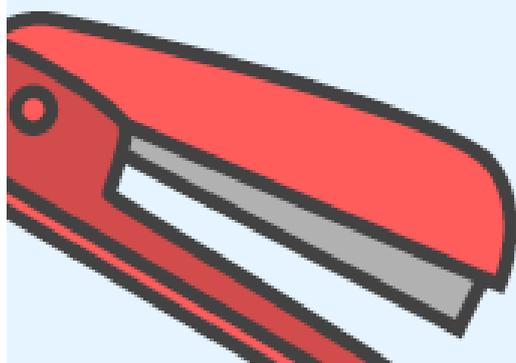


OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

PRE WRITING

RESOURCE PACK
FOR SCHOOLS



Pre Writing Resource Pack

Introduction

Pre-writing skills are the fundamental skills children need to develop before they are able to write. These skills contribute to the child's ability to hold and use a pencil, and the ability to draw, write, copy, and colour. They are usually developed in a particular sequence, at an appropriate age and should not be forced.

The key skills for Pre-writing include:

- Hand and finger strength
- Crossing the mid-line
- Pencil grasp
- Hand eye coordination
- Bilateral integration
- Upper body strength
- Object manipulation
- Visual perception
- Hand dominance

The focus of this resource pack is to provide information and practical tools/strategies for the skills required for children's readiness for handwriting. If a child has difficulties in any of the above areas not covered in this pack please refer to our Motor Skills Pack for further activity ideas to help develop these skills.

If you feel the child is beyond the pre writing stage and is experiencing difficulties with aspects of letter formation, organisation of written work or pencil grip or pressure please refer to our Handwriting Resource Pack for further advice.

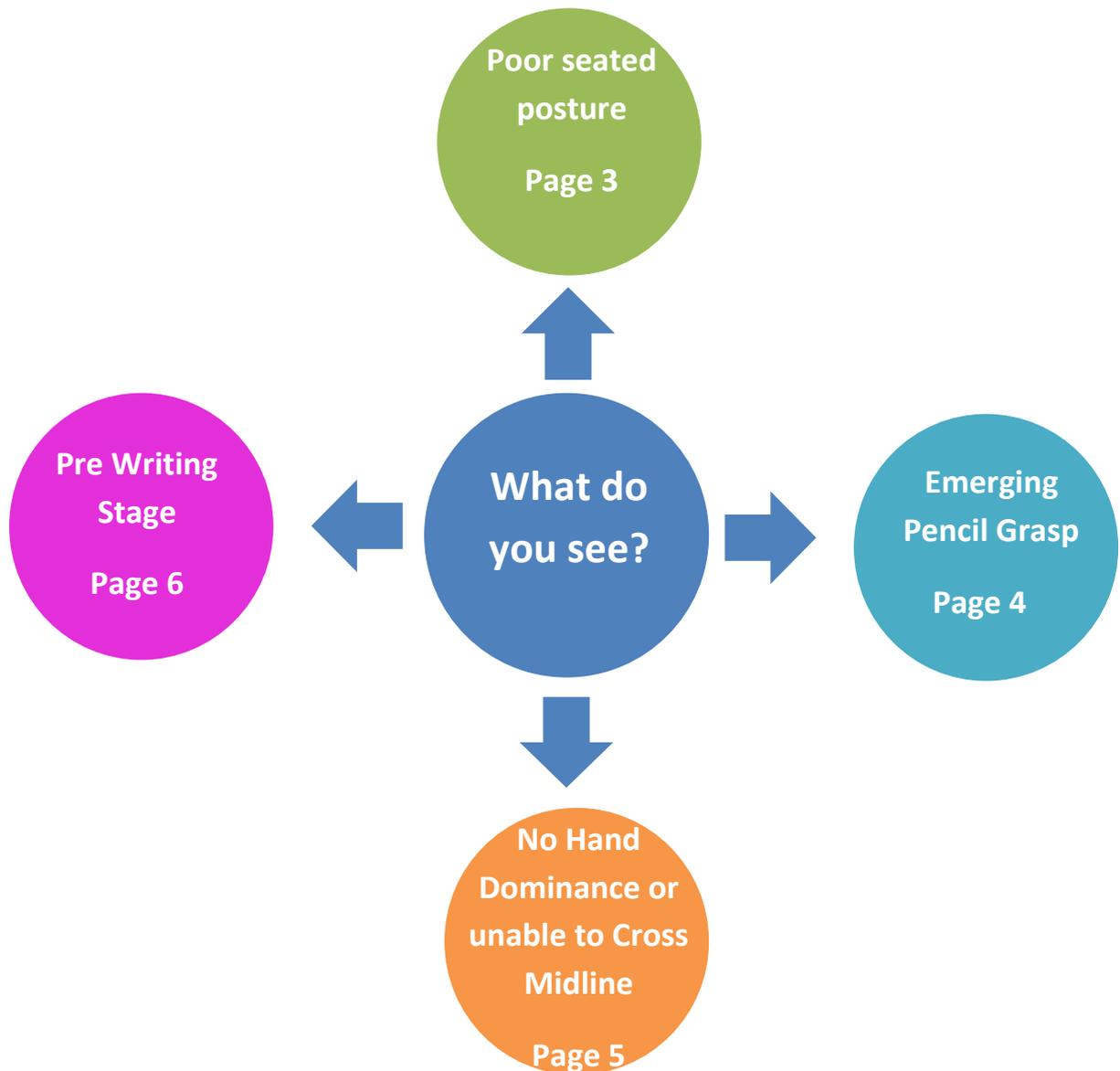
An evidence form can be found in Appendix 3 to help document which resources and activities have been trialled to help with skill development. If you feel you require further advice and/or assistance after using this pack, please contact the Occupational Therapy Department.



All images within this booklet have been sourced from CANVA. www.canva.com

Contents Page

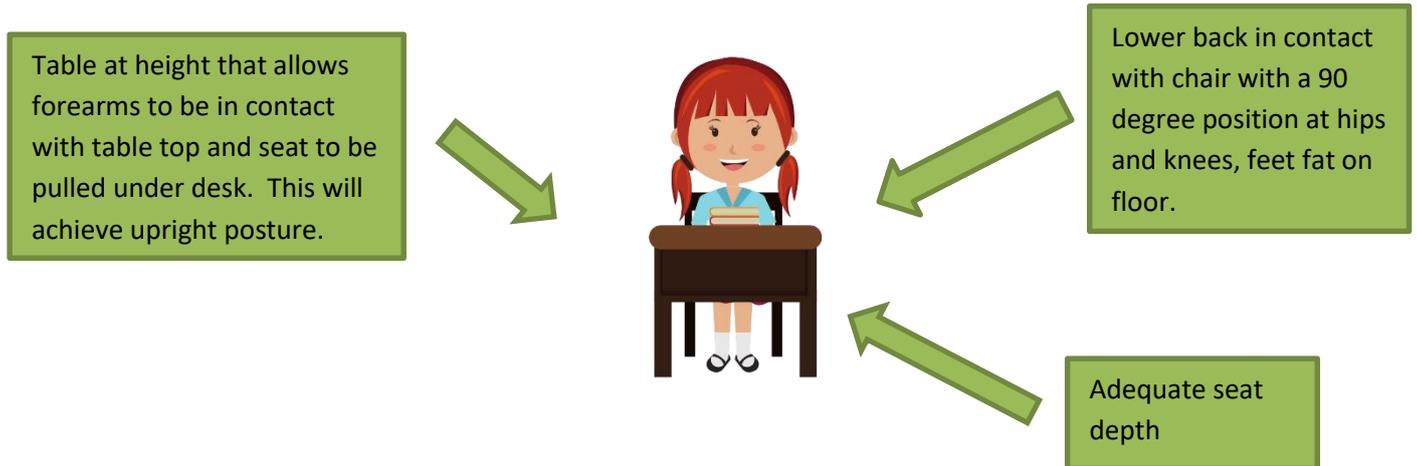
To use this pack use the “What do you see?” approach to identify the difficulty the child may have and the colour coded pages will offer practical advice and resources for the area you have identified.



What do you see? Poor Seated Posture

Ergonomics

Good sitting posture provides children with a stable base. Firstly the basic ergonomics of furniture should be considered when asking children to carry out drawing tasks.



If a child has poor seated posture, this can put stress on muscles and joints and can affect the quality of the work they produce. Please see below for a rough guide for suitable height furniture:



Age	Up to 3	3-4 years	5-6 years
Seat Height	21cm	26cm	31cm
Desk Height	40cm	46cm	53cm

Other considerations

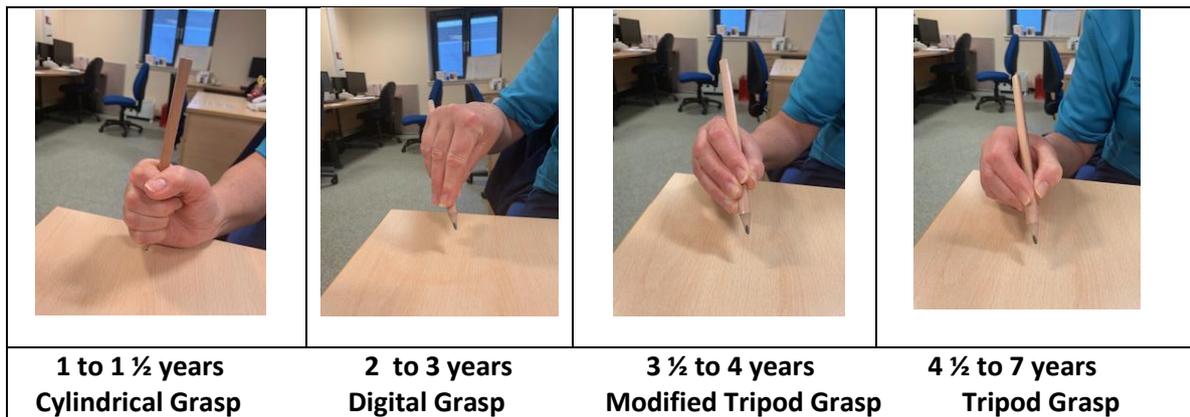
If the furniture is suitable, observed poor posture may mean the child is experiencing difficulties with their core strength and stability. Core strength, alongside shoulder stability, provide a stable base for controlling a child's arms, hands and ultimately pencil.

A child develops core and shoulder strength through participation in gross motor activities in particular. Activities to promote the development of core strength are outlined within our Motor Skills Pack

What do you see? Emerging Pencil Grasp

Generally, the most proficient pencil grip is a dynamic tripod grasp. Picture one below outlines the 'normal development' of pencil grip – note the wide age range for refinement. Ideally, the pencil should rest in the web space (space at the base of the thumb between thumb and index finger) and the forearm and wrist should be supported by the table top for optimum stability.

Picture one (normal developmental stages of pencil grasp):



Please find activities below to encourage the development of a pencil grasp:

- Please see our Motor Skills Pack for activity ideas, in particular the fine motor activities, to help with development of pencil grasp.
- Using a very short, chunky wax crayon encourage the child to colour/draw on sugar paper.
- Identify thumb/fingers needed to hold the pencil you can do this by:

Ask the child to place their writing hand palm down on table. Then lift each finger in turn and name them: **Tommy Thumb (1), Peter Pointer (2), Toby Tall (3), and then tap each separately on table.**

- Pick up pencil and practise where the fingers go
- Reinforce with rhyme/song (tune as in 'Here we go round the mulberry bush' or 'Twinkle, twinkle' - repeat last two lines):

**On my pencil, can you see?
Thumb and fingers, one two three
Hold your pencil just like me
Thumb and fingers, one two three**



What do you see? Hand Dominance & Crossing Midline

Consistent, preferred hand for writing?

When some children start school they may not have established a clear dominant hand or leading hand. Even those children who always hold a pencil in the same hand may alternate the leading hand in two handed activities, for example threading activities.

For some children who pick up a pencil in alternate hands, this can sometimes be linked to difficulty with coordination or crossing the mid-line of the body.

What is crossing midline?

- Crossing the midline of our body means that a body part (e.g. hand or foot) is able to spontaneously move over to the other side of the body to work there.
- Crossing the midline emerges as a child develops bilateral coordination skills.
- When crossing the midline it is important that the child's trunk rotates.
- In order to develop good fine motor skills, the child's dominant hand must spontaneously cross over the midline regularly.

Check list for hand dominance

1. Does the child generally use both hands together efficiently or tend to ignore one?
2. Are there any immediate left handers in the family? Particularly the mother as it may suggest there is a left sided preference.
3. What hand does the child prefer to use for activities such as throwing a ball, feeding or leading hand for threading?

Where there is no reason to predict left-handedness and child appears to function at the same level of skill with either hand, encourage using pencil in right hand (in liaison with parents).

Strategies for establishing hand dominance

- Encourage activities which require a leading hand and supporting hand for example: windup toys, Tap a Shape, and Threading/lacing activities.
- Place activities directly in front of their body (midline) and allow the child to choose their leading hand.
- Observe which hand the child uses more frequently.



What do you see? Pre Writing Stage

Strategies for Pre-writers

In the first instance please refer to our Motor Skills pack for fine motor activities which will improve readiness for handwriting. Please find additional ideas and activities below, and in Appendix 1 of this pack.

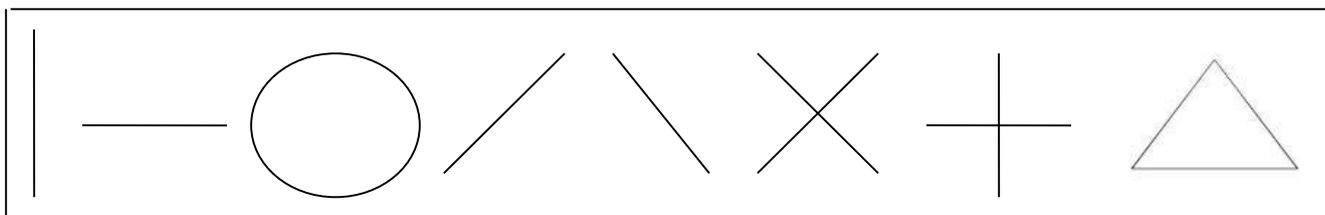
- Practise making shapes and patterns in the air with big arm movements to reinforce motor memory, then with smaller hand or finger movements (in sand, play dough, finger paint etc.)
- Encourage good posture for writing: it is important to reinforce this early, so children do not have to unlearn habits later on.

Try the following activities:

- Try using a variety of vertical and horizontal angles, such as writing on a blackboard, using large pieces of paper on the floor
- Use a sensory approach to develop pre-writing skills, such as writing in sand, shaving foam, paint, using a chalkboard.
- If your child has an awkward pencil grasp try using a thicker pencil .
- Colouring books, which encourage pencil control by staying within the lines.
- Tracing around templates.
- Encourage the child to trace through mazes etc., without stopping or going backwards..
- Encourage your child to pick up a pencil/crayon as often as possible.
- In conjunction with above activities, consider use of pre writing apps for tablets/iPads. A suitable list can be found in Appendix 2.

Pre writing shapes are the pencil strokes that most letters and numbers are made up of. They are typically mastered in sequential order. Between the ages of 4-5 ½ years a child should be able to copy the shapes below. This is an important developmental stage in the process of developing letter formation. If a child has not mastered these shapes, development of all letter forms can be challenging, and they can fatigue more readily. A sample of pre-writing activity sheets suitable for practice can be found at the end of this pack. These can be re-produced for use with children.

Pre-writing shapes:



Appendix 1 Pre-Writing Skills



Some activities to try:

- Try using a variety of vertical and horizontal angles, such as writing on a blackboard, using large pieces of paper on the floor.
- Use a sensory approach to develop pre-writing skills, such as writing in sand, shower gel, paint, using chalkboard.
- Colouring books, which encourage pencil control by staying within the lines.
- Tracing around templates such as dot to dot.
- There are several iPad apps available which encourage development of pre-writing skills such as Hairy Letters and Dexteria.
- Encourage child to draw pictures that include pre writing shapes (i.e. a square for a house, triangle for roof, circle for sun in the sky, cross on windows etc.).
- Drawing a large rainbow on the back of wallpaper can encourage crossing midline, making a continual line from one end of the rainbow to the other.

Tips:

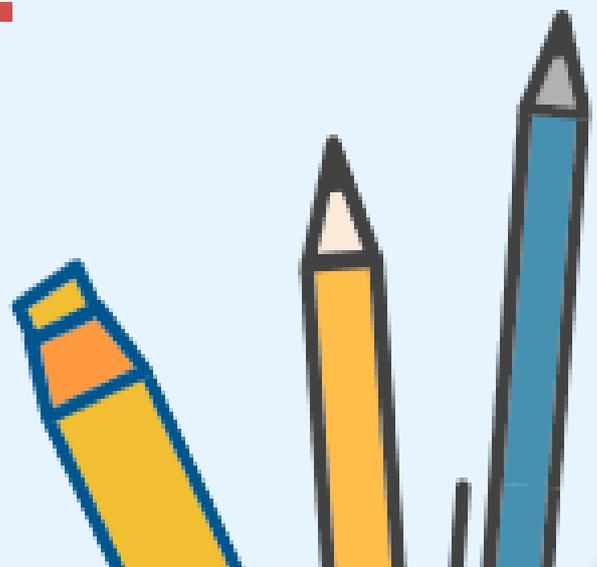
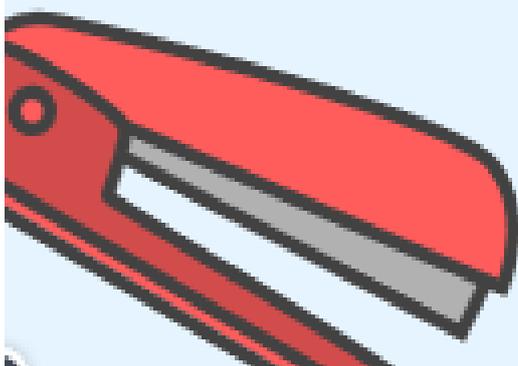
- Dot the corners of shapes out initially for children to join the dots.
- If your child has an awkward pencil grasp try using a thicker pencil initially.
- To help with pencil grip, using coloured tape around the bottom of the pencil to act as a visual cue on where to hold a pencil
- Encourage smooth movements – encourage child to trace through mazes etc., without stopping or going backwards.
- Encourage your child to pick up a pencil/crayon as often as possible.
- To control pressure – place several sheets of carbon paper and plain paper underneath writing sheet. Have the child press heavily or lightly.
- **Body posture:** ensure your child is sitting with their feet firmly on the floor, bottom back against the chair, knees and hips at 90 degrees.



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

PRE WRITING ACTIVITY SHEETS

RESOURCE PACK
FOR SCHOOLS



Activity Sheet 1

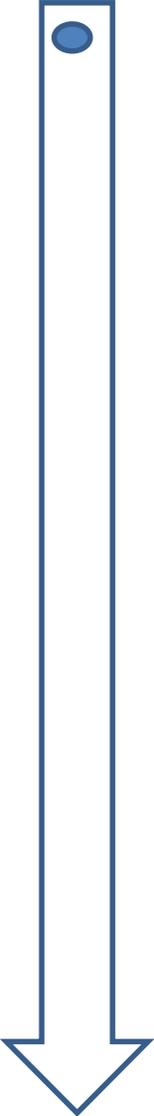
Starting at the dot follow the arrow to the end using your pencil.



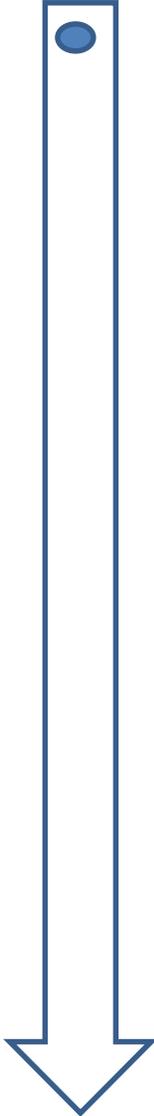
Activity Sheet 2

Starting at the dot follow the arrow to the end using your pencil.

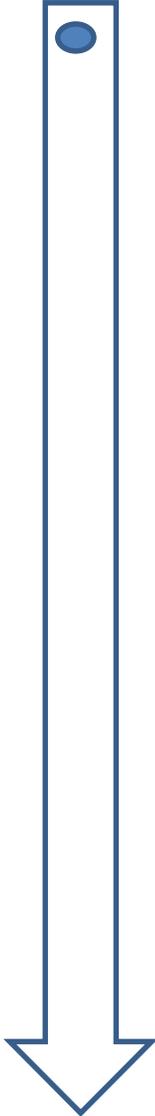
Start Here



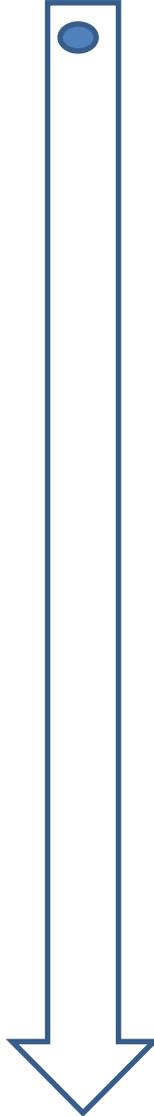
Start Here



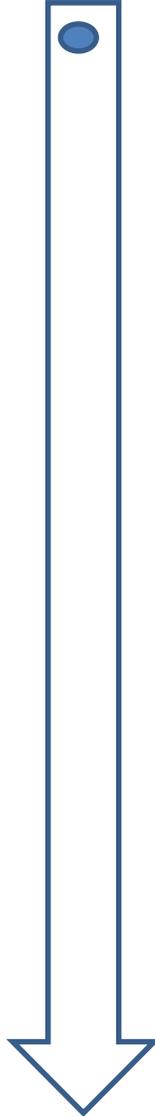
Start Here



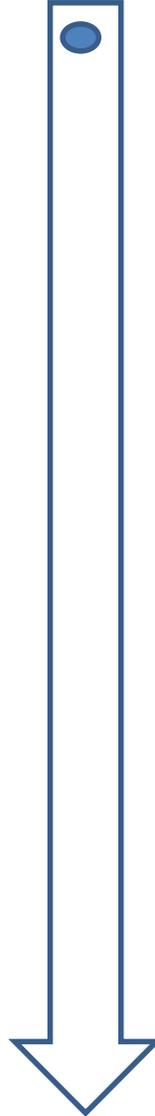
Start Here



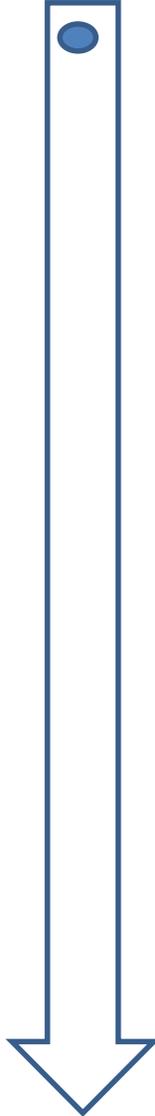
Start Here



Start Here

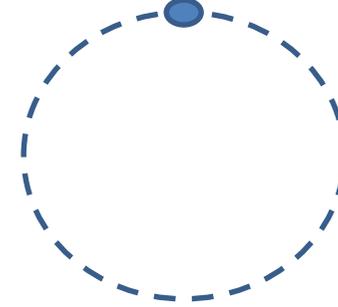
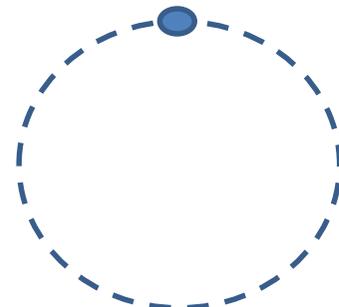
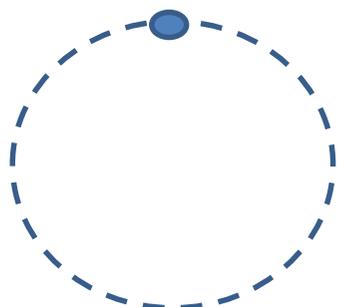
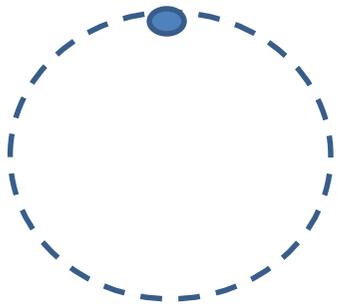
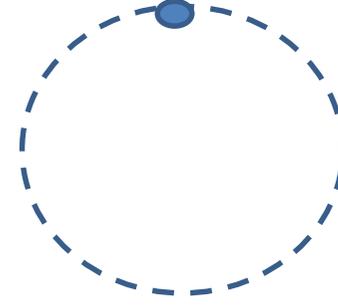
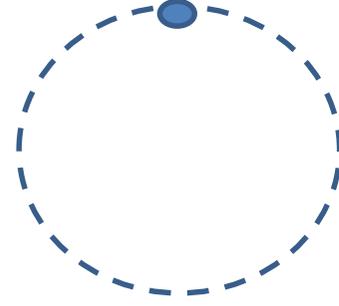
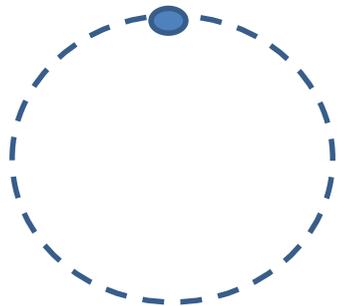
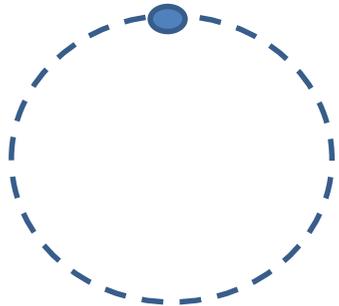
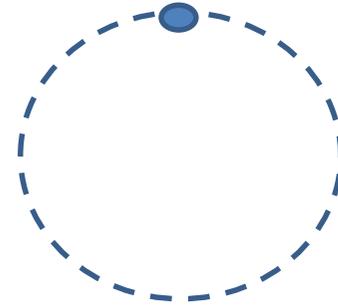
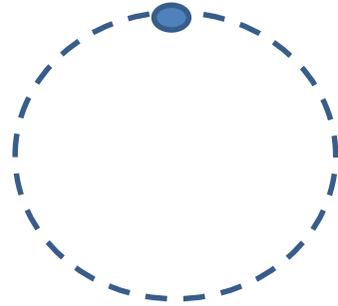
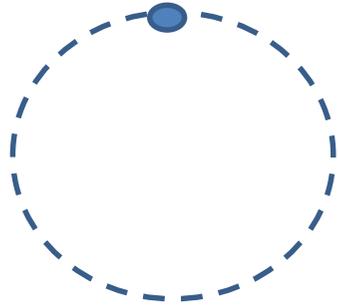
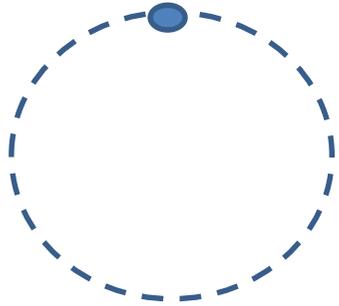


Start Here



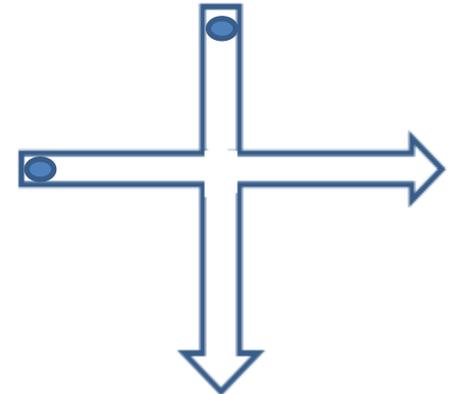
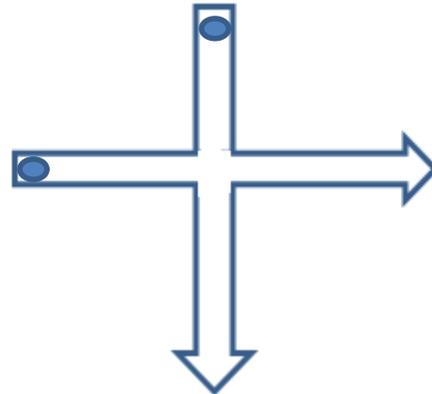
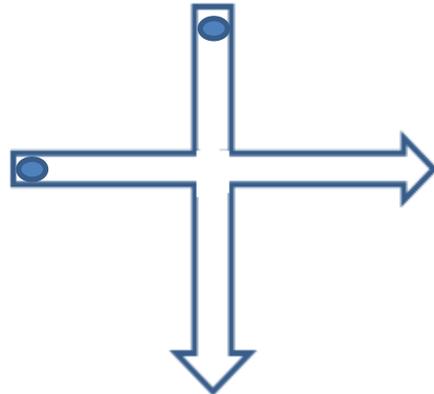
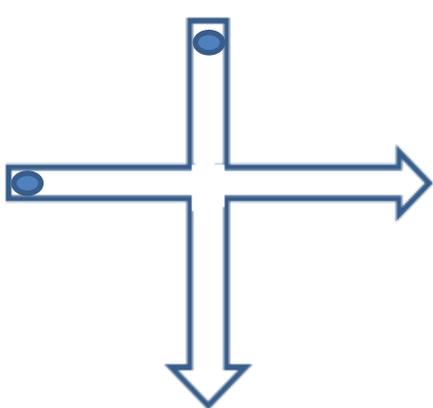
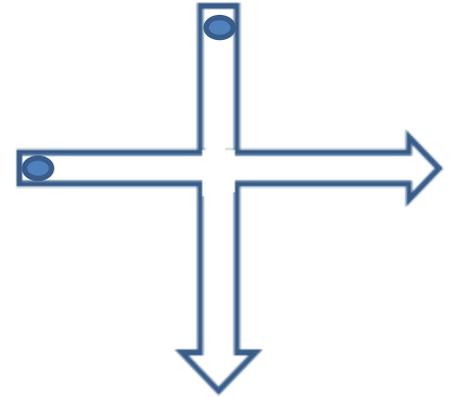
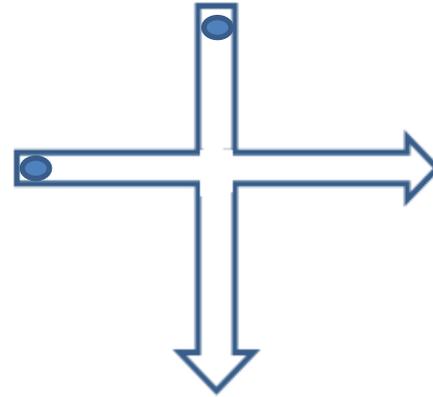
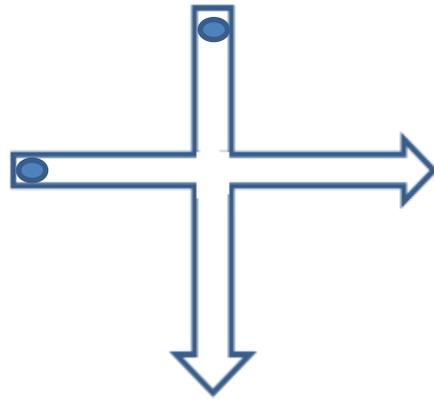
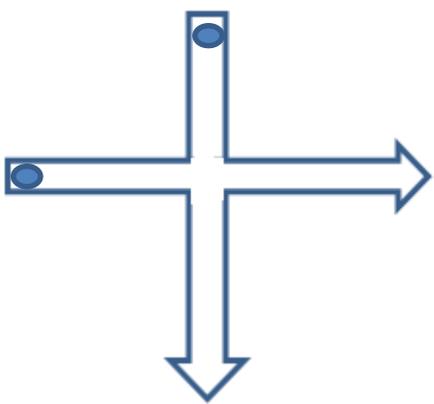
Activity Sheet 3

Starting at the dot trace the shape using your pencil.



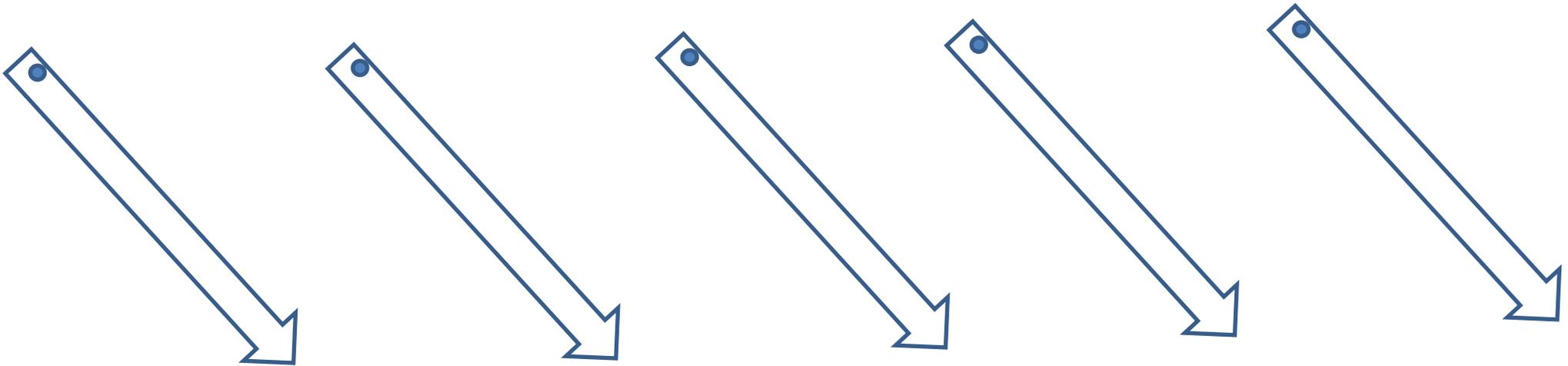
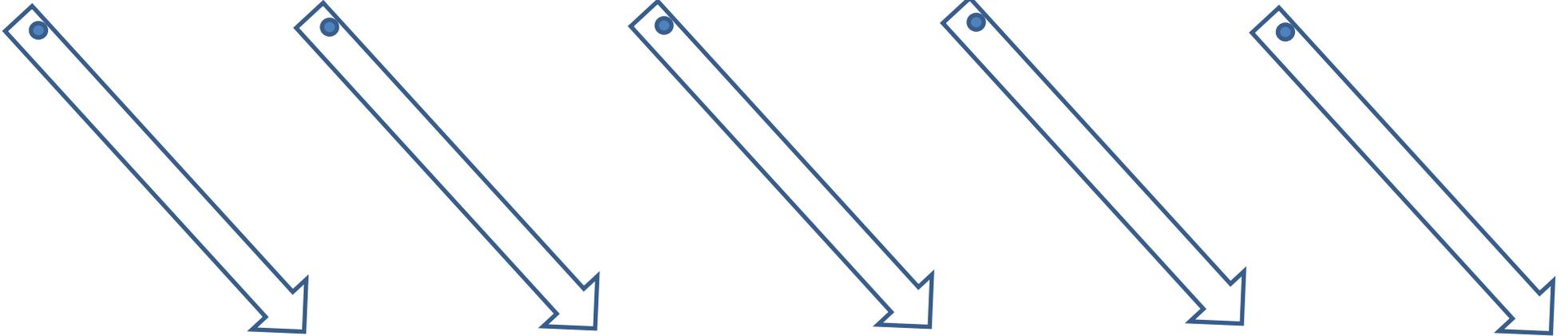
Activity Sheet 4

Starting at the dots copy the shape using your pencil.



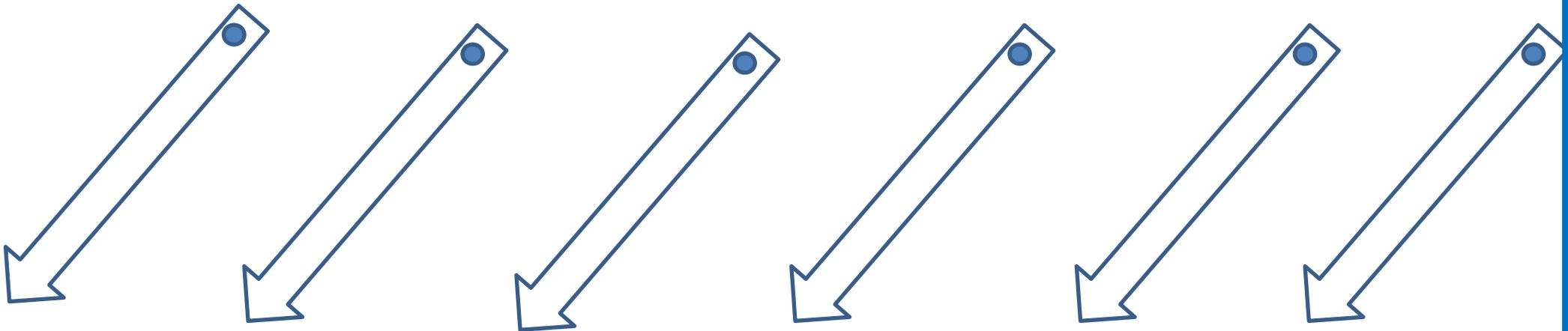
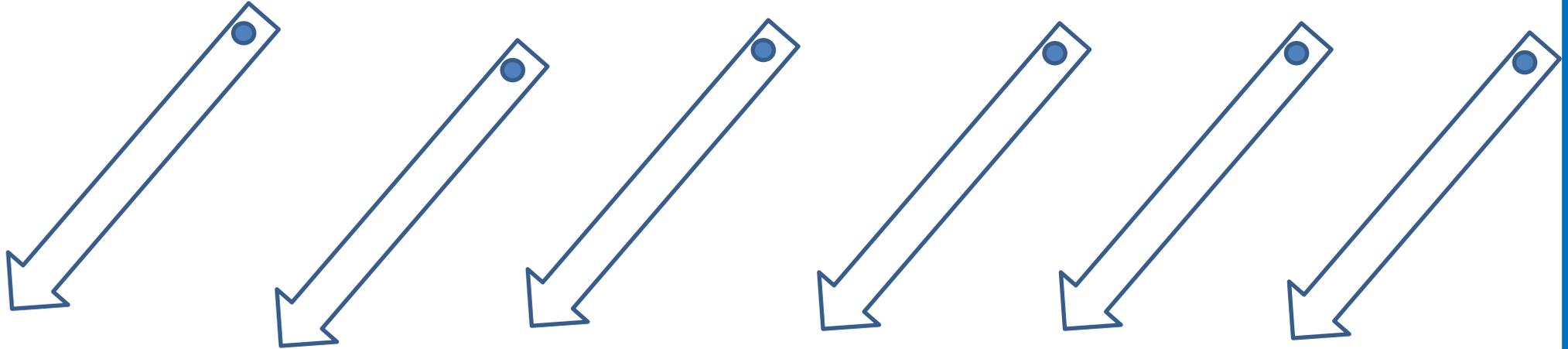
Activity Sheet 5

Starting at the dots copy the line using your pencil.



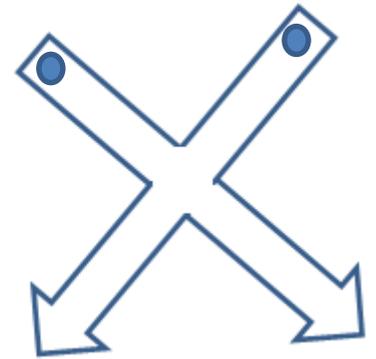
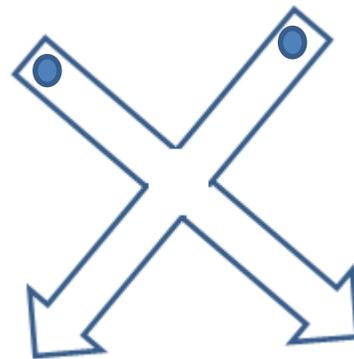
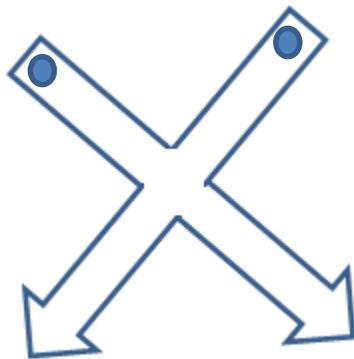
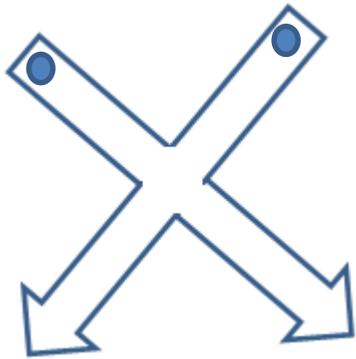
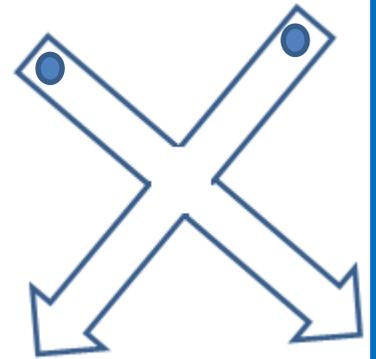
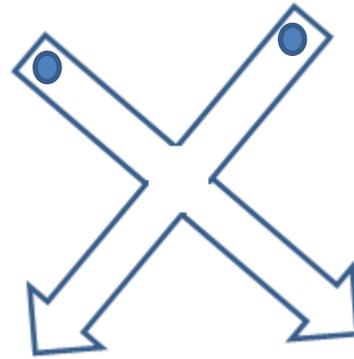
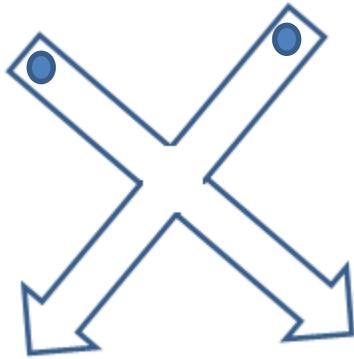
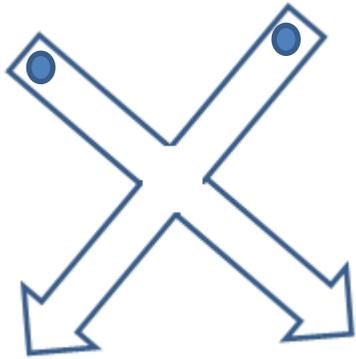
Activity Sheet 6

Starting at the dots copy the line using your pencil.



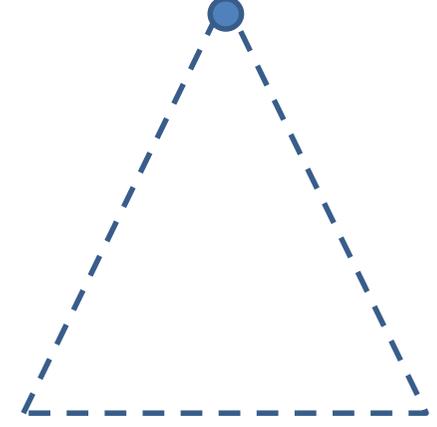
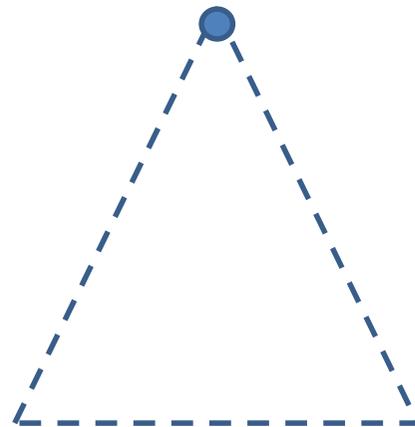
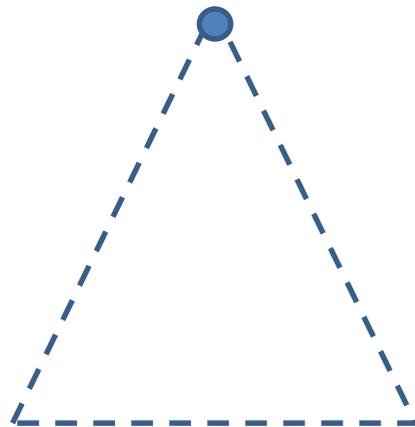
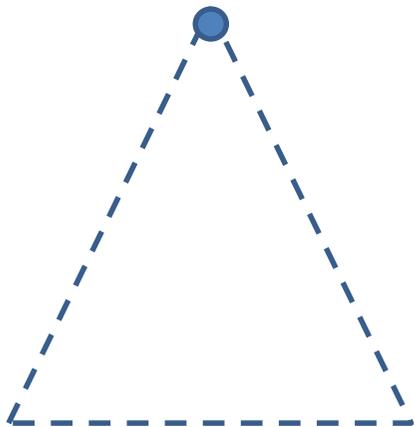
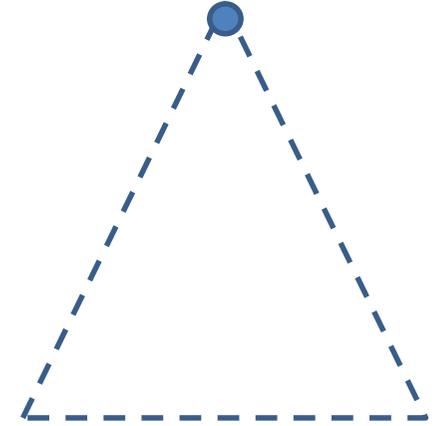
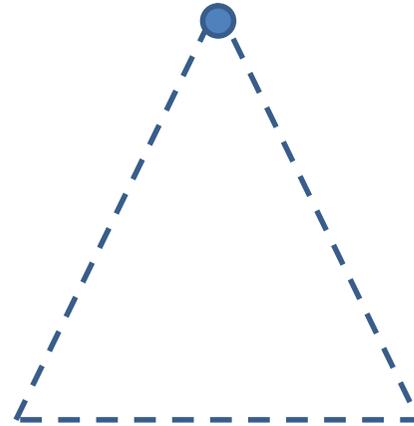
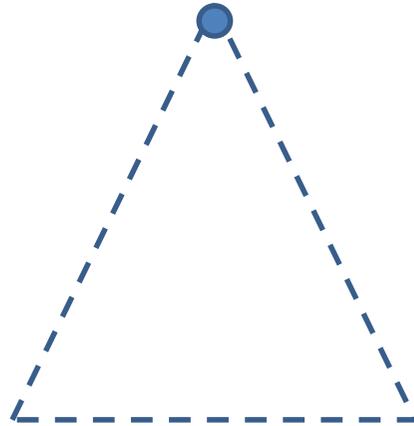
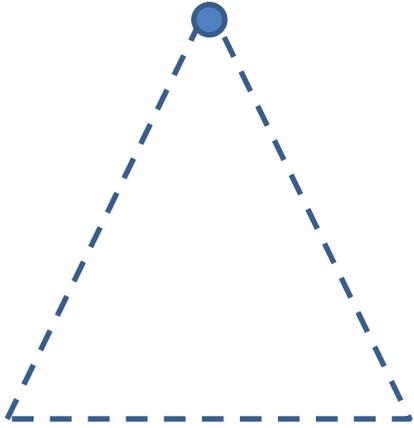
Activity Sheet 7

Starting at the dots copy the shape using your pencil.



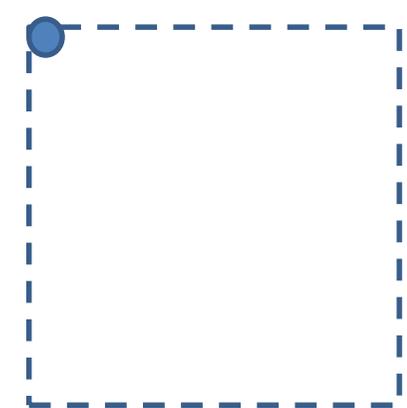
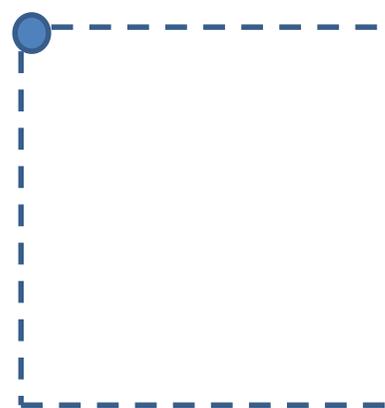
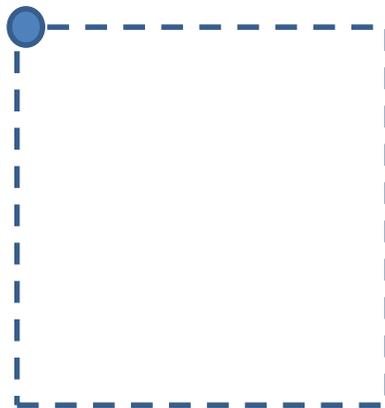
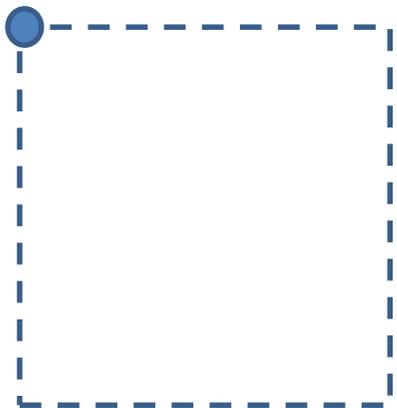
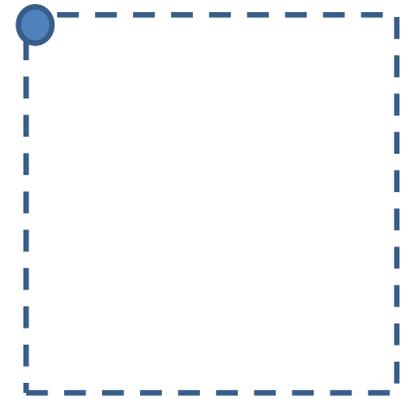
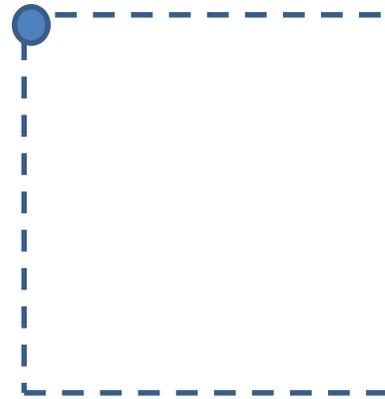
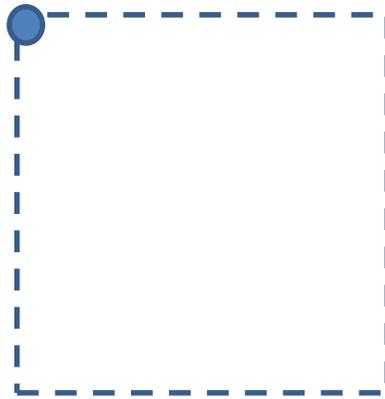
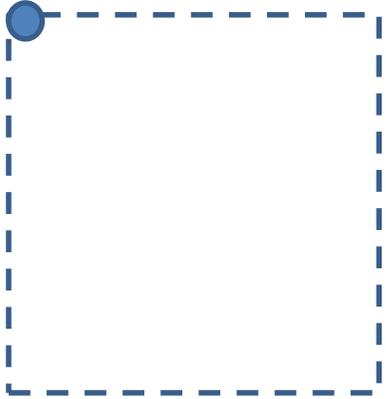
Activity Sheet 8

Starting at the dots copy the shape using your pencil.



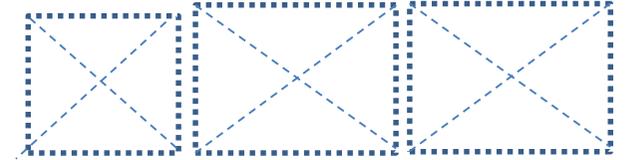
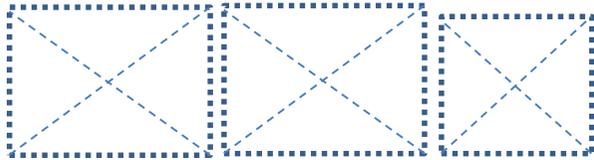
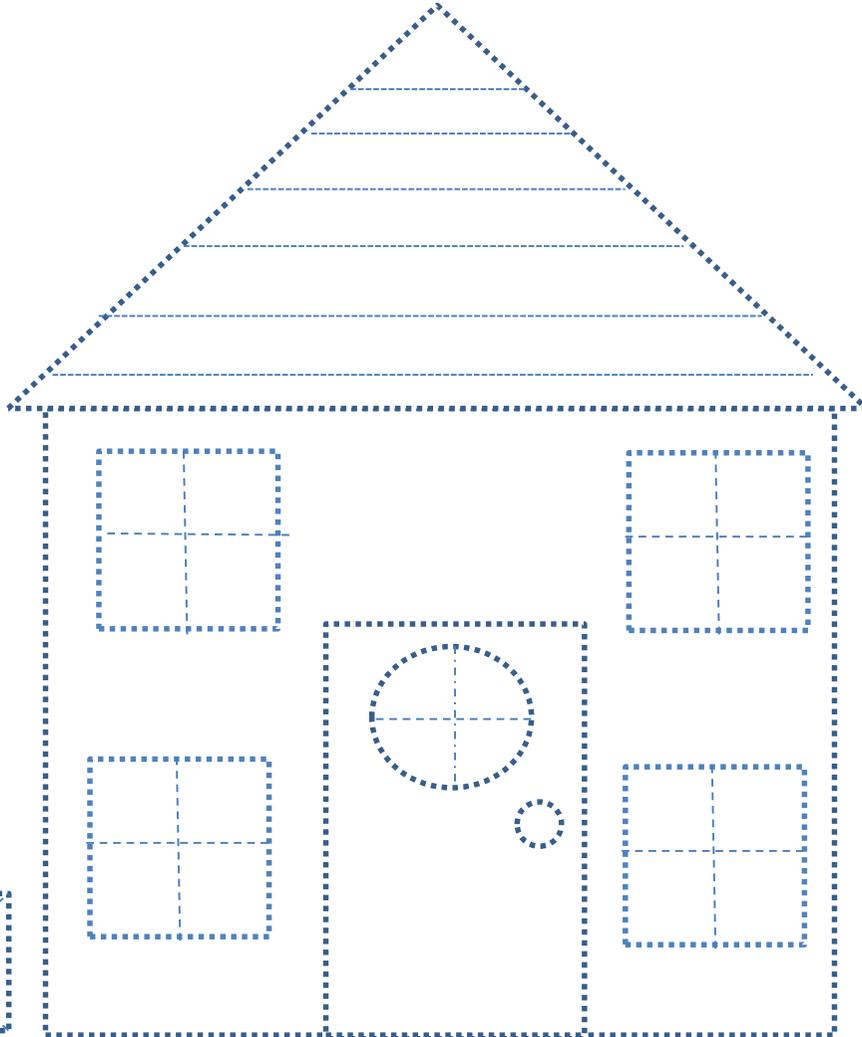
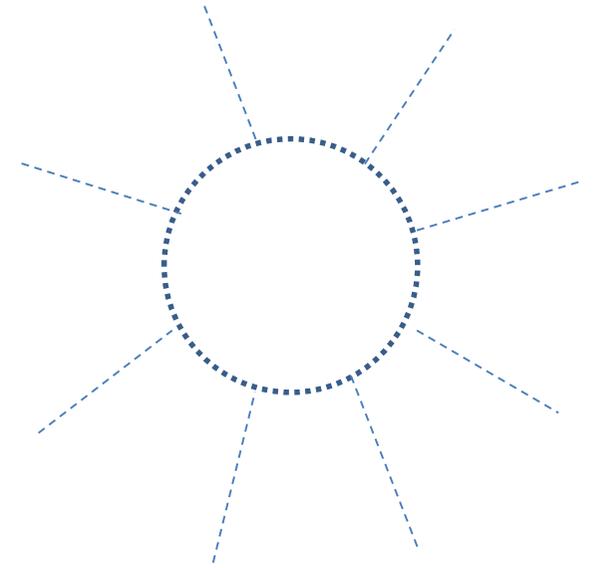
Activity Sheet 9

Starting at the dots copy the shape using your pencil.



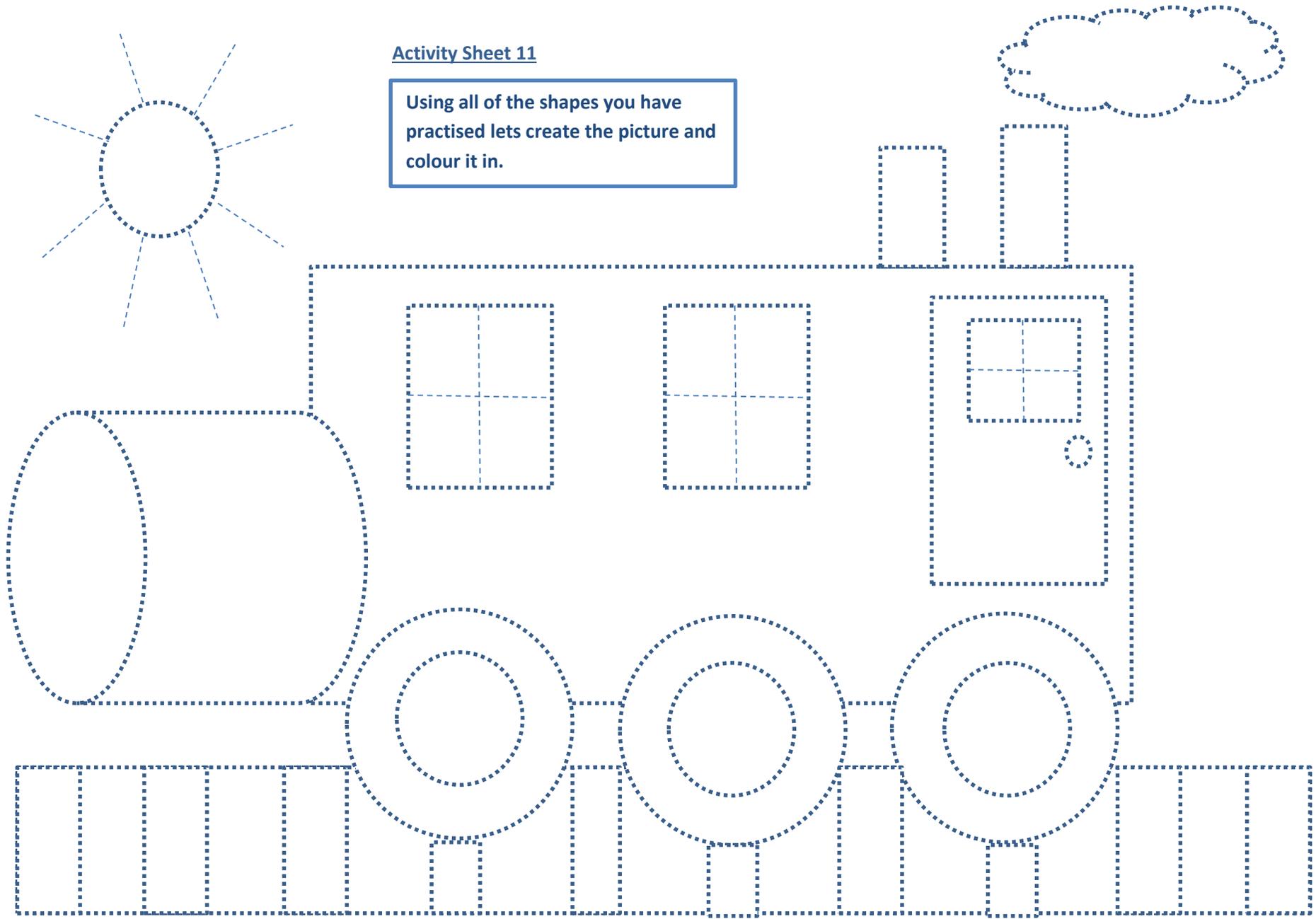
Activity Sheet 10

Using all of the shapes you have practised lets create the picture and colour it in.



Activity Sheet 11

Using all of the shapes you have practised lets create the picture and colour it in.



Appendix 2 Apps

PRE-WRITING APPS	FOCUS
Paint Sparkle [Younger child] Drawing free hand with coloured crayons/paints.	Building finger control, creativity.
Finger Paint [Younger child] Child encouraged to draw with single finger &/or fingers with musical/audio responses. Fun way to help young children practice first interactions with a touch screen.	Promotes finger isolation, creativity.
Fine Motor Fundamentals Requires the child to use finger to drag the different parts of the letter to form a whole letter. Horizontal & vertical lines, circular movements, left to right, up & down. Car Track - Child to trace route of car from start to finish. Different graded levels.	Encourages & promotes finger control & accuracy as child has to stay within the guide lines.
Neon Mania Drawing App – Tracing lines to form different pictures. Graded, starts off with more simple shapes & gets more complex & detailed as levels progress.	Finger control, dexterity, accuracy & precision.
Flow Free, Draw Line, Doodle Flow, Number Link Connect coloured dots to corresponding colour on a grid. Graded to increase in difficulty. Left to right, & up/down movement.	Finger control, accuracy & problem solving.
Dot to Dot Follow the dots with a finger to create a shape/picture.	Finger control, accuracy & dexterity.
Touch & Write Shapes Teaches strokes, basic shapes, advanced shapes with visual prompts. Practice pre-writing strokes in a fun interactive way.	Finger control, accuracy & dexterity.
Dexteria Jr. – Preschool Motor Skills : Trace & Erase Graded levels where the child draws simple lines (horizontal, vertical, diagonal) to more complex patterns (zig-zag, waves, spiral).	Finger control & accuracy.
Shelby’s Quest Interactive story where the child draws lines & shapes with some visual guidance, keeping within the guide lines. Graded levels, from basic lines to shapes.	Finger control, dexterity & accuracy.
Paint & Learn Connect the letters of the alphabet to create a picture.	Letter recognition & finger control.
Draw me Encourages child to draw boy/girl using lines, circles with audio & visual prompts.	Finger control, dexterity & accuracy.

Further information on the topics covered in this pack and a range of other useful resources can be found on the KIDS Scotland web page. The website is a specifically designed NHS website for Children and Young People hosted by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

<http://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/>

In addition we regularly post activity ideas and general information on our Facebook page and Twitter account.

Please follow our Social media Pages:

 **NHS Lanarkshire Children and Young People, Occupational Therapy**
 **@OccupationalTh4**

If you have any queries or concerns please contact NHS Lanarkshire Occupational Therapy, Children and Young People:

South Team – Douglas Street Community Health Clinic (01698) 368714/705

North Team – Glenorchy Building, Coathill Hospital (01236) 707778

