

# SQUIGGLE WHILST YOU WIGGLE

By Shonette Bason



The journey of a squiggle begins, not when a child is chronologically 4 or 5 years old, but the early writing process starts on conception of the child. During the first 8 weeks from conception the neural plate is formed, it then develops a neural groove, neural crest cells form and the neural groove deepens to form a neural-fold.

Basically from the start of the embryo's life the brain is forming and it is from the brain's connection to the body that hand-eye co-ordination and fine muscle control are formed. We make the mistake in believing that a child's chronological age deems them to be educationally ready to write when in fact if their brain and body are not married in co-ordination and balance then writing is going to be something they find extremely Difficult.

We often see in the primary classroom children disengaged from writing as an Activity, which can cause difficulties for the teacher and the pupils. One of my own children was so disenchanted with writing that his teacher wrote in his school report 'he will be a success at anything he does as long as it does not involve literacy'. My son had movement issues and once these were addressed went on to love to read and write.

I began to work on the program of 'Squiggle whilst you Wiggle' when I led a Foundation Stage in an area where age on entry was extremely low. 85% of the children entering the setting were age scored below 2 years 2 months even though chronologically they were age 3 years or above. Their co-ordination was poor, their literacy skills were next to nothing and on the Foundation Stage profile they scored extremely low in reading, writing and linking sounds to letters. Neurologically they were not developmentally ready for this formal education but in terms of raising standards I wanted to find a way to raise their developmental age, bringing it in line with their chronological age. I also wanted to use neuro developmental exercises to assist the children in a fun and exciting way towards loving early writing.

So here starts the journey of the squiggle ... It is important to remember that this journey affects a child's literacy skills for life and so Squiggle Whilst you Wiggle needs to be implemented with a FEW approach! Fun, Excitement and Willingness. The fun and excitement become evident in the activities set out in the book but the willingness needs to come from the adult participating in the child's development and learning process. A willingness to accept that the modern child Comes from a different world, a visual society.

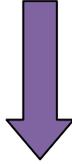
Many factors delay a child developmentally and a child is less likely now to be as well co-ordinated as our physical world is less demanding, but the child's visual capacity has increased. Years ago children walked miles to school and were glad to sit down at a table to learn, children rarely walk a great distance and exercise is something people have to program into their lives. A developing child needs movement so that the brain can gain control over it's body.

The adult participating in this program needs a willingness to let go of 'old' ways and enjoy the fun and excitement of Squiggle Whilst You Wiggle. With a FEW approach the learning and development will flow freely and the child involved will, through fun and excitement, become more co-ordinated, balanced and excited to literacy. Please remember: IF IT'S NOT FUN STOP DOING IT! Move on to the next section or try something else.

# Basic lessons layout

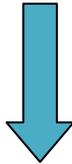
Large gross motor movements in the air to the song using 2 of something. 2 wands, 2 pens, tinsel, pom poms, feather bow.

When then can do this confidently in the air, we move on..



Do the same movements to the same song on the paper rolled out, chalk and tarmac, whiteboards, paint on tables, shaving foam, mash, paint on cardboard..

(this may be session 2 you do this or half way through the song from being in the air).



Then DOODLE with your NOODLE- using your writing hand to practise forming the letters (again to a song but chanting the RWI letter formation chant too).

For more info on doodle see back page.

Done over 2 days Or all done in one day and the song is played twice. Depends on time constraints.	Song first time	Day 1	<u>2 different paces to take, depending on ability of children</u>	
	Song Second time	Day 2	Large gross dance	Half gross dance, half floor dance
			Half dance on paper, floor etc, doodle with noodle (letter formation).	mini gross dance, mini dance on floor, most doodle with noodle (letter formation).

# Letters: l i t

## Up and down! Side to Side

The first simple move of mark making is to get the child to make the movements up and down.

1. Dance out the movement first

Up, up, UP!

*Shake your arms upwards and jump UP.*

Down, down, DOWN!

*Shake your arms to the floor and bend your knees so you are close to the floor.*

2. SIDE to SIDE

*Left, then right, then try and cross arms over.*

Perfect song- Jackson 5 ABC



Letters: k, u, y

Wiggle and Wiggle

Get your pom poms and boas out to wiggle away to the chorus. I stamp out the verse as though I am walking to the office or climbing a ladder!

Good Song: 9 to 5 by Dolly Parton



## Letters: c o a d

### Circles, circles and Squircles

**Song: *Rolling, Rolling like a River***

This song is fast and pacey and you can really get large scale arm movements going to create circle motions in the air.

I recommend start with big circles and use the 'three bear approach' - Big, medium and small.

Tip - I draw out a smiley face, circle eyes, big arch mouth and zig zag hair its slow enough to have 3 movements included.



Letters: m n h

Arches and Arches

Creating arches is fun to draw - squiggle bridges and rainbows but remember to use two hands.

Do large full arches with both hands one way then the other. Then make each hand make an arch.

Good Song: mama do the hump



Letters: e, g, q

In and Out

This Squiggle is made by circling inwards and spiralling outwards.  
Good song- I am walking on Sunshine -  
Catrina and The Waves.

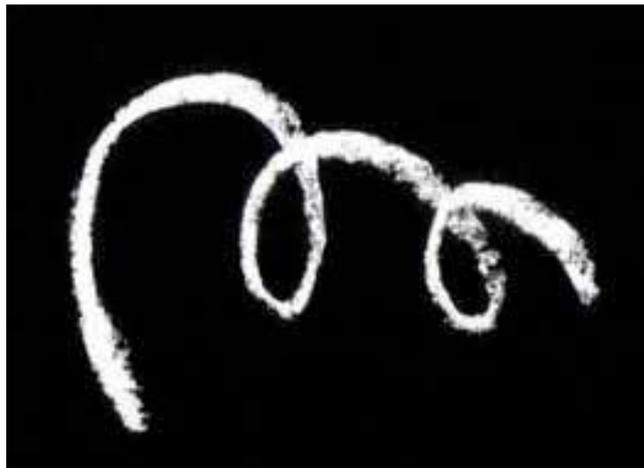


Letters: r, b, k, p

Reverse and turn

This Squiggle stretches and reverses the previous 'in and out' spiral. It's the part of the journey where it made need a slower song.

Some Michael Buble - home



Letters: s, j, f, z x

Lay down straight eight

This Squiggle is the most difficult for children developmentally. It is the letter S and the number 8. For ease we need to lay it on its side for formation. The quicker the pace of the Squiggle here the easier it will be.

Recommended song for lay down 8?  
Pointer Sisters - I am so excited



## Letters: v, w, x

### Straight, straight lines

I recommend Madonna and Justin Timberlake's 'I only got 4 minutes to save the world'. The tune is funky but also has a jagged beat that will help us make straight lines.

At the start of the song move your arms around the body like a ticking clock. Almost turn robot in this dance to simply create a line movement that eventually will end up on the page.

This is a great squiggle to do in chalk outdoors on large pavement areas or tarmac surfaces.

Another good song- walking like an Egyptian.



# Letter formation order

i l t u y

c o a d

n m h

r b k p

g q e

j f s

v w z x

# Doodle with your Noodle

*Where the squiggle becomes one line.*

Eventually the child needs to learn to form letters with one dominant hand. They will find a comfortable one as their fine muscle control improves. Doodle With Your Noodle is a more exciting approach to letter formation and handwriting.



## The Magic 3

1. Air
2. Carpet
3. Board/paper/messy

*Always chanting the RWI rhymes as forming letters.*