes, a single line curved upward representing a smile with hair on the head
- Bodies are single lines with stick arms and stick legs
- Bike wheels are circles and lines are drawn to indicate handlebars and seat
- Abdallah says: "I have an extra wheel to it to make me not fall."
- Adult (dad) is somewhat bigger than drawing of the child, Abdallah
- Abdallah's bicycle is smaller than his dad's bicycle with a lower seat (Abdallah comments: "My dad's bike is bigger.")
- Abdallah, dad and two bikes are all side by side in a horizontal line

Writing:

- Printed "DaD"
- Printed "Me" underneath himself
- 'Bik' and 'DaD' used appropriate initial and final consonants with middle vowels
- Read each word (e.g., "Me, Dad, Bik" and pointed as he read them)
- Said: "Me and my dad. We are going to ride the bikes."



Brielle – Fall: 6-year-old

- Drawing:**
- All characters have circle heads, with two eyes, with stick bodies, stick arms and legs
 - Smallest character has smile
 - Triangular house with chimney
 - Clouds in sky with grass on ground
 - Mom and Brielle same size with little brother smaller
 - All family members drawn smaller than house
 - All family members drawn beside the house

- Writing:**
- Printed “MY”
 - Printed “WOCIN tow MY HAOS” (Walking to house)
 - Uses initial and final consonants with some vowels
 - Read: “We are walking to my house”?



Evander – Fall: 6-year-old

- Drawing:**
- All characters have circle heads with eyes, smiling mouths, attached to an oval body with stick arms and legs
 - Triangle bird with triangular wings
 - One character is smaller than the other three
 - Bird is half the size of people
 - All characters are side by side with the third character lying horizontally on the ground
 - Bird in sky

- Writing:**
- Two sentences with capitals, word spacing describing action within picture
 - 'in', 'the', 'run[ing]'
 - Prints 'drde' 'mud', using initial, final consonants and some vowels
 - Reads: "They are running in the mud. They are running dirty."

Evander



They are running in the mud



They are running drde

6-Year-olds—Spring Session: Most common features across all the drawing and writing of six-year-old children in our study

Drawing :

- Details in images that make people, objects and animals recognizable (e.g., facial features, hair, feet/hands, houses with doors, windows)
- Size differences to show relationships
- Positionality (e.g., random, placed in horizontal line, above, below)

Writing:

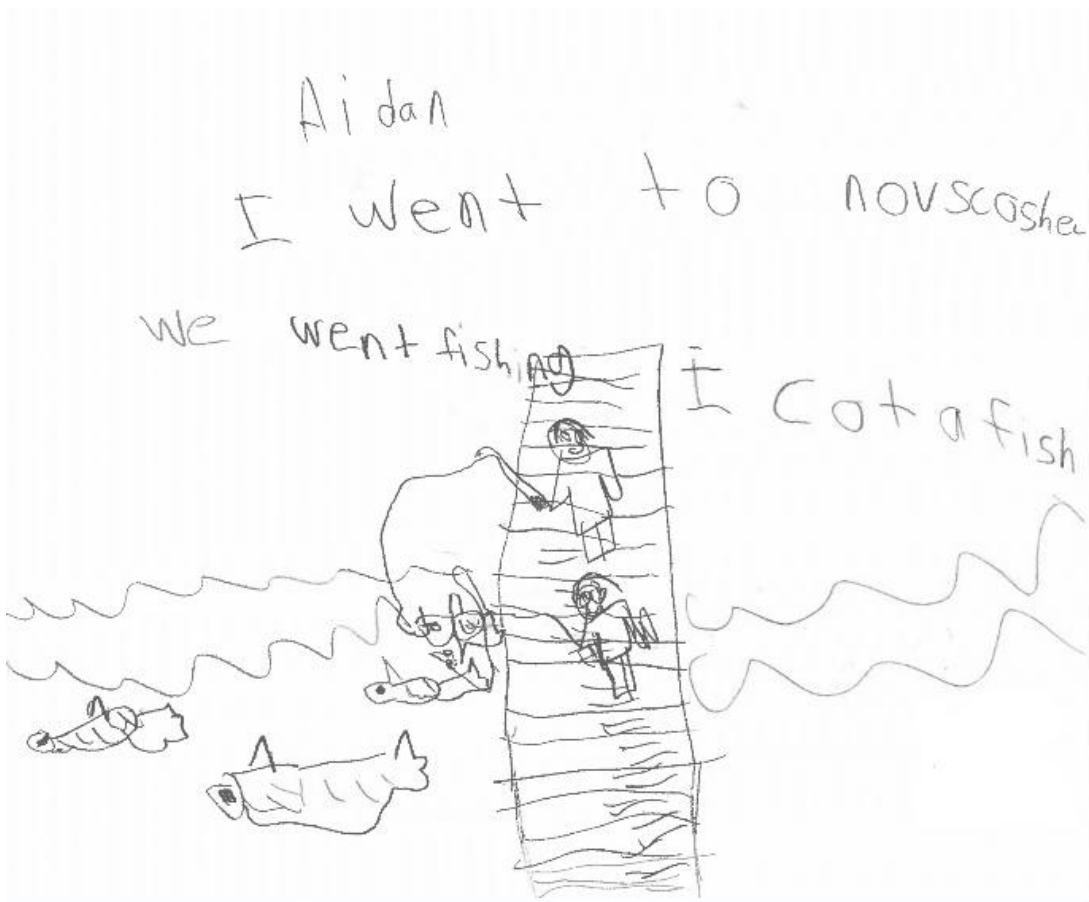
- One or more sentences (capitals, periods, word spacing, meaning related to/extra information beyond)
- Writes high frequency words
- Words spelled at mid to late letter-name stage (initial and final consonants and some vowels)
- Reads sentence or words/talking about the picture

Exemplars

Aiden – Fall: 6-year-old

- Drawing:**
- Aiden and friend have circle heads with eyes, smiling mouths, attached to a rectangular body with arms and legs
 - Fish have eyes, fins, tails and gills
 - Wavy lines for water, and horizontal lines for wood on dock
 - Aiden and friend are the same size
 - Fishing rods, hooks and fish are appropriate size
 - Aiden and friend are fishing on the dock on above the other

- Writing:**
- Three sentences with capitals, word spacing describing information beyond just the picture
 - 'I', 'to', 'we', 'went' 'a'
 - Writes 'novscoshea' 'cot', 'fish' using initial, final consonants and some vowels
 - Reads: "I went to Nova Scotia. We went fishing. I caught a fish."



Cole – Fall: 6-year-old

- Drawing:**
- Cole and his friend have circle heads with eyes, smiling mouths, attached to a rectangular body with arms, legs, circular feet
 - Shark has eyes, open mouth with teeth and tail
 - Ammunition being shot by rectangular robot into shark's mouth
 - House has roof and wall
 - Cole and friend are the same size
 - Robot is half the size of the shark
 - Cole and friend are sitting on the couch
 - Video game and images drawn above them

- Writing:**
- One sentence with capital, spacing describing action within picture
 - High frequency words spelled correctly: 'I was playing' and 'got'
 - Prints 'robos' 'atin', using initial, final consonants and some vowels
 - Reads: "I was playing robots and I got eaten."



Appendix

Writing Task Protocol: Supplementary Dynamic Assessment

If children are hesitant about writing or say that they cannot write, the administrator may conduct a dynamic assessment by saying: *“What if I help you write _____ (a short sentence from what the child had said about the picture). Let’s try it together”*.

The administrator may stretch out the sounds in the words or provide other assistance. Some children who are not confident in their writing are able to show their knowledge about print with this small amount of support.