

# Research on the Approach of Pre Writing in Art Activities Based on the Perspective of 3-6 Year Old Children

Lingling Li

Sichuan Preschool Educators College, Mianyang 621000, Sichuan, China

**Abstract:** *Children aged 3-6 have not yet acquired formal writing skills, and their main way of expressing their understanding and thoughts about the world is through painting. Almost all children have a strong interest in painting and hope to express their thoughts through it. The pre writing of children aged 3-6 is a spontaneous or adult guided behavior of drawing, writing symbols, and writing, which is an important foundation for transitioning to formal writing. Fully understand and respect the physical and mental development laws and characteristics of children aged 3-6 years old at different age stages. Based on the cognitive and learning needs of children, provide them with rich painting tools and materials, stimulate their interest in pre writing in playful art activities, exercise their fine motor skills, accumulate pre writing experience, and prepare them for scientific early childhood transition.*

**Keywords:** Children's perspective; Pre writing; Early childhood transition; Art activities.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In China, the education of Chinese character recognition is a key focus in basic education. The education of literacy and handwriting for children aged 3-6 has always been of great concern to families, society, and the education sector, with long-standing debates and disagreements. One view is that children cannot fall behind the "starting line" and should learn to read and write Chinese characters early, otherwise they will "fall behind" in elementary school. Another viewpoint is that "talking about tigers turns pale", believing that children's early recognition and writing of Chinese characters is a "primary school oriented" advanced education that promotes the emergence of seedlings. The "Language Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education" mention: "Grades 1-2 enjoy learning Chinese characters and have the desire to actively recognize and write. They master the basic strokes and commonly used radicals of Chinese characters, and can write with a hard pen according to basic stroke order rules." In the "Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Scientific Connection between Kindergartens and Primary Schools" issued by the Ministry of Education in 2021, it is proposed that "teachers consciously use words and symbols to assist children in recording and summarizing the process and ideas of games, so that children can feel the function and significance of text symbols in daily life, protect their interest in pre writing, and make necessary writing preparations.". The recognition and writing of Chinese characters are not achieved overnight for children. In the process of scientific transition from preschool to primary school, teachers should, based on the perspective of children, systematically stimulate the interest of children aged 3-6 in pre writing through game activities such as drawing and jigsaw puzzles, help them accumulate pre writing experience, and lay the foundation for lifelong learning.

## 2. THE CONCEPT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF PRE WRITING ACTIVITIES

### 2.1 Concepts previously written

In the "Guidelines for Kindergarten Education (Trial)" issued by the Ministry of Education in 2001, the concept of "pre writing" was first proposed: "using books, paintings, and other methods to arouse children's interest in books, reading, and writing, and cultivate pre reading and pre writing skills.". Since then, many domestic researchers have conducted research on the knowledge ability, emotional attitude, and expression forms of preschool children's pre writing, defining the concept of pre writing: preschool children, before receiving formal writing education, use pens or other writing substitutes as tools to express information and transmit information through graffiti, drawings, symbols resembling characters instead of characters, and close to correct characters, and engage in activities such as exchanging and sharing their ideas, emotions, and experiences with peers and adults. Writing is a delicate skill, especially in writing Chinese characters. The stroke order, structure, and form are extremely complex and difficult processes for children. And the previous writing has expanded to free graffiti, painting, and symbols that are

incorrect but close to formal writing. Children aged 3-6 can accumulate preliminary writing experience through the previous writing.

## **2.2 The value and significance of pre writing**

The pre writing of children aged 3-6 is a spontaneous or adult guided activity of painting with a pen or drawing tool material, which is an important foundation for transitioning to formal writing. The pre writing activities in kindergarten mainly focus on game activities, such as drawing games, handicraft games, and tabletop games, to cultivate the coordination ability of hands, eyes, and brain, and focus on guiding young children to be interested in symbols or text. The early pre writing experience is of great significance for the development of young children: controlling the drawing tools with the hands to draw graffiti can exercise the fine movements of children's hands, and the cooperation between hands, eyes, and brain can also promote the development of children's intelligence; Can help young children express their cognition, emotions, and thoughts about the world through symbols or words; To have a preliminary understanding of the functions and characteristics of Chinese characters, and to acquire the ability to express themselves in written language; It can help young children establish initial confidence in reading and writing, develop early writing habits, and lay the foundation for lifelong learning in reading and writing. Therefore, on the basis of drawing, children draw symbols that resemble characters rather than characters, and then move on to the process of writing. This process reflects the value and significance of pre writing for children to continuously accumulate writing experience.

## **3. PRE WRITING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF 3-6 YEAR OLD CHILDREN**

The accumulation of children's pre writing experience is often requested from the perspective of adults, but we should put children first, fully understand and respect the laws and characteristics of physical and mental development of children aged 3-6, and carry out pre writing activities suitable for children based on their cognitive and learning needs.

### **3.1 Painting is children's first language**

Children aged 3-6 have not yet acquired formal writing skills, and their main way of expressing their understanding, thoughts, and emotions about the world is through painting. Almost all children have a strong interest in painting and hope to express their thoughts through it. In his book "The Growth of Creation and Mind," American psychologist Ron Field believes that children's art development goes through a graffiti period (2-4 years old), pre schema period (4-7 years old), schema period (7-9 years old), (9-11 years old), realistic stage (11, 12-14, 15 years old), and adolescent art stage (15-17 years old). He believes that in each stage of creation, children will spontaneously exhibit characteristics of emotional, intellectual, physical movements, perception, sociality, aesthetics, creativity, and other aspects of growth and development. Experts have proposed that "early writing is drawing, and early writing is an extension of drawing. It is a game of using pens, and it is not until the senior class that writing differentiates from the game of using pens and becomes a standardized writing behavior." Children aged 2-4 are in the graffiti stage, and at this age, rich graffiti materials such as watercolors, crayons, and pigments should be provided to encourage children to explore the rich traces of graffiti and stimulate their interest in graffiti activities. Children aged 4-7 are in the pre schema stage, which can guide them to observe and discover the details of object shapes. In painting, handicraft games, and in line, shape, and other forms, they can exercise their ability to operate meticulously, cultivate their ability to control and operate their pens, and lay a foundation for standardized writing in primary schools.

### **3.2 The developmental needs of Chinese children's Chinese language**

The mother tongue environment of Chinese children is Chinese, and Chinese conversations between family members encourage children to learn the commonly used Chinese character language in daily life from babbling to speaking. The mother tongue environment of Chinese provides children with a communication environment for pronunciation and language sense, laying the foundation for Chinese communication. The characteristic of Chinese characters is the organic unity of sound, form, and meaning. When children are able to communicate basic through oral language, they become interested in the "form" of Chinese characters on packaging, storefronts, books, and media around them. The unique square character characteristics of Chinese characters, as well as the pictorial nature of some Chinese characters, have a natural appeal to Chinese children. It can be seen that some children have a desire to recognize characters and will spontaneously "draw" crooked Chinese characters. Some children will also ask curious questions: What does this character mean? As children grow older, they are no longer

satisfied with just mastering oral language and communication, but have a spontaneous learning need to learn more Chinese characters, write and draw more Chinese characters, and understand the meanings of more Chinese characters. They hope to master more Chinese language for expression. Therefore, it is particularly important to respect the laws and characteristics of physical and mental development of children aged 3-6 years old, and to stimulate their interest in pre writing in art games and activities based on their cognitive and learning needs.

#### **4. THE PRACTICAL APPROACH OF PRE WRITING IN ART ACTIVITIES**

Art activities have gamification and operability, which meet the cognitive and learning needs of children in accumulating pre writing experience through painting and scribbling. Therefore, from the perspective of children, playful and operational activities should be created, allowing children to gradually accumulate pre writing experience through direct perception, practical operation, and personal experience.

##### **4.1 In art activities, stimulate pre writing interest**

3-4 year old children are in the kindergarten small class, and at this age, they have a great curiosity about everything around them. They have a strong curiosity and desire to explore various painting tools and materials. They can provide thick and short painting tools, such as oil painting sticks, watercolor pens, watercolor pigments, etc., which are easy for children to grasp and doodle with their whole hands. They can also provide sponge sticks, cotton swabs, comprehensive materials, etc., to enrich the gameplay of painting actions and stimulate children's interest in games. Provide a spacious and bright painting area, with half open or fully open paper that can be pasted on the wall, or laid flat on the table or ground, ensuring that they use their shoulder joints as the foundation to drive their arms and hands to perform large muscle movements in the graffiti game. At this stage, the graffiti marks of young children are often repetitive lines and irregular shapes. American educator Ron Field named this stage "named graffiti", and their images generally show repeated broken or spiral lines, or irregular circles. Adults cannot easily see the content of the graffiti, but young children can spontaneously tell that the content in the picture is their life experience. At this point, adults should not only evaluate children's graffiti paintings based on the sole criteria of "whether they are like or not" and "whether they are good or not". They should encourage and praise children more, listen to their expression of graffiti content, and protect their interest in writing.

##### **4.2 Accumulate pre writing experience in art activities**

Children aged 4-5 in the middle class gradually develop their hand muscles and bones, and can consciously exercise their ability to perform fine hand movements through various tabletop games such as pinching small beans and inserting mushroom nails. In the art activities, we will carry out activities such as origami, Paper Cuttings, clay sculpture, etc., which are operated by both hands, to exercise children's ability to coordinate and fine operate with both hands. We can provide tools such as line markers, oil painting sticks, watercolor pens, watercolor pigments, etc. to exercise children's finger grip method. At this stage, children interact with paper and pen to feel and control the lines and shapes formed by painting tools such as brushes on the paper. Their grip and posture enter a relatively stable stage, and adults can gradually correct children's incorrect grip posture. In the content of art activities, art activities with storyline content can be carried out, encouraging children to use forms such as pictures and symbols to record and express their lives, story plots, etc. At this stage, children talking to themselves while drawing is a very important and valuable expression. It is an important period for children to accumulate both pre writing experience and language experience. Adults need to create a suitable environment and provide sufficient space for children's language and painting expression, guiding them to accumulate rich pre writing experience.

##### **4.3 Prepare for pre writing during art activities**

Children aged 5-6 in the senior class have spontaneous literacy and writing behaviors, and can demonstrate correct writing postures. In painting works, they intentionally design the position of the upper, lower, left and right images to help children learn brush skills from top to bottom and left to right. After thousands of years of development, Chinese characters have been summarized as highly refined symbols. The strokes of Chinese characters are varied, such as horizontal, vertical, lifting, folding, hooking, flicking, and pressing, and their structures are also very diverse. The writing of Chinese characters requires high precision in motor skills. However, we can filter out Chinese characters with simple strokes and structures that are commonly encountered in daily life, especially pictographic characters such as mountains, rivers, clouds, rain, sun, and moon. We can focus on these types of Chinese characters and design graphic and narrative drawing activities to provide children with rich painting tool

materials, especially the pencil tool used for primary school writing. We encourage children to continue practicing fine and smooth line control skills in playful and narrative art activities, and boldly try drawing pictographic characters to understand simplified Chinese characters. This not only helps to understand the development of Chinese characters for thousands of years, but also prepares children for writing before entering primary school.

The accumulation of children's pre writing experience is not achieved overnight and cannot be mechanically repeated for writing training. On the basis of respecting children's cognitive characteristics, rich painting tools and materials should be provided to stimulate children's interest in pre writing in graffiti games they like, guide children to coordinate their hands, eyes, and brains in painting, encourage children to boldly tell in art activities, accumulate language experience and pre writing experience, and prepare for children's scientific transition from early childhood to early childhood.

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## Author Profile

**Lingling Li** (1977- ), female, Santai Sichuan, Associate Professor of Fine Arts, Master's degree. Sichuan Preschool Educators College, Mianyang, Sichuan 621000. Research direction: Fine Arts in Vocational Preschool Education and Children's Art Education.