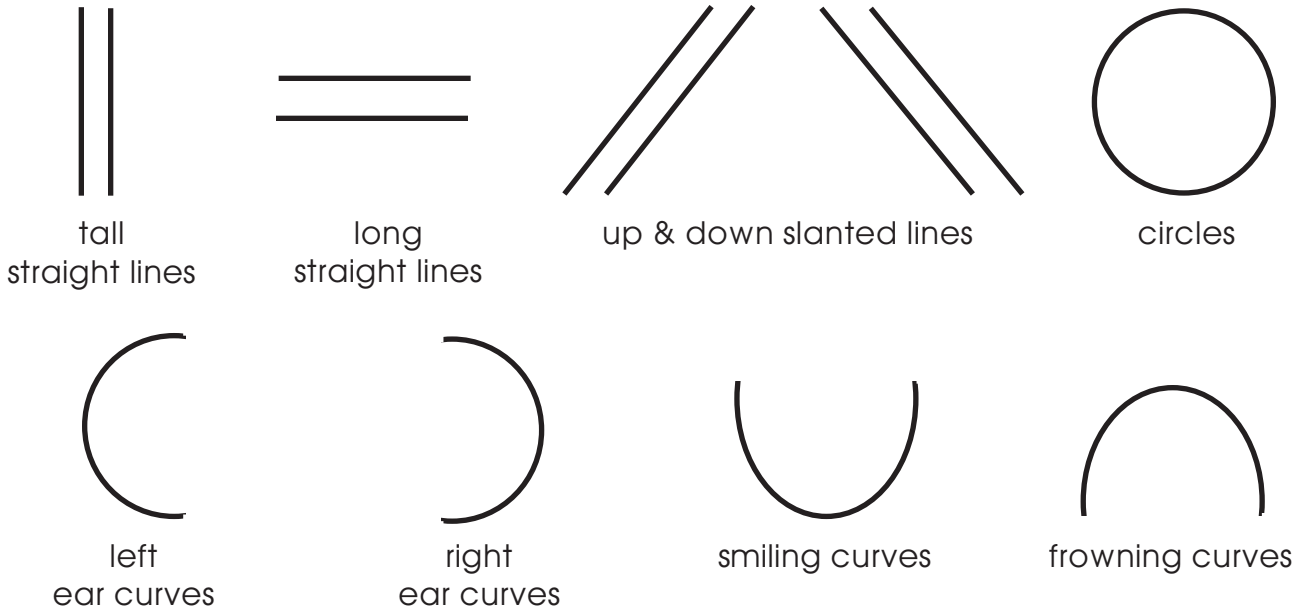
Introduction

Learning how to print can either be a frustrating and challenging experience for a young child, or it can be a fun and successful experience. All the activities in *Pre-Handwriting Practice* have been designed to make learning how to print a successful experience.

So, what makes the difference? Often, teachers and parents present learning how to print letters in alphabetical sequence. Developmentally, this makes very little sense. Children need to learn how to control a pencil and how to make various handwriting strokes before they are able to print letters. *Pre-Handwriting Practice* gives children the opportunity to learn how to control a pencil and then learn specific handwriting strokes, which then enables them to print a variety of alphabet letters.

First, children are taught how to make "tall straight lines" and then "long straight lines." When children are able to print these lines they are then able to print "I, i, L, t, T, F, E, H, and I. Children immediately feel successful and are learning correct handwriting skills.

The strokes taught in *Pre-Handwriting Practice* are as follows:



DIRECTIONS FOR THE TOUCH AND TRACE LETTERS

To aid in the developmental process of learning how to print, use the "Touch and Trace" cards found on pages 56–64. Reproduce these cards onto card stock and cut out along the dotted lines. Trace over each letter with glitter glue, puff paint, or a craft glue. Allow to dry. The children will be able to trace over the letters with their fingers and "feel" how each letter is formed. This tactile sensation will help imprint the correct direction of each letter, and help the child remember the proper strokes. **Use a touch and trace letter before each individual letter is introduced.** Have each of the children make their own set of "Touch and Trace" letter cards to take home for additional practice.

EXTRA IDEAS TO STRENGTHEN FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Children need a large variety of experiences to strengthen fine motor skills and to learn how to print. Finger painting, modeling with play dough, opening and closing clothes pins, using scissors and snipping the edges of paper, peg boards, and beading are all wonderful activities that will build small muscle strength and coordination.