

12 Warm-Up Drawing Exercises

1. Doodle dash

Materials: Pencil and paper

Instructions: Ask the children to draw as many different doodles as they can in 60 seconds. These can be swirls, zigzags, dots, faces, patterns or shapes. Repeat with a different theme, like “only wiggly lines” or “tiny monsters.”

2. Silly scribble creatures

Materials: Pencil, pen or crayon and paper

Instructions: Ask the children to close their eyes and draw a scribble. Then, open their eyes and turn their scribble into a silly creature by adding eyes, legs, wings or other features.

3. 5-Second shapes

Materials: Pencil and paper

Instructions: Call out a simple shape (e.g. triangle, circle, square). Give children 5 seconds to draw it as quickly and neatly as they can. Then challenge them to turn the shape into something else (e.g. a triangle into a slice of pizza).

4. Mirror drawing

Materials: Magazine pictures (or other simple pictures cut in half) Pencil and paper, glue stick

Instructions: Ask the children to stick the picture they've been given to one of their papers. Then, they draw an exact mirror image of the picture on the other side. Could be time-limited for an extra challenge or a drawing they could spend more time on and come back to over a series of 10-minute slots.

5. Tiny art challenge

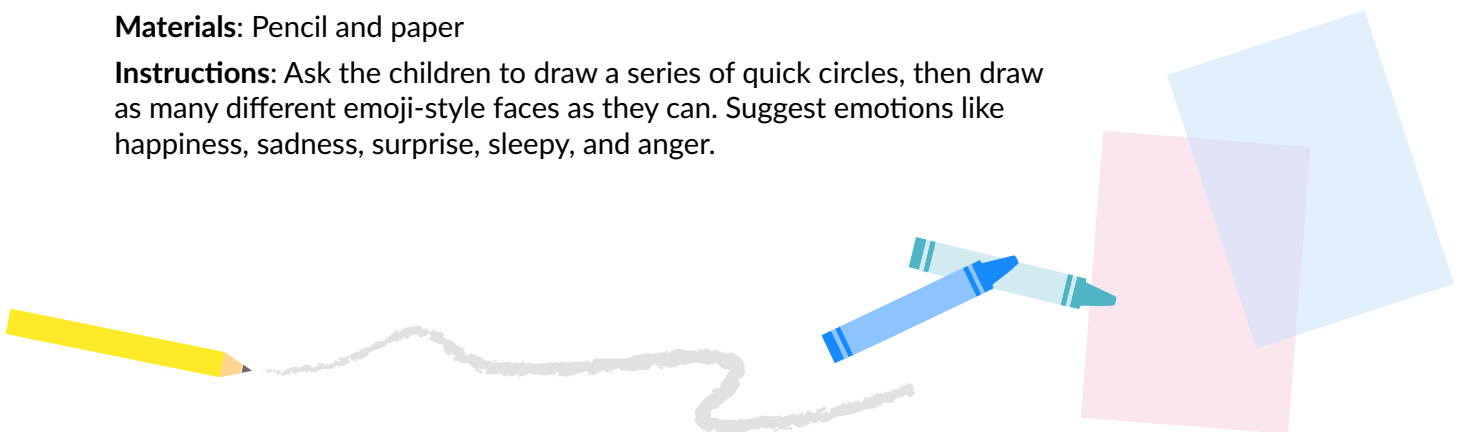
Materials: Pencil, pen or felt tips and paper (cut into small squares)

Instructions: Give each child a small piece of paper and challenge them to draw a complete scene in a tiny space. Ideas: a tiny garden, a tiny house, or a tiny underwater world. Alternatively, children draw around a glue stick lid and form a circle that they have to draw their scene inside.

6. Emoji faces

Materials: Pencil and paper

Instructions: Ask the children to draw a series of quick circles, then draw as many different emoji-style faces as they can. Suggest emotions like happiness, sadness, surprise, sleepy, and anger.



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7. Line continuum

Materials: Pencil and paper

Instructions: Ask children to draw one continuous line across the page without taking their pencils off. (You could do a 5-second countdown until they have to stop!) Then turn that line into a scene or object—perhaps a rollercoaster, animal or maze.

8. What's in the square?

Materials: Pencil (or pen) and a square piece of paper no bigger than 15cm

Instructions: Draw a small square in the centre of the page. Then another round it, then another. In each area challenge them to create a different pattern.

9. Mystery drawing

Materials: Pencil and paper

Instructions: Call out a list of random objects or features, one at a time (e.g. “a hat... wings... three eyes... a tail...”). Ask the children to include each item in a single drawing as you go. The results will be wonderfully wacky!

10. Roll-a-Doodle

Materials: Dice, pencil and paper

Instructions: Create a simple chart where each number (1–6) represents a drawing prompt (e.g. 1 = robot, 2 = animal, 3 = monster, 4 = vehicle, 5 = food, 6 = character). Children roll the dice and draw the item that matches. You can make it trickier by rolling twice—first roll for the subject, second roll for a random twist (e.g. “with sunglasses”, “on the moon”).

11. Mindful doodles

Materials: Drawing pens or pencils and paper and calming music

Instructions: Draw whatever lines or shapes the music being played makes your hand draw. Try squiggly lines that cross over and form areas to draw more lines or patterns inside.

11. Draw with your wrong hand

Materials: crayons, graphite sticks or pencils

Instructions: Ask the children to draw a simple picture (e.g. a cat, a house or a tree) or something they can see (even doing portraits of their friends) using their non-dominant hand. The results are usually funny and unexpected. It's a great way to loosen up and remove pressure from “perfect” drawing.

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