La pluie tombe

A little rain. A first discovery in making downward marks.
Toddlers and preschoolers, with an adult • French prompts, English guidance

Print page 2. Choose one tool. Explore together.

Read this page on screen. Page 3 is an optional observation sheet; page 4 contains adaptations, source notes and permission to copy. US Letter (8½ × 11 in), portrait. Print page 2 at Actual size / 100%; the other pages are optional.

Prepare a simple space

Offer the child page and a washable crayon or marker. For painting, use thicker paper and washable, non-toxic paint. Keep the paper steady on a comfortable surface and protect the table. No cutting, laminating or special equipment is needed.

Try these four small moments

1 Notice

Look at rain through a window, or point to the cloud.

« La pluie tombe. » The rain is falling.

2 Show

On a separate scrap, slowly make one downward mark.

« Ça descend… stop. » It goes down… stop.

3 Invite

Offer the tool, then pause. The child may watch or try.

« À toi, si tu veux. » Your turn, if you want.

4 Create

Let the child make their own rain. Describe what you see.

« Tu as fait un trait ! » You made a line!

Follow the child

Begin with a few enjoyable minutes. Dabs, scribbles, gestures and watching are welcome. No repeated French answer is required. Stop or pause when interest fades or the child seems uncomfortable. The page does not need to be filled.

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La pluie tombe

Fais tomber la pluie, si tu veux.



Prénom (facultatif) : _____

OPTIONAL • FOR ADULTS

Notice the discovery

Use brief notes across separate visits. Observe quietly; this is not a test.
Keep notes private. A child code is enough; photographs are not required.

Child code: _____ Observer: _____

Record the kind of attempt: E = free exploration; I = imitation after seeing you draw; C = copying a finished model. T = tracing, only if used separately. Watching is participation too. Keep these experiences distinct when comparing notes.

VISIT 1 Date: _____ Tool / surface: _____

Attempt type / support offered: _____

Interest, gestures or words: _____

Movement noticed / comfort: _____

One next adjustment: _____

VISIT 2 Date: _____ Tool / surface: _____

Attempt type / support offered: _____

Interest, gestures or words: _____

Movement noticed / comfort: _____

One next adjustment: _____

VISIT 3 Date: _____ Tool / surface: _____

Attempt type / support offered: _____

Interest, gestures or words: _____

Movement noticed / comfort: _____

One next adjustment: _____

Look for: choosing or returning to the tool; an intentional downward movement; starting or stopping; comfortable use of the hands. Note what happened, not whether the page looked “right”. Compare similar tools, surfaces and levels of help.

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Make it fit your child

A playful invitation to explore movement, language and art.

A gentler beginning

Offer blank paper or a larger sheet if the printed page feels limiting. Let the child explore any marks first. Use a dry crayon if wet textures are unwelcome. A child may simply watch, point or return another day.

A small next step

When the child is interested, invite another downward mark or explore short and long rain. Change one thing at a time. There is no need to stay under the cloud, follow a path, count strokes or complete a row.

Optional practical-life connection

Before or after drawing, invite squeezing a large sponge into a bowl with a little water. Supervise closely and put water away afterwards. This offers a different hand experience; it is not a prerequisite for drawing or a substitute for making marks.

Comfort and access

Let the child use either hand. Model beside them rather than moving their hand for them. Adjust the tool, space or seating for comfort. Use materials suitable for the child’s age and supervise throughout. Persistent pain or marked difficulty in everyday hand activities can be discussed with the family and an appropriate professional.

What you might notice

Your child might draw a long raindrop or ask for more rain in French.

Brief source notes

Health Service Executive: Pre-writing and formation (practical guidance).
Association Montessori Internationale: Indirect Preparations for Handwriting (educational rationale).
Johnston et al. (2025): Pilot randomised prewriting trial (no significant advantage over comparison group).

Free to use at home and in your classroom

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