

# *I Can Draw* **Pre-Writing Program**



## **Early Childhood Curriculum**

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## **Dedication and Acknowledgements**

This book is dedicated to all children and adults who struggle with alphabet letter discrimination, reading, and writing tasks because they did not receive supportive guidance and clear instruction.

Know that you are very capable, not dyslexic nor disabled,  
and you CAN BE very artistically creative and expressive!  
Begin again and do what you are naturally gifted to accomplish!

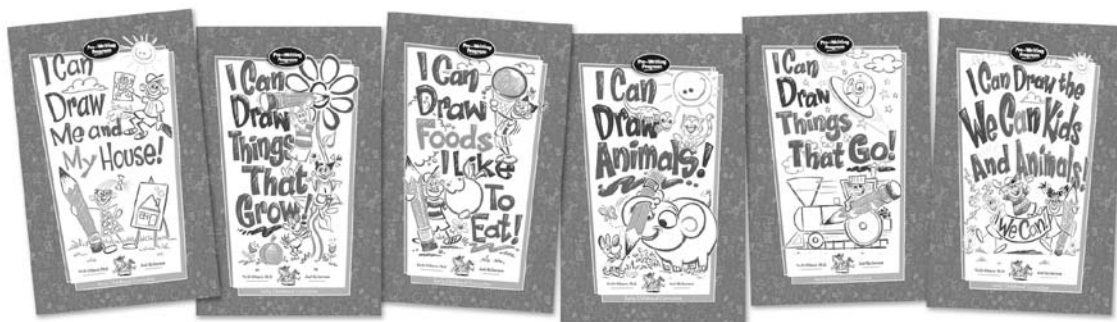
## **Many heartfelt thanks to...**

Joel Hickerson for your childlike heart and commitment to this program. Your creative talents and love for children are captured in these drawings.

Teachers for your participation, encouragement, and support. Your desire to help children learn successfully is an inspiration and a blessing!

Many children for sharing ideas and suggestions that made this program fun and instructional. I appreciate your hard work! You are truly God's greatest gifts!

# Welcome to *I Can Draw*, A Pre-Writing Program for Children



## Overview and Rationale

*I Can Draw* is an instructional program that helps children develop skills for printing and writing using art materials and activities that are fun and proven to be successful. In this program, children learn five pre-writing strokes that are used to draw objects and print letters and numerals. Teachers and children share instructional activities that include big book stories containing step-by-step directions that demonstrate how to use the strokes and draw objects in the illustrations. Children are encouraged to creatively express thoughts and feelings as they participate in activities that develop the prerequisite writing skills for printing and writing.

Initial instruction begins by encouraging children to experiment with art materials to explore their freedom of expression while using a relaxed body posture and correct grip that reduces muscle fatigue. They enjoy art experiences using larger muscle movements while developing the smaller muscles needed for printing. Children learn the prerequisite skills for printing by drawing, coloring, and painting.

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*I Can Draw* is a pre-writing program used to develop fine motor skills. It is not formal art instruction.

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Children develop confidence and competence as they participate in teacher-directed activities in *I Can Draw*. Creativity abounds as they learn what to do.

## Copying, Printing, and Writing Are Not the Same Things

The *I Can Draw* Pre-Writing Program involves instructional activities using art materials and experiences before introducing paper and pencil tasks. The activities are sequentially presented, scaffolded from easy to difficult. Children learn how to combine five pre-writing strokes to draw shapes and create designs before printing letters and numerals. Teachers observe children's progress, provide corrective feedback and use data from observations to set reasonable expectations for mastery.

Some early childhood programs adopt unreasonable expectations for young children by requiring them to print their names using alphabet letters that are meaningless because no explicit instruction has been provided. Consider the demands placed on young children when they are expected to "write" their names. They have to recognize the whole word (name), "read" the name, and print the letters in the correct order to spell it.

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Without explicit instruction, children guess how to "copy" or imitate their names using graphic drawings. They guess and draw their names and often develop poor writing habits.

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Consider the difference in copying a name and correctly printing or writing a name. Copying is NOT printing or writing. Copying means "to imitate or make something that looks like something else." Young children copy to imitate an image or name in print. When they attempt to print their names before instruction in alphabet awareness or printing, children are using symbols without an understanding about purpose or use.