

How To: **Create a Drawing Den**

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Drawing helps to develop children's imaginations and conversations as well as lay foundations for handwriting

Free drawing acts as 'track training' for handwriting as well as being a wonderful activity in itself to develop the imagination and encourage conversation.

Creating a 'Drawing Den' in your classroom provides a quiet place for children to focus on activities that interest them.

Ingredients:

- A small area that you can enclose
- Large sheets of flat or corrugated card
- A small table and two chairs
- A variety of drawing materials
- Changing displays of children's drawing
- Images to stimulate and inspire children's creative work

Make

- The aim is to make the area as attractive and cosy as possible for two children to work in at once. Use large sheets of flat or corrugated card to enclose a small table, and two chairs or stools. Fix the card to the table or the surrounding display walls with staples or parcel tape.
- Decorate the walls with mounted examples of a range of children's drawings, and examples of artists' work – both realistic and abstract – that might engage and inspire them. Change these regularly to reflect the wider themes that you are exploring in the classroom.
- Supply a variety of pens and crayons in different colours and sizes, and different grades of pencil, from hard to soft.
- Supply a variety of paper in different colours, textures and sizes, including very tiny (such as 10cm squares) to encourage tightness of line.
- Be ready to supply a subject for drawing if necessary, or to stretch children who always focus on the same subject. Subjects could include: self-portraits, local events, favourite games at playtime, television characters, home, family and friends, holidays and favourite toys.
- Encourage children to experiment with different sizes of paper and different drawing media.
- Encourage children to cover the paper with their work, to finish their work and to clean up afterwards.
- Ask children to put their name on their work.
- Celebrate children's achievement in this area.

Tip

Allow only two children into the area at a time to maintain a quite atmosphere.
If you have an easel in the classroom you could add this to the den for the children to work at.

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