

# The Squiggle

## A CLEL Silver Bell Award Book for WRITE

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As her class walks to the park, a girl spots a discarded bit of red cord on the ground and she immediately begins to imagine what shapes she could make with it. The cord becomes a dragon, a cloud, and even fireworks as she plays. *The Squiggle* is an accessible exploration of representational thinking, a key concept in print literacy.

### Activity Ideas for *The Squiggle*:

- Give the children a piece of cord, string, yarn, or ribbon. Can they arrange it on the table or floor so it makes a picture, or the start of a picture? Ask them to tell you what they see in the shape, then tell them what you see. Pretending that one object can stand for another (imagining that a squiggle is a dragon, or a building block is a cell phone, or a stick is a magic wand) is a cognitive milestone children need to reach before they can understand that the letters on the page can stand for words and ideas.
- Look around your room or talk a walk around the block and look for shapes. Have the children talk about what they see. What do stop signs, books, doors, and balls look like? Do they have straight edges? Curves? Does a door look like a rectangle? Does a book look like a rectangle too? Noticing how shapes are the same and different (a rectangle can be many sizes or colors and still be a rectangle) will help children as they work to recognize that the same letter can be written or printed in many different ways.
- Show the children how to make “snakes” out of play-dough, a fine-motor task that will help with writing skills. Ask them to make the snakes into the letters of their names. You write an example of each letter on a paper for younger children to look at as they work. Children learn through all their senses, and the physical task of making straight and curvy lines with the play-dough can help them understand what distinguishes one letter from another. Another day they can try to make letters of the alphabet out of their bodies for more sensory-based learning.

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The CLEL Bell Picture Book Awards are given to books that provide excellent support of early literacy development in young children. For more information and for other activity sheets, visit <http://www.clel.org> and select the CLEL Bell Awards tab.



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