**Activity**

Let your child explore writing with chunky (thick) non-toxic crayons and paper! Give him a choice of colors (e.g., say, “Do you want blue or green?"). Show him how to draw a line from top to bottom and see if he will imitate it. You can also make a circular stroke and see if your child will imitate that. He may or may not, and it's OK to just follow his lead. If he scribbles, talk about the color he is using. You can also use thick sidewalk chalk and take this activity outside on a nice day!

**Crosswalk to Healthy Beginnings**

This activity supports development in relation to the following *Healthy Beginnings* indicators:

* Personal/Social A1
* Language Development B6
* Physical Development A2

**Possible Intervention Strategies & Supports**

* This is great age to allow your child to “draw” while standing at an easel or other elevated surface. This upright position allows him to work on strengthening his shoulder and wrist muscles. Have him practice large scribbling motions to help gain the control he will need later for smaller, more controlled drawing and writing.
* Another fun way to practice early writing is to allow your child to “write” in goopy substances, such as pudding or whipped cream on his high chair tray. You may want to strip him down to his diaper first though! Getting messy is half the fun.
* If your child isn’t interested or has difficulty holding a crayon, consider taping a big piece of paper on a wall, the refrigerator, or a door. He may find it easier to stand in front of the paper to color.
* Pair sounds with different crayon strokes. Encourage your child to not only imitate the stroke, but the sound as well. For example, for a straight line stroke say, “zip” or “zoop”; for repeated circular strokes say, “woo-woo-woo”; for a cross say, “tee-tah”; and for a scribble say, “scribble, scribble, scribble.” Be sure to consider your child’s language abilities when deciding which sounds to pair with the strokes. Some sounds are more difficulty for his little mouth to make than others (e.g., “z” sounds).
* If your child is hesitant to hold a crayon, that’s OK. Experiment with other writing materials, such as washable markers, chunky chalk, or washable paints with a brush. Remember, any mark your child makes should be celebrated!

**Tips**

Around 18 months, your child will most likely still be holding a crayon with a fisted grasp. As your child approaches 2 years, he will still be using a fisted grasp, but you may notice that his fist is thumb-down. Both of these techniques are typical and will change into a more mature grasp in time. Don't force your child to hold his crayon the “right” way at this age. Just let him have fun! Also don’t be worried at this age if your child switches between hands or even holds a crayon in both hands. This is a normal part of development at this time.