



## Introduction to Write Dance

**Write Dance** is an approach and a method that provides movement opportunities enhancing young children's physical development. These experiences are the foundation for fine motor development and the skills for cursive handwriting. The movement is *driven* by the music. Consequently, the underlying principle is enjoyment, therefore building self-confidence in young children.

**Why Use Write Dance?** Children are motivated through imaginative drawing, music and rhymes to develop early skills in handwriting. Also, they develop their language skills, their visual-perceptual skills and their social skills. Music is central to the teaching of Write Dance. It supports and inspires the movements, that is why we say it is *The Motor that Sets the Movement Off*. It provides cues for the children so that they can internalise the rhythm and movement sequences.

**What happens when we write?** When we move to form letters, we make marks that form letters in the alphabet: 1) **Straight lines** 2) **Rounded shapes** 3) **Circle movements** and 4) **Angles**. Our arms and wrists need to change **Direction** (up/down, from left to right) when forming letters. And, when we progress in our writing, we reduce the **Size** of our writing, big to smaller. Write Dance gives children greater confidence and fluency in their writing, and very importantly, they learn **cross the midline**. The midline is an imaginary vertical line that passes from the top of our heads to the floor. Crossing-over between left and right and back again is a fundamental physical skill, essential for letter formation and writing.

### Using the books and getting started - *Write Dance in the Early Years* (Blue book)

**Scrimbling** is a Write Dance idea. It describes children's movements while they sing and act out stories and scribble. Introduce Write Dance by beginning with stories or rhymes. Keep the stories short, ideally using props or pictures to emphasise the action. Children can physically *act-out* stories, rhymes and songs. Demonstrate movements and actions for children to copy, whilst reciting the lyrics and describing the actions.

Next, sing these songs with the children and continue to *act-out* and dance.

The children do not need to go straight to mark making at this point. The priority is to move and dance to music and song. Singing works really well. You do not always need recorded music.

When you set up the room, include sensory mark-making resources for a **scrimbling** area. For example, chalkboard cloth with chinks, water and sponges. Provide enough resources so children can use both hands. Provide a small amount of paint or foam in trays, or directly onto tables. Keep shaving foam moist by providing a water spray. Try adding handwash mixed with paint and water spray. For some sparkle you could add glitter or neon colours. Vary paper size that is available when children make monoprints from their music drawings on the tables.

**Teaching Points:** Adapt Write Dance by using familiar stories and songs. Do try and learn Write Dance songs and teach these as well. Secure paper firmly so children can hold a crayon or chalk or sponge in each hand for a flexible grip. *Scrimble* with both hands (together and alternately). Sing and sway to keep in time with the music helping the children to develop body rhythm and fluency.



**Introducing Write Dance (Purple Book)** The themes below accompany the music and stories:

- **The Volcano** – warming up and energising dynamic movements
- **Krongelidong** – flexible and relaxed continuous lines for rounded movements
- **Circles and Eights** – round movements and crossing the midline with continuous lines
- **Robots** - straight movements with strong rhythm and beat
- **The Train** –looped garlands (up) and looped arcades (down) finding speed and flexibility in writing
- **Horses and Hares** – arcades and garlands
- **The Sea** – development of fluid writing movements (flowing up and down wave movements)
- **Mandala** – bringing the themes together to develop variation (a combination of straight and curved lines, angles and circles)

**Progression:** Combine themes and look for letters in the music-drawings because this can help children to visualise and trace over familiar letters. As the children gain in confidence, they can explore the spontaneity of the additional themes and extension activities as they practice letters and joins. Letters can be divided into groups and there are various exercises to use as a warm up for handwriting. Later you could try and reduce paper size.

As in *Write Dance in the Early Years* this **Purple Book** recommends you start with whole body movements in the hall/playground or classroom. Children practice movements in the air. They *finger-dance* on a writing surface, when standing or sitting Then they are ready to move and draw, producing music-drawings from the dancing process. The goal is to create smooth flowing handwriting by combining straight and round movements. The music is the instruction, the stimulus and the motivation. Every child's music drawing will be individual because they will be expressing themselves through movement and drawing. Their drawings are their personal response to the music.

### **Next Steps and Resources**

- Familiarise yourself with Write Dance book(s) and the SAGE music/videos. You can buy additional books from our website.
- Consider available physical space. It may be easier to take the dancing and mark-making outside.
- Gather **Resources**, for dancing you might need hoops, ribbons or scarves.
- Provide additional mark-making resources: stubby crayons and chinks. Water, sponges and handwash with poster paint
- Consider purchasing chalkboard tablecloth for convenience and ease.

**Visit our website for more information and to order books and resources.** Our Resources page [www.writedancetraining.com/resources](http://www.writedancetraining.com/resources)

Read our research [Strauss-and-Barrons-2017-dont-stop-the-song-and-dance-27.11.17-1.pdf](#) ([writedancetraining.com](http://writedancetraining.com))

Any further questions, please contact us [info@writedancetraining.com](mailto:info@writedancetraining.com) and send us your success stories. Very well done and many thank you for participating

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