

Trace Letters on Rice

Is your child eager to practice writing? Do they love to play with their food? Enjoy making designs in their mashed potatoes or carrot puree? Transform their inclination to play with their food from taboo to “yahoo”! They'll get a big kick out of working on their handwriting...using rice!

What You Need:

- 1 large baking sheet
- 1-2 cups uncooked rice
- Pencil
- Lined paper

What You Do:

1. Sit your child down at a table with a large baking sheet with 1-2 cups of uncooked rice spread evenly across it
2. Draw a line across the top of the rice, and one across the bottom. Then, using the pointer finger of the dominant hand, show your child how to draw the following handwriting strokes, which are the building blocks for most letters of the alphabet:
 - Straight line: begin at the top, and draw straight to the bottom
 - Straight line: begin at the left, and draw straight to the right
 - "Slant left": begin at the top, and draw a diagonal line left, eventually connecting to the base line
 - "Slant right": begin at the top, and draw a diagonal line right, eventually connecting to the base line
 - Circle- draw an “o”
 - Half circle: show your child how to draw one to the right, and one to the left (as in d and b)
3. Once they've practiced a few times in the rice, ask your child to write the same strokes on the lined paper.
4. When the strokes themselves become easy, it's time to move on to the ABC's. Slide out that baking sheet and ask your child to write each letter in both its capital and lowercase form. As they finish writing in the rice, have them write the letter on the paper as well, to reinforce things.



Still feeling crafty? You can extend the activity by using the leftover rice for a different purpose. Now that your child has written all of their letters onto paper, have them glue rice on top. It may sound a little odd, but working with rice and glue helps improve hand dexterity (which works those writing muscles!). Plus, it helps kids think about the shape of the letters, and the direction they moved while writing them. Dried corn, macaroni, raisins, or uncooked noodles also work well for this purpose. So raid that pantry, and get your kid thinking about those ABC's!