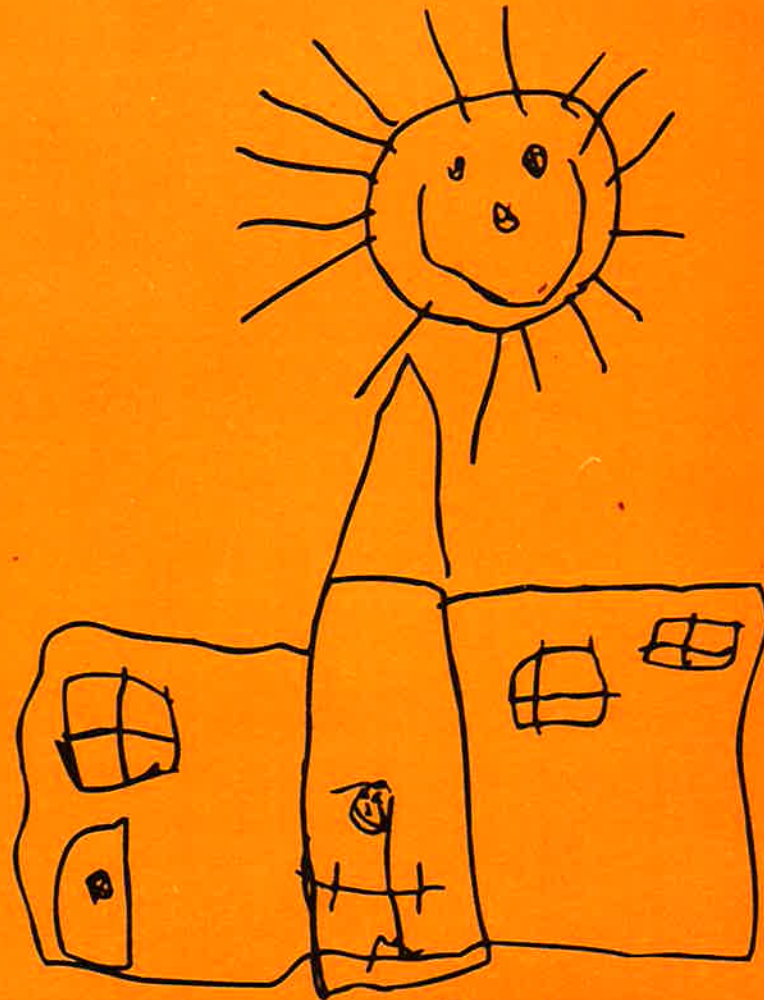


I CAN DRAW THE SUN



Drawing by Sean Prior Age 5

PRE-WRITING FOR 3 TO 5 YEAR OLDS

BY DIDI A. NIVEDITA and KETANA BARDWELL

I CAN DRAW THE SUN

EARLY WRITING FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

by

DIDI A. NIVEDITA and KETANA BARDWELL

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction and Early Writing Lines	3
How to Use the Stories	7
When to Introduce the Early Writing Lines	8
 Stories	
Rope - The Magic Rope	10
Road - Which Way Home?	12
Fence - The New Fence	14
Tracks - The Railway Tracks	16
Ladder - The Fire Fighters	18
Slide - The Playground	20
Hill - Winter Fun	22
Rain - The Rain Wizard	24
Mountains - Red Cap	26
Ears - The Unhappy Clown	28
Ballon - The Magic Balloons	30
Sun - Sunshine Children	32
Waves - A Trip to Magic Island	34
Smoke - Smoke Signals	36

Introduction

To small children, the letters of the alphabet are mysterious things. While they may be curious about the world of writing, it takes time for children to fully understand the rules and elements of writing. A child may know that letters have meaning, but understanding exactly what each represents is at first difficult. The muscles and bones in a young child's hands are also not fully developed. To write letters which look like those in a book are difficult tasks for these untrained muscles. In a meaningful and imaginative way, this book will help children develop the muscles and skills needed for writing.

'I Can Draw the Sun' is a system of stories that motivate children to develop their early writing. Each story focuses around a simple drawing of a familiar object, such as a ladder or balloon. These drawings are also parts of letters. For example, a ladder is similar to the lines of the letters H, I, T, F and E. A balloon resembles the letters O, P and Q. After the story, the children are asked if they can draw the ladder or balloon. As these objects have meaning to the children, they feel a definite goal in attempting to draw them. It is not necessary for the children to draw the objects in a specified fashion. This system of stories and drawings simply gives an opportunity for the children to explore and expand their skills in a creative manner. It is a positive experience in which the children use only their ability as a guide.

Fun and fantasy fills every story. The children may rescue a cat with a magic rope or fly with a balloon to help an injured fairy. Each story is personalized by using the children's names for the characters. This affirms the children's efforts and inspires them to draw themselves and the different figures of the story. These stories also present healthy values of caring for others and the environment.

Following are the early writing drawings for the letters: I L T H F E i l t:

Drawing

rope



road



fence



railway tracks



ladder



The following lines develop skills for letters: X A V W N M K Z Y

k v w x y z

slide



skiing

rain

mountain



The following lines develop skills for letters: U J S D P B R

a b c d e f g h i j m n o p q r s u

ears



balloon



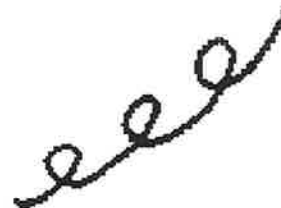
sun



waves



smoke



HOW TO USE THE STORIES

Materials needed: a large chalkboard, small slates for the children (if available) and colored chalk.

The parent or teacher draws the story on the blackboard as it is told. Many people hesitate to draw as they feel unsatisfied with the outcomes. Contrary to this belief, anyone can draw a story. The aim of telling these stories is not to teach art, but to involve the imagination and inspire the children to draw for themselves. If the adult is less self-conscious about their drawings, she/he will find that this is a fun and engaging way to tell stories. The drawings need not be complicated. Simple stick figures will satisfy young children.

Sample drawings accompany each story. First, draw the basic background - trees, houses and so on. Next, draw the figures. The storyteller erases and redraws the figures according to the story. Sometimes only the facial expressions need to be changed. For example, from a sad face to a happy face. The stories are generally short and do not require much drawing.

Include all the children in the story by drawing a figure for each child. Children love to see themselves being drawn and will eagerly wait to see what happens next. As the children are part of the story, they have incentive to recreate it for themselves. It is best to tell the story to a group of six or seven children. For larger groups of children simplify the drawing, or four or five children can be chosen each day to be in the story.

The storyteller has the freedom to adjust the story according to the children. Add local culture or themes to increase their meaning. According to the interest of the children, the storyteller may shorten or lengthen the story. Stories are more appealing if the adult becomes a 'storyteller', and avoids simply reading the book. This entails using different voices and making the characters move. For example, when a cat climbs up a tree, make little taps with the chalk up the tree, as if the cat is climbing it.

Initially, when the parent or teacher introduces the system, the children trace over the drawing on the chalkboard after the story. As the children become more confident, they can draw for themselves instead of tracing. Small slates are a good medium for the children to use. Drawing on paper can sometimes become frustrating to a child if they want to change something. Chalkboards can be erased repeatedly as the child experiments. It is better to use paper when the child shows some confidence in their drawing.

WHEN TO INTRODUCE EARLY WRITING

While children tend to develop skills around the same age, no two children are alike. The best way to determine whether it is appropriate for a child to begin early writing is through observation. Watch each child as they draw during free time. Look to see whether they draw the beginning of figures. Does the child sit for a long time while drawing? Is the child beginning to name some of their drawings? If the parent or teacher observes such behavior, the child is ready to begin. Even if a child is not ready to draw the actual objects, they still will enjoy the stories.

Sometimes children may have difficulty with the later drawings of ears, balloon, sun, waves and smoke as they are more circular. If this is the case, simply repeat the first stories and then try the circular drawings again.

FURTHER ENRICHMENT

These early writing stories are springboards for many different activities. After the children have heard a few stories told on the blackboard, they will begin to tell their own stories. Their natural inclination to fantasy allows them to become avid storytellers. Teachers who have used this early writing system have found that the children quickly begin to make up their own stories. Some children have been observed for thirty minutes or more creating elaborate stories on the chalkboard.

Using the children's own stories further enriches their language development. Ask the children to make up a story about one of the early writing drawings. The children draw the story and dictate it to the teacher who writes it below the drawing. These stories may then be collected and made into individual or class books. This develops expressive language, self esteem and creativity. It also will help create a love of books and literature in the children.

STORIES

Rope

The Magic Rope

Once the children from (name school) went for a walk to the store. There was (name each child as they are drawn). As they were walking along, they saw an old woman who looked very sad. "Why are you so sad?" asked (child's name).

"I am sad because a dog chased my cat up the tree. Now she can't get down," cried the old woman. "What can we do? The tree is too big to climb," said (child's name).

"I know," said (child's name), "I have a magic rope."

(Child's name) took out his/her magic rope. He/she tapped the rope three times. Slowly, the rope magically climbed to the top of the tree.

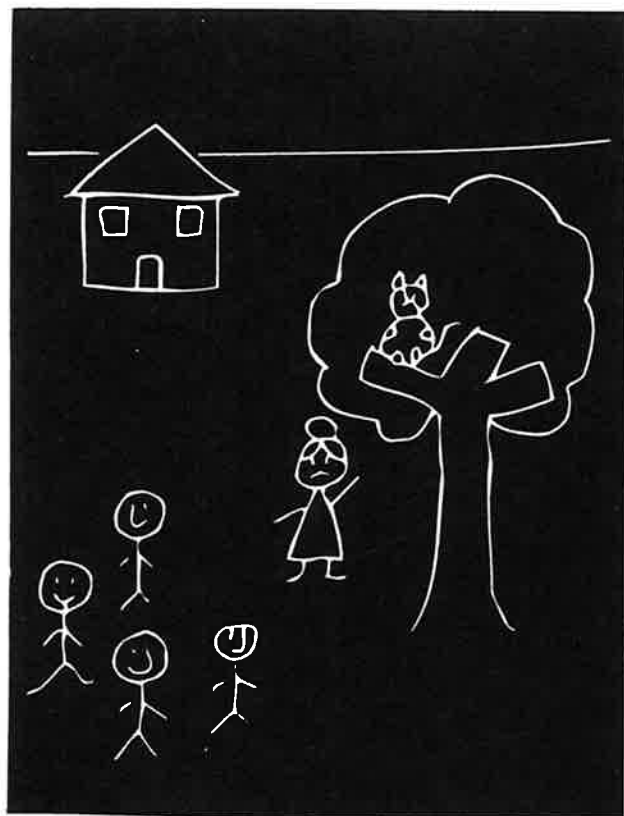
The old woman called, "Here kitty kitty. Climb down the rope."

Carefully the cat climbed down the rope and then jumped in the old woman's arms.

"Thank you, children," said the old woman, "I am so happy you saved my cat."

From that day on the old woman, the cat and the children became the best of friends. (Name child who had the rope) always kept his/her magic rope, just in case.

"Can you draw the magic rope to save the cat?"



Road

Which Way Home?

Once there was a group of children named (name all children). They were playing hide and seek near the forest. (Child's name) was hiding behind a big tree. Suddenly, a mouse came rushing by him/her. "What are you doing?" asked the child.

"Squeak squeak. I'm trying to find my way home, I am lost," answered the mouse.

The other children saw the mouse and ran to their friend. "The mouse is looking for it's home," (said child's name). "Can we help you find your home?" asked the children.

The mouse nodded and said, "Please do, I am running round in circles looking for it. First, I must find the long straight road. It will take me to my home."

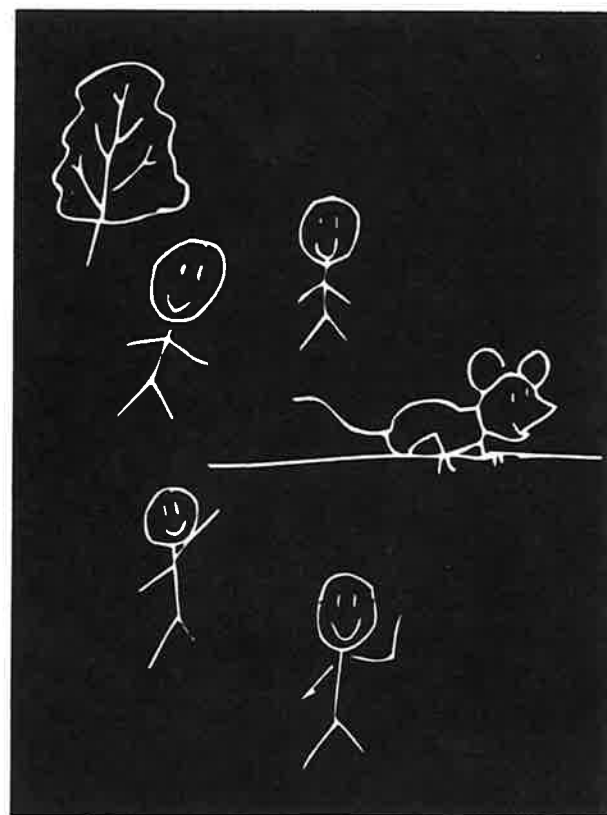
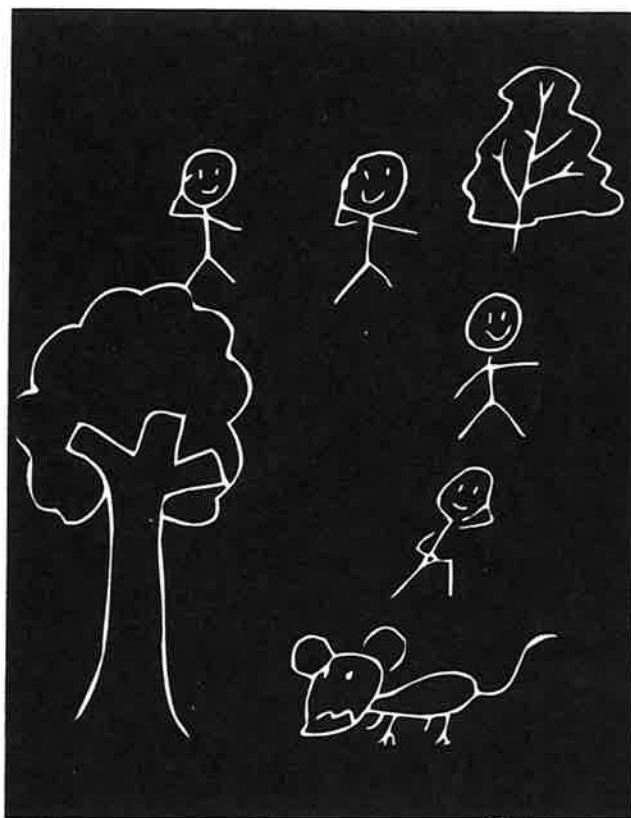
All the children began to look for the long straight road. Soon one child called, "Look, I found it."

Everyone came running. They saw beyond some trees the long straight road. "Squeak. Yes, that's it. Now I can find my home," said the mouse.

All the children and the little mouse held hands and walked down the long straight road. It wasn't long before the mouse was safely back in it's house.

"Squeak. Thank-you children, you were such a big help to me." said the mouse as it gave each of them a hug goodbye.

Can you draw the long straight road to the home of the mouse?



The New Fence

One day all the children of (name of school) moved to a new school building. Their new school was very big. The playground had lots of space to play. The children thought it would be nice to care for some animals. "We could share our playground with chickens and goats," they said.

A friendly farmer gave the school some chickens and goats. The children put the animals at the back of the playground with some food and water. After playing for a while, the teacher called, "Come inside, it's lunch time." The children ran inside.

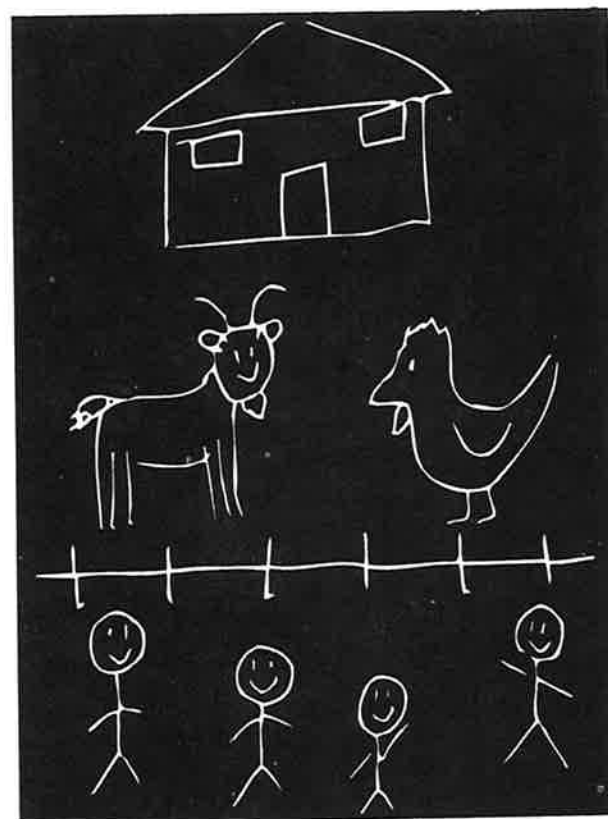
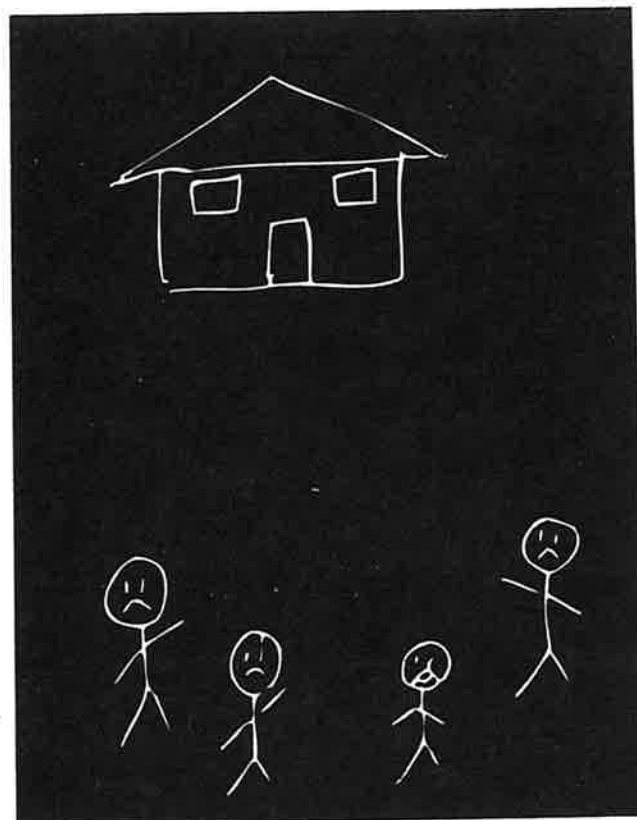
All the children ate their lunch and brushed their teeth. Then they ran outside to play with their animal friends. But when they reached the playground, the animals were gone. (Child's name) said, "Where are the chickens and goats?" "Maybe someone stole them," cried (child's name). All the children felt sad.

Just then (child's name) called out, "Look at the neighbour's yard." The children looked and saw their chickens and goats. The animals were eating the neighbour's garden. "The animals wandered over there. What can we do to keep them at our school?" asked the children.

(Child's name) said, "Let's build a fence to keep them in our yard."

Everyone wanted to help build the fence. (name several children) collected wire, and (name rest of children) found the wood. Together the children built a fence for the animals. From that day on, the chickens and goats never wandered into the neighbour's garden again.

Can you make a fence to keep the chickens and goats at school?



Tracks

Railway Tracks

One day all the children of (name of school) decided to have a picnic. Everyone brought some food to share. (Child's name) brought juice. (Child's name) brought sandwiches. (Child's name) brought a big bag of apples. They walked up a hill and through a field looking for a good picnic spot. As they were walking, they heard a choo choo.

"What is that?" said (name child). They all turned around and saw a little train chuffing down the railway tracks. "Choo choo." said the little train, "Are you going somewhere?"

"Yes." said the children, "We are going on a picnic. Would you like to come?"

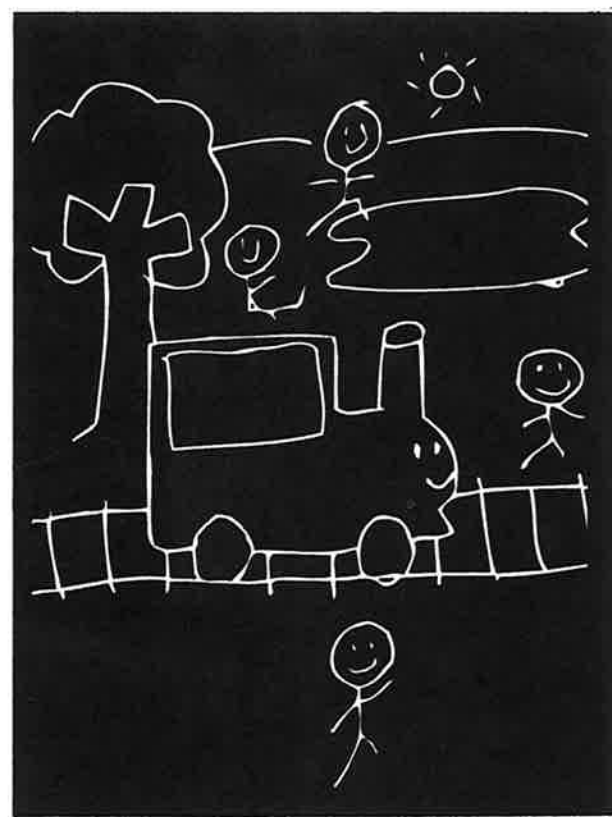
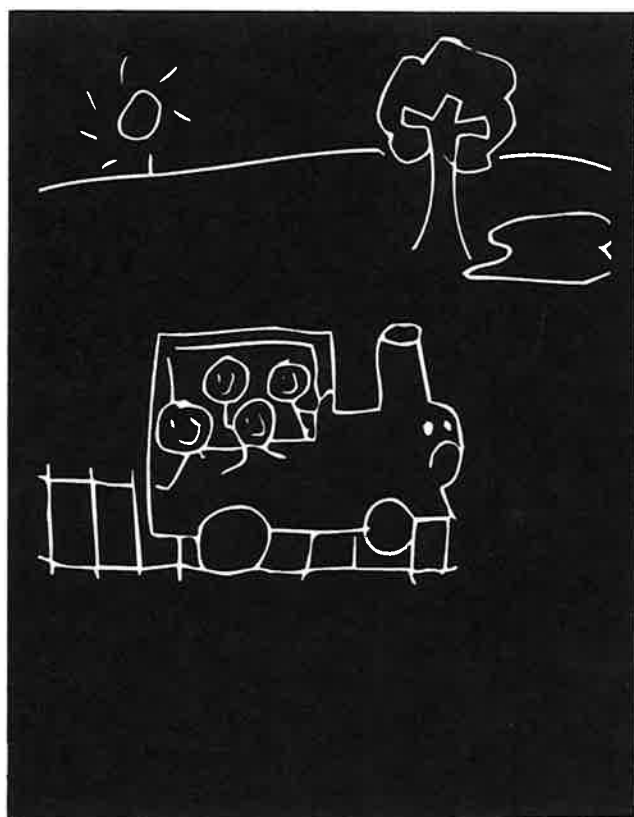
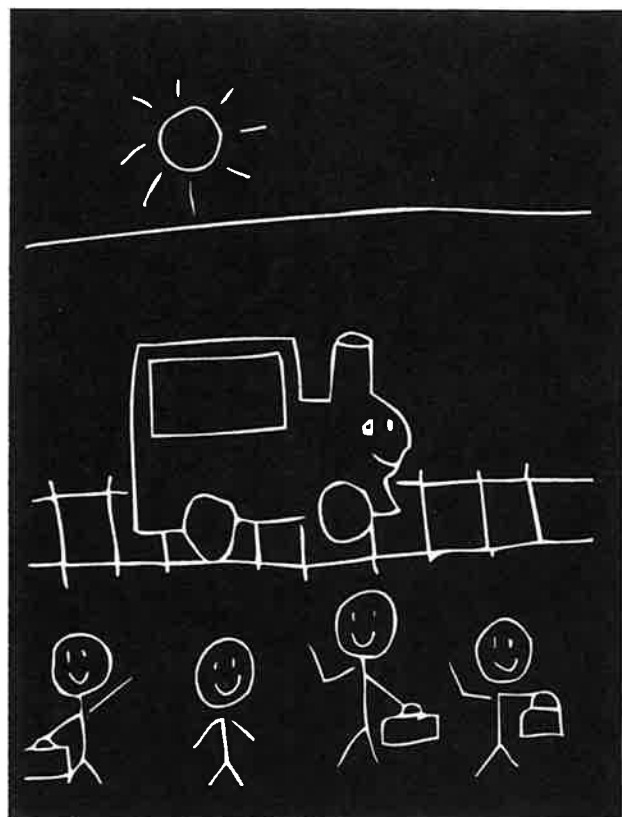
"Yes." said the train, "Climb on board and I will take you there." All the children climbed on the train. Soon they were racing down the railway tracks. "Look." said (child's name), "I see a nice tree and a pond over there. It is a nice picnic spot."

When they were almost there the train suddenly stopped. "What's the matter?" asked the children. "Why did you stop?"

The little train sadly answered, "I can't take you to the nice picnic spot. There are no more tracks. You can walk the rest of the way, but I'll have to stay here." All the children felt sad. Then (child's name) said, "We can make more tracks."

"Yes, let's make more tracks," called the children as they jumped down from the train. The children worked together. Soon they made enough tracks for the train to reach the picnic spot.

"Toot toot. Thank-you children," said the train as it hurried down the new tracks. "Now lets have a picnic." For the rest of the day the children and the train had a wonderful picnic.



The Fire Fighters

One day, all the children at (name of school) had a special treat. They had an excursion to the fire station. At the fire station the children saw the big red fire truck. On the sides of the truck were long ladders and hoses. "Do you like the fire station?" asked the fire fighter. "Yes." said the children, "We want to be fire fighters when we grow up."

The fire fighter thought for a moment. Then he said, "Would you like to watch the fire fighters work today?" "Yes!" the children said. They were so happy they jumped up and down. The children watched the fire fighters practice spraying water from the hoses and climb ladders. After lunch, the fire bell rang-ding ding ding.

"Quickly, everyone into the trucks," called the fire fighters. The children followed the trucks in the Fire Chief's car. Rrrr rrrr, went the siren. The big red fire truck rushed down the street. Soon they reached a tall house that was on fire.

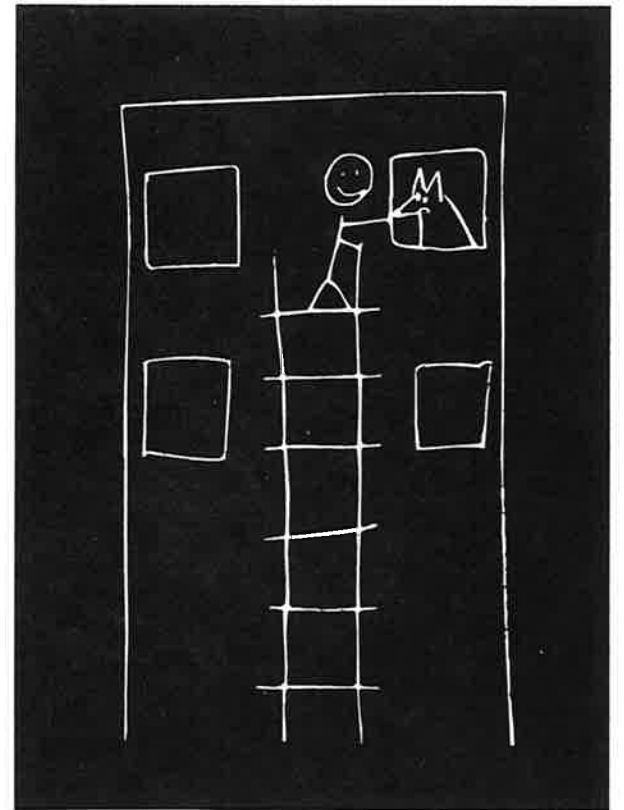
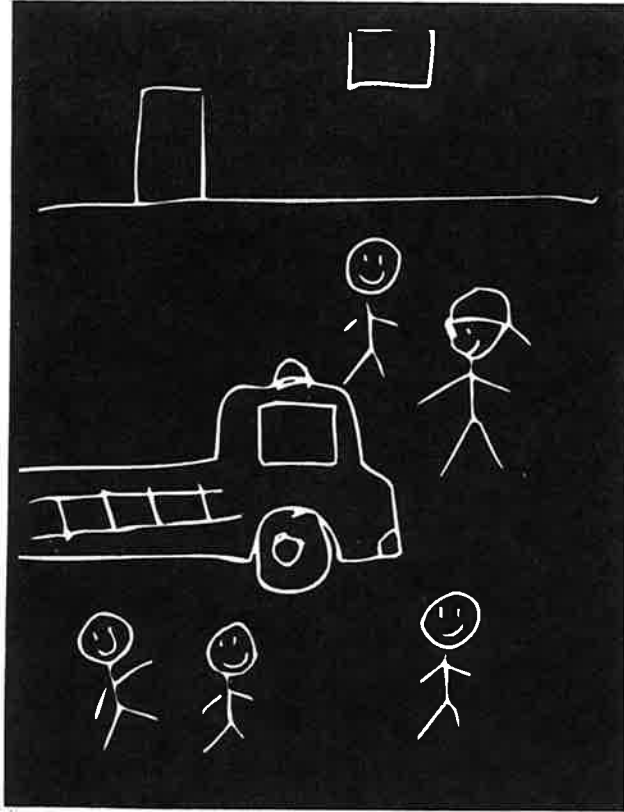
The children stood away from the fire and watched the fire fighters work. Swish went the water in the hoses. The fire fighters sprayed the fire with water. Soon it was almost out.

"I think it is safe now," said the fire fighter.

(Child's name) looked up at the house. "Look, a dog is in the window, it must be stuck up there" said (child's name).

Two fire fighters quickly put a ladder next to the window. They climbed up the ladder. When they reached the top, they found a scared little dog. The fire fighters carried the dog down the ladder. When they reached the bottom all the children cheered, "Hurray for the fire fighters. You put out the fire and saved the dog."

Can you make a ladder to rescue the dog?



Slide

The Playground

After school one day, (name the children) decided to go to the playground. "I want to go very fast," said (child's name).

**"We could run," said (child's name). So the children ran as fast as they could.
"Wow, that was fast, but now I am tired," said (child's name), "Let's go on the swings."**

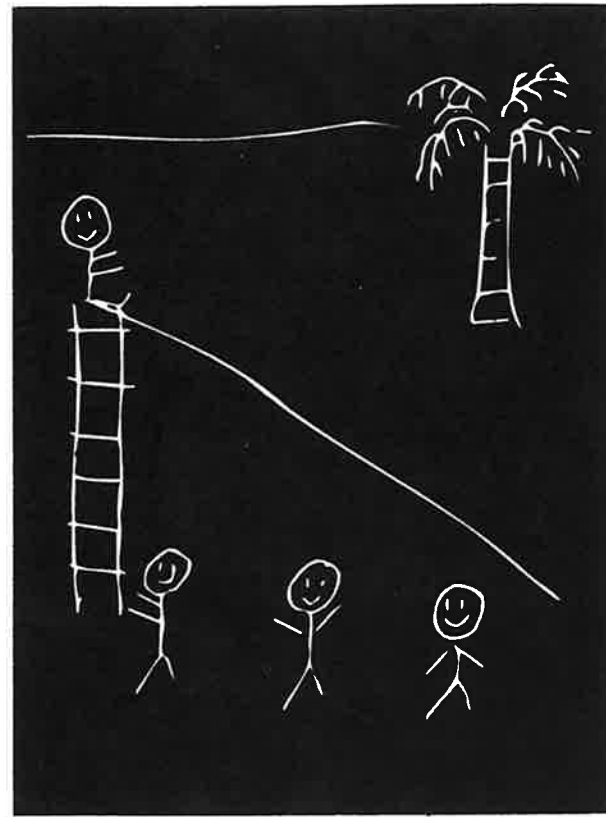
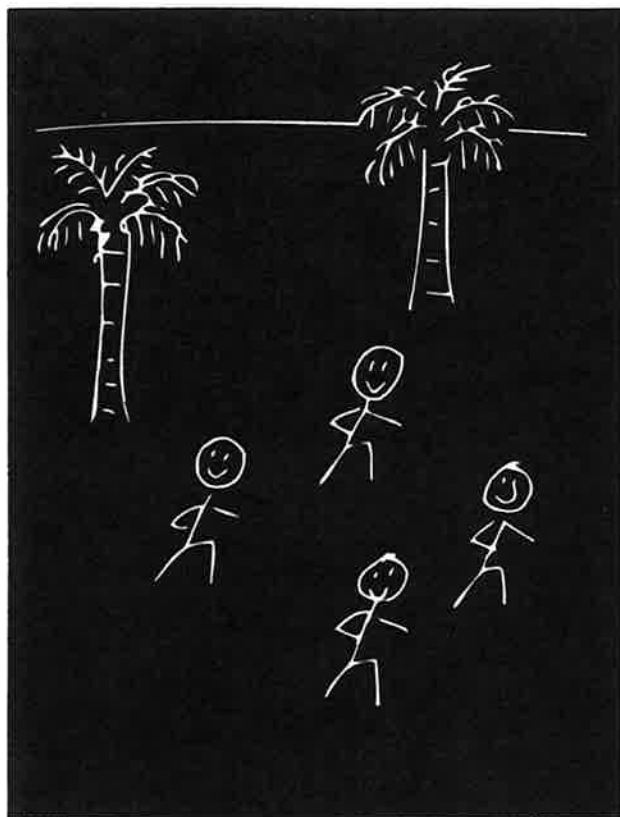
**All the children took turns on the swings. Higher and higher they went.
"Swinging is fun," said (child's name), "but I want to go faster."**

**Next to the swings the children saw a tall slide.
"We could go faster on that slide," called (child's name).**

**The children carefully climbed up the ladder and slid down, down the slide. They went very fast.
"This is fun. We can go very fast on the slide," called the children.**

All day the children played on the slide, climbing up the ladder and sliding down, down the slippery slide.

Can you draw the slide?



Hill Slope

[This story practices drawing slanted lines in a different direction.

In areas where children are not familiar with snow, use only the first story.]

Winter Fun

In the winter, when it was very cold, the children of (name of school) looked out the window every day. They wanted it to snow. It was fun to play in the snow.

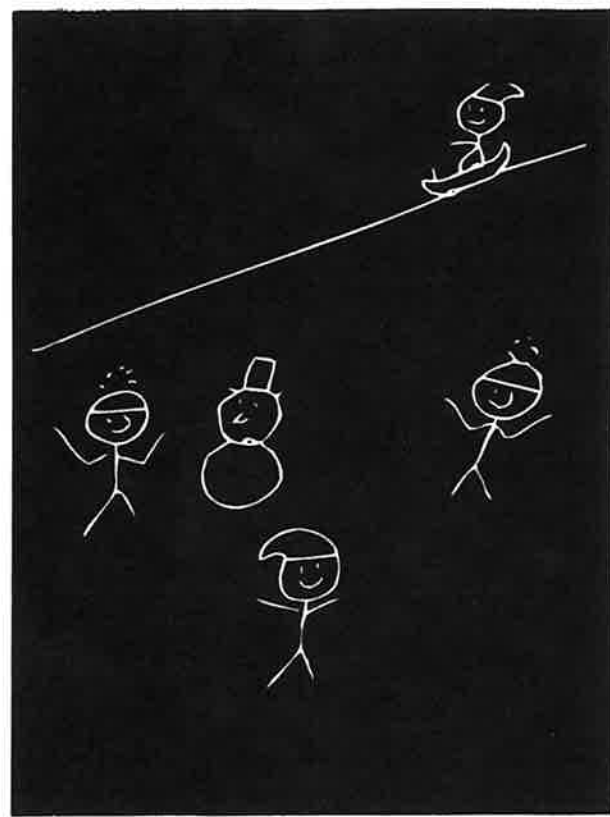
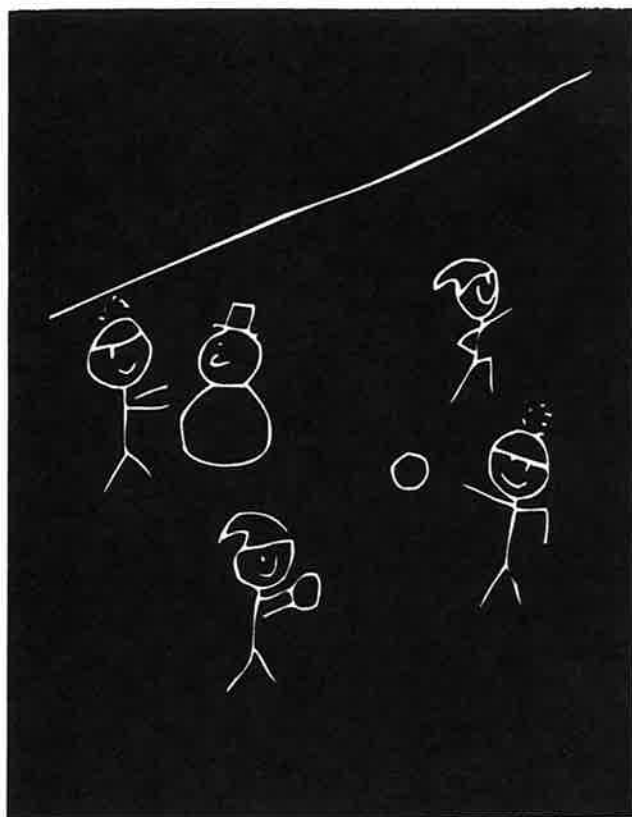
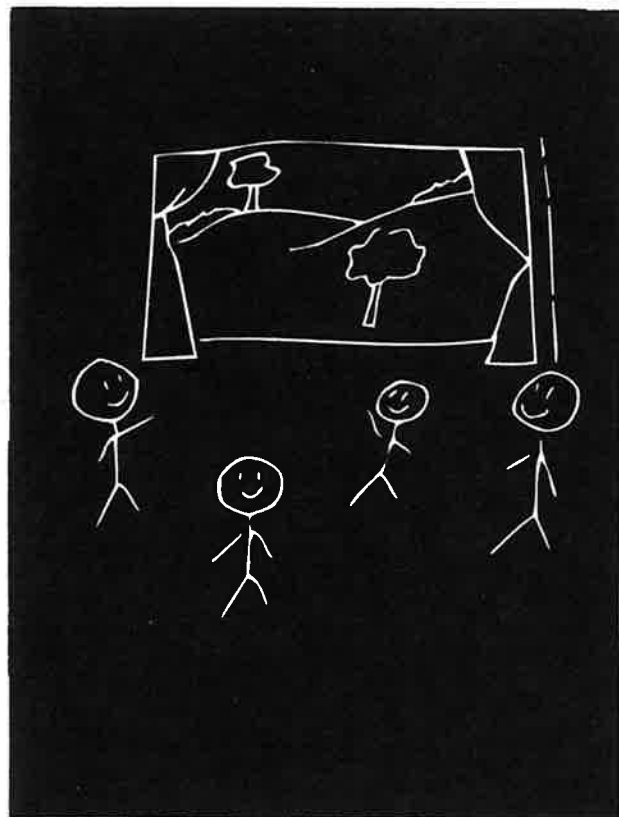
**“I want to build a snow person,” said (child’s name). “I want to make snowballs,” said (child’s name).
“The best fun is sliding down a hill on a sled,” said (child’s name).**

**One morning when the children woke up, they saw snow covering the ground.
“Yippee!” they called, “Let’s go and play in the snow.”**

**(Child’s name) made a snow person. (Child’s name) threw snowballs. Then (child’s name) called out, “Look at me!”
Everyone looked at (child’s name) sliding down the hill on a sled. “That looks like fun. Can I try?” asked (child’s name).**

All the children wanted to slide down the hill. They took turns sliding down the snowy hill. Sometimes they fell off and landed in the soft snow. They would laugh and climb up the hill again. The children slid down the hill until they were too tired to walk up the hill again. Slowly, they walked home. Soon they were all asleep in their cosy beds. Each had dreams of laughing and sliding down the snowy hill.

Can you draw the slope of the snowy hill?



Rain

The Rain Wizard

One day, all the children of (name of school) were outside playing ball. They had fun, laughing and throwing the ball. Nearby a wizard watched them. He was a grumpy wizard and did not like children to laugh. "I am going to spoil their fun," he grumbled. Then he waved his magic wand, "Let it rain all day so the children cannot play." Soon the clouds filled the sky and it began to rain.

"Oh, no," said the children. "We can't play anymore." They all felt sad. (Child's name) said, "We can play in our rain coats and with our umbrellas."

"Let's run home and get them," the children agreed. Quickly, the children ran home and put on their raincoats and took their umbrellas. "Now we can keep on playing," they said as they laughed and threw the ball to each other.

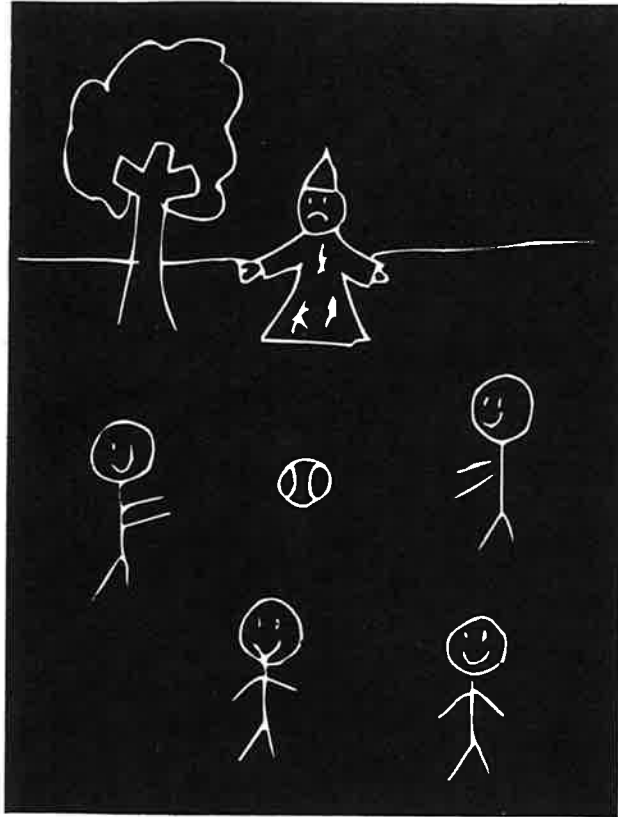
When the wizard heard the children laugh he was very angry. "Why are those children still having fun?" He threw his wand on the ground and walked over to the children. "Why are you happy even when it's raining?" the wizard asked.

"Rain cannot stop us. We like playing together," answered the children. (Child's name) said, "You can have fun, too."

The wizard frowned and said, "I do not smile and I do not play." "Please try and smile," said the children. "It makes your face feel nice." The wizard didn't want to try. But the children kept saying please. So the wizard tried to smile. At first it was just a little smile. Then it got bigger and bigger and bigger.

"Yes." said the wizard, "It does feel nice! Do you think I can play with you?" "Sure," said the children and they threw him the ball. For the rest of the day the children and the wizard laughed and played in the rain.

Can you make rain like the wizard?



Mountains


(This story does not use the children's names.)

Red Cap

Once there was a little elf named Red Cap. He had a big brother and sister. They lived in a small house near some mountains. One day when Red Cap woke up, he did not see his brother and sister. He looked inside the house but he could not find them. He looked outside but he did not see them anywhere. "Brother, sister, where are you? Please come out," he called as loud as he could. No one answered. "They have gone off without me. They think I am too little to go with them," said Red Cap. Red Cap sadly waited for his brother and sister to come home. When the sun was beginning to hide behind the mountains, his brother and sister came home.

"Where have you been?" asked Red Cap. "We went down to the river," answered his sister. "Can you take me with you?" said Red Cap. "I am big enough to go with you." His brother thought for a moment and said, "We will see." Red Cap was unhappy because his brother did not say yes. He did not want to be left behind.

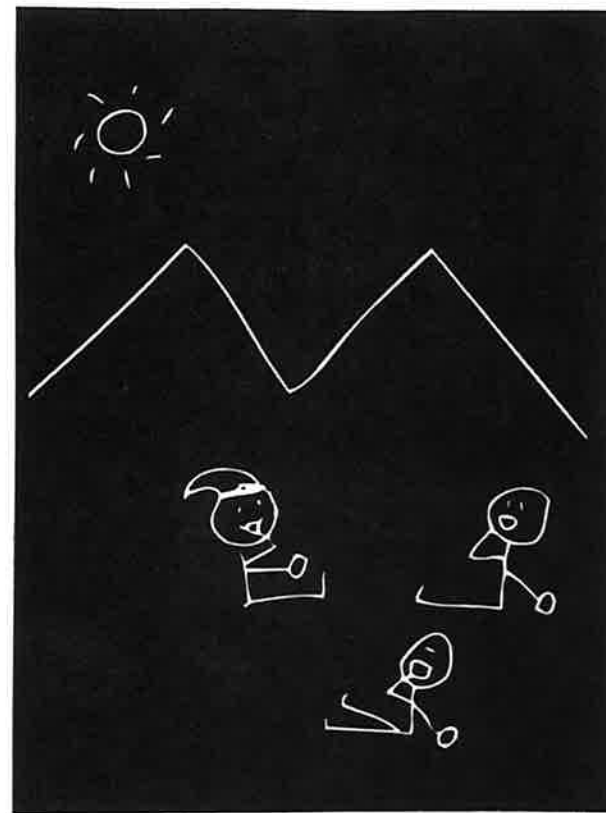
The next morning when Red Cap woke up, he did not see his brother and sister. He looked inside the house but could not find them. He looked outside but he did not see them anywhere. Red Cap began to cry. "They have left me again."

While Red Cap was crying, he noticed something drawn in the dirt. It looked like this.  It looked like the mountain. "My brother and sister drew this for me. It is a message to say they went to the mountains. Yippee, now I can go and find them," shouted Red Cap.

Off Red Cap went to the mountain. As he walked he saw more drawings in the dirt. He followed them up and down the mountain. Soon Red Cap found his brother and sister. "Hello," they called. "Nice to see you," said his sister.

"You are getting big enough to go with us. You understood the messages we left," said his brother. The three elves sat together and ate lunch. From then on, Red Cap was never left behind again.

Can you draw a mountain just like the elves?



Ears

The Unhappy Clown

Once a clown came to visit (name the children). The clown's name was Bozo. He had a big red nose and curly green hair. His pants were too big and his shoes were so long that he kept tripping over them. All the children sat and watched Bozo do magic tricks. He rode his bicycle that had only one wheel and juggled four balls.

"Bozo is so funny." laughed (child's name), "I want to be a clown like him."

When the clown show finished the children wanted to talk to Bozo. They knocked on the door of his room. Bozo invited them in. "Hi, Bozo." the children said, "We loved your show."

Bozo did not say anything. He just looked sad. The children wondered why Bozo was sad.

Then Bozo said sadly, "I have a big nose, big shoes and big pants. But I do not have big ears. I cannot hear the people laugh when I do funny things. I would like to hear children laughing."

"Do not worry." the children said. "We have a magic pencil. We can draw you some nice big ears."

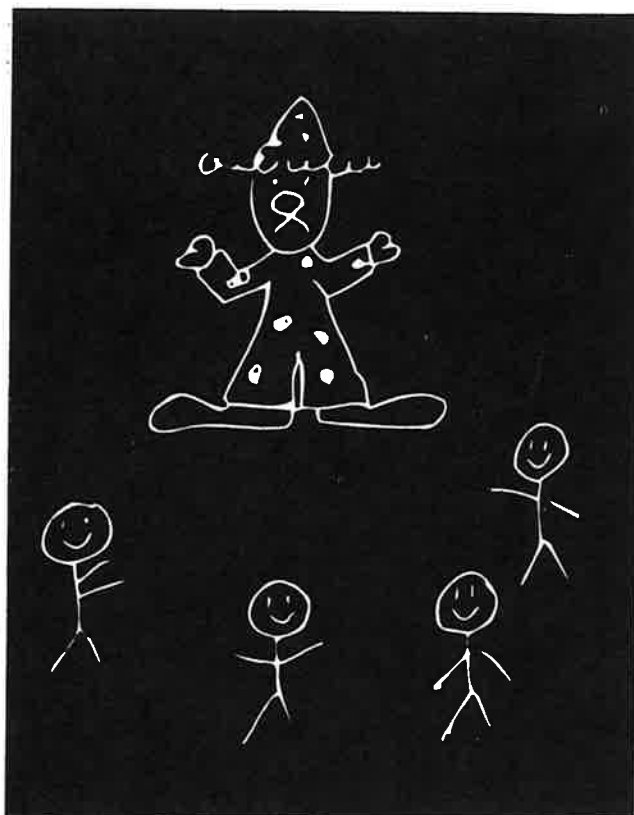
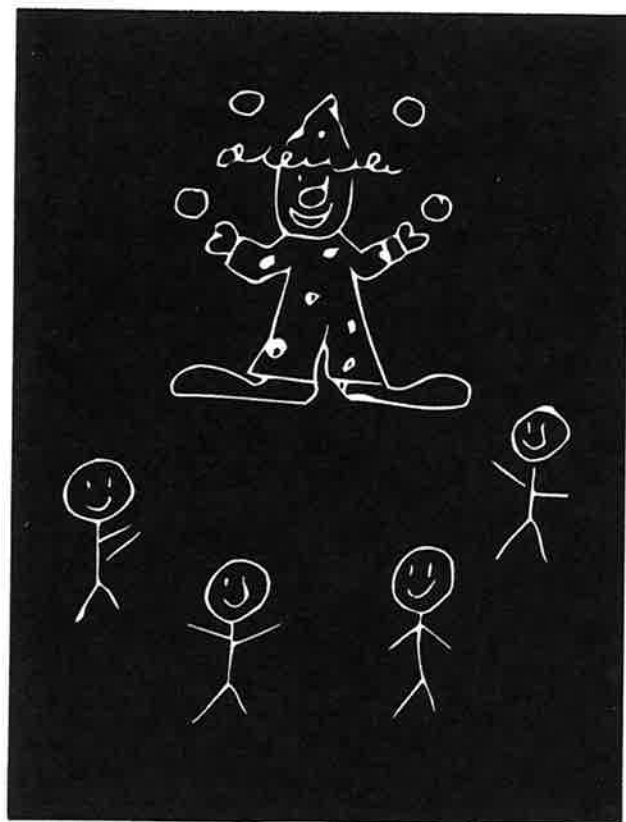
So the children took out their magic pencils. They drew two big ears on each side of Bozo's head.

Bozo felt his new big ears. "Thank you," he said. He was so happy that he did a back flip.

"Ha ha," laughed the children.

"I can hear you laugh," said Bozo. "This is the best present anyone has ever given me."

Can you draw two big ears on the clown's head?



The Magic Balloons

(Name of children) went to the fair. There were many people and lots of interesting things to see. (Child's name) looked and said, "I want a balloon." The children ran to the balloon seller. There were red ones, green ones, yellow ones and even rainbow ones.

"Do you want a balloon?" the balloon seller asked. "Yes," said the children, "But we do not have any money." The balloon seller bent down and said, "You look like good children. I will give you some magic balloons." The balloon seller gave each child a magic balloon. "Thank-you," said the children.

"I wonder what magic they have?" asked (child's name). Just then the balloons rose up in the sky. The balloons pulled the children into the air. "We are all flying!" they said. The children flew high towards the clouds. Far away from the fair they flew. They passed some flying birds. Soon they flew to the mountains.

On the top of a mountain sat an odd-looking house. Outside the house stood a fairy. She waved and called, "Help, help!"

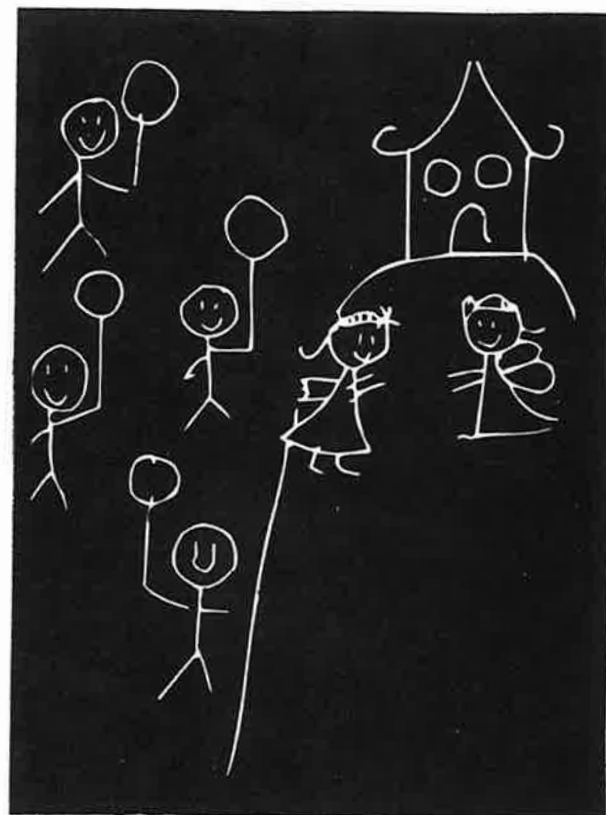
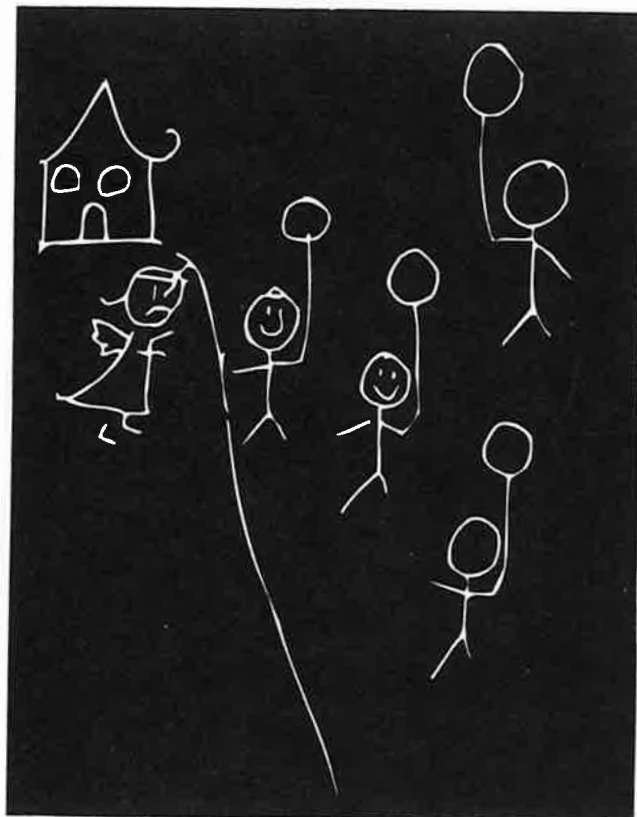
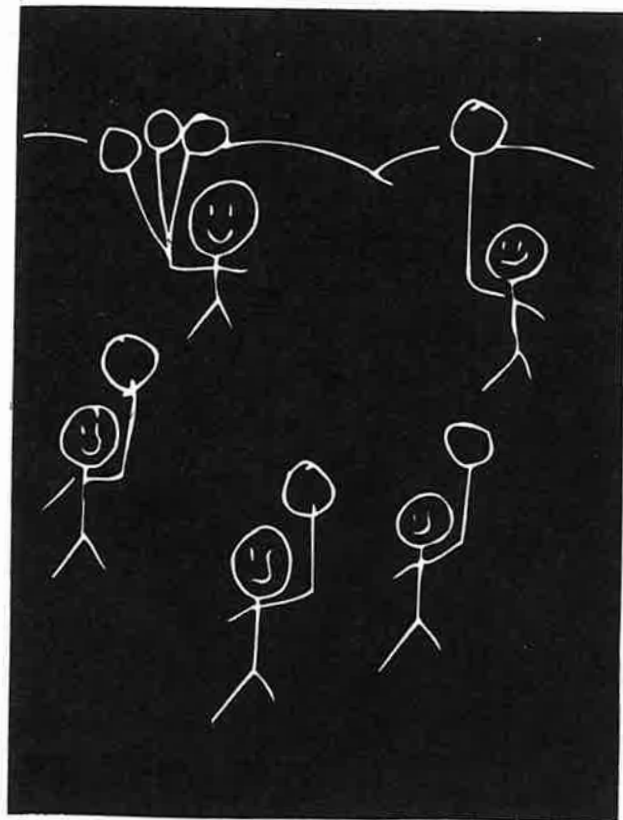
"What's wrong?" asked the children.

"My wing is torn and I can't fly. I need to go to the fairy doctor on the other mountain. Can you help me?" she sadly asked.

"Yes, we will all hold onto you and take you there," answered the children.

All the children held tightly onto the fairy. They flew through the clouds to the other mountain. The children gently put the fairy on the ground. "This is where the fairy doctor lives," said the fairy. The fairy doctor came out of her house. She saw the torn wing of the fairy and said, "Dear fairy, come inside and I will fix it."

Before going inside the fairy ran to each child and gave a special fairy kiss. "Thank-you for helping me," she said. The children said good-bye. They held tight to their balloons and flew back home, happy that the fairy would soon have a new wing.



Sun

Sunshine Children

(Name all children) were going to school one day. It was very cloudy. The children were unhappy because the sun was not shining.

“I want the sun to shine,” said (child’s name). “It makes me happy.”

“We will have to be sad all day,” said (child’s name).

Just then a little boy walked down the street. Nobody knew who he was. “I have never seen him before,” said (child’s name). When the little boy came closer he said, “Why do you all look so sad?”

“We are sad because the sun is not shining,” answered the children.

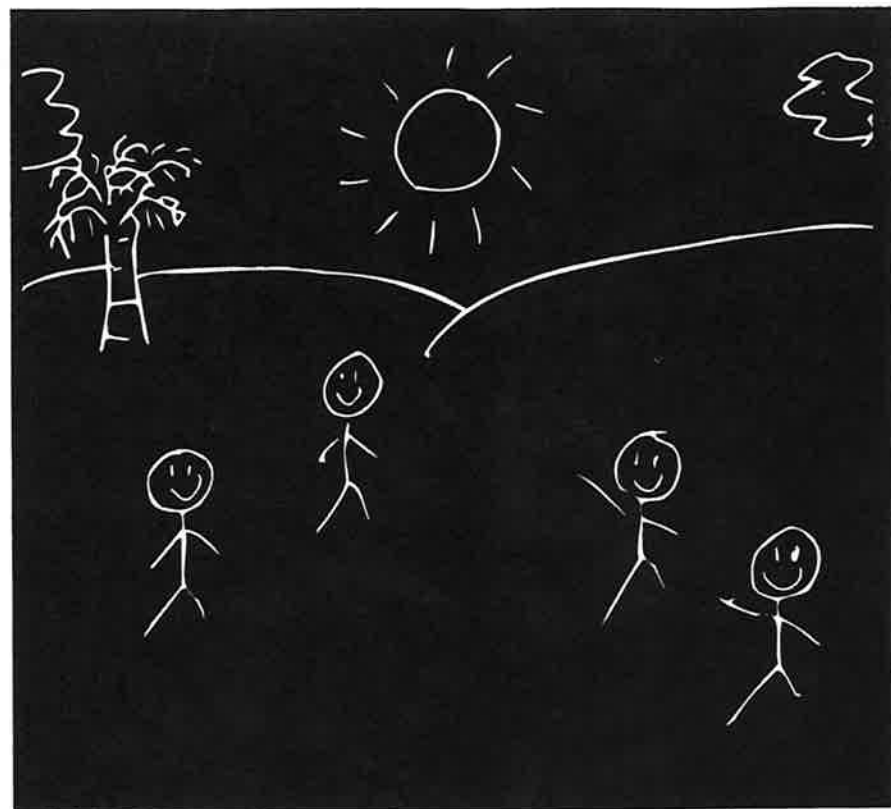
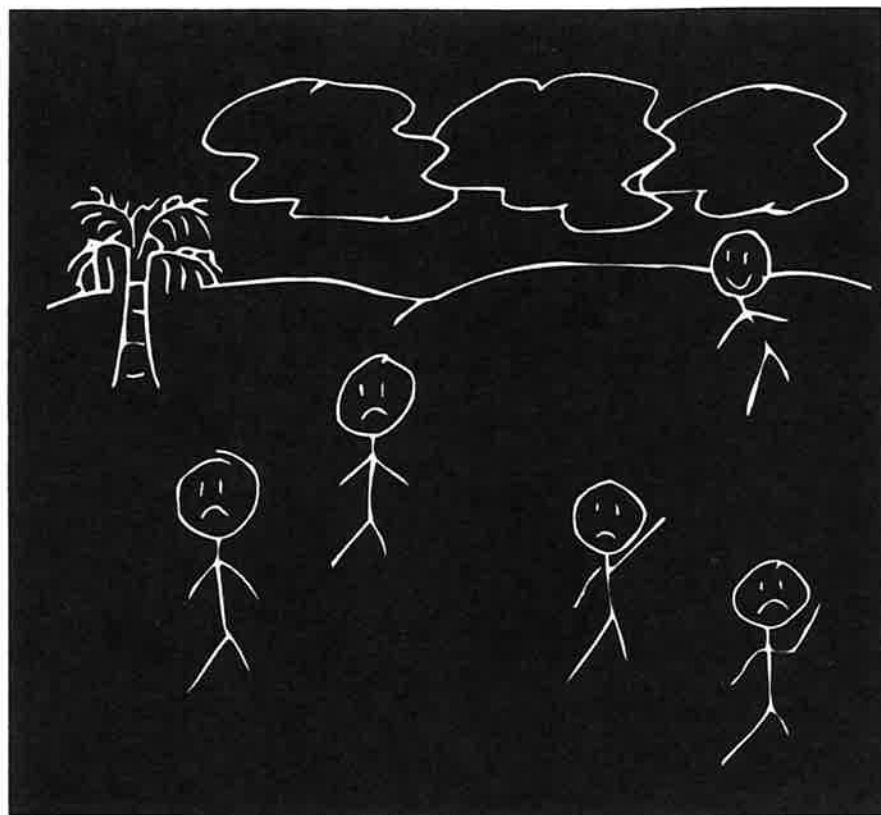
“You don’t have to be sad.” said the little boy, “Singing makes me feel happy.” Then he sang, “You can make the sun shine any old time, even if the clouds are there. You can make the sun shine any old time, even if the clouds are there.”

The children tried to sing the song, “You can make the sun shine any old time, even if the clouds are there.” It made them feel a bit happier, so they sang it again. “You can make the sun shine any old time, even if the clouds are there. You can make the sun shine any old time, even if the clouds are there.”

When they finished singing the children said, “I feel so happy, I feel like the sun is shining inside me.” They started to walk to school feeling happy and warm inside. When they reached school the children looked up in the sky. They saw that the clouds were moving away. “Look, the sun is shining,” the children shouted happily.

They turned to thank the little boy, but he had disappeared. The children never forgot the little boy or the magic song he taught them.

Can you draw a bright shining sun?



A Trip To Magic Island

One day, (name of children) went to the beach for a picnic. The sun was shining and the waves were rolling over the sand. A little way out in the ocean was a small island. "That island is magical. Our friend the sailor, told me," said (child's name.) The other children laughed. They didn't believe her/him.

Soon afterwards, the sailor came along. "Hi, would you children like to sail with me in my boat? I am going to go to the island to visit a friend," he said.

"Yes; yes!" shouted the children. They all climbed in the boat. The sailor started sailing the boat. After a while the wind began to blow harder.

The waves got bigger and bigger. They looked like this



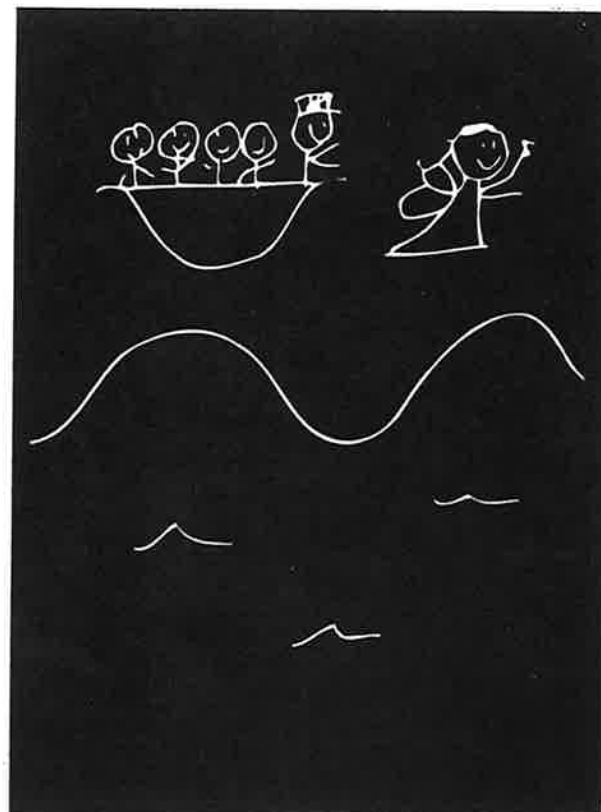
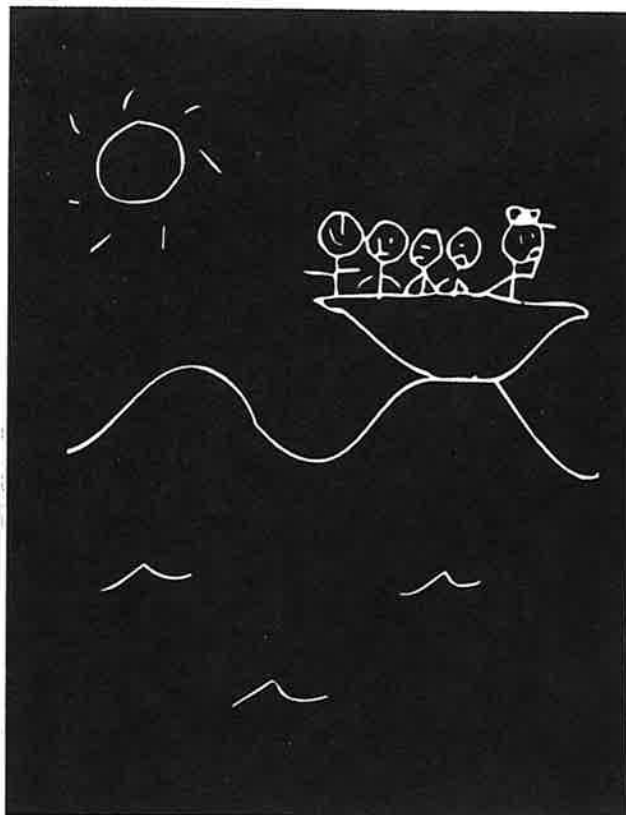
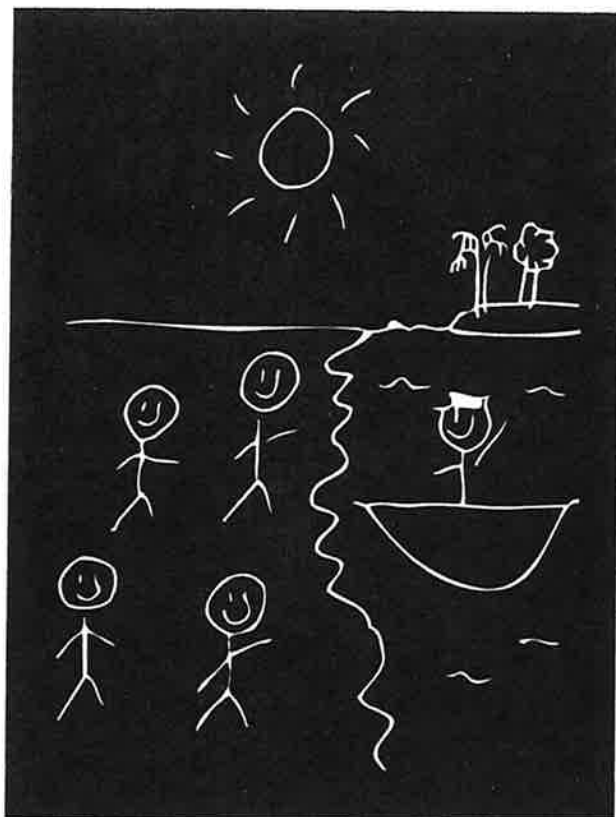
The children were afraid. The sailor told the children, "Do not be afraid. I will tell my friend on the island to help us." He took out his radio and called the island. "I can't come over. The waves are too big," he said into the radio.

Soon a bright light flashed on the island. The light flew over the large waves. It came closer and closer. The light turned into a beautiful fairy. The fairy was the sailor's friend. She smiled at the children. "I can help you go to the island," she said.

The fairy waved her magic wand and said, "The boat is now a magic boat. Fly, fly in the sky over the big waves." The boat slowly began to fly. "We're flying," called the children. It flew over the big waves and gently landed on the island.

"Hurray, the big waves did not stop us," said (child's name). The sailor and the children thanked the fairy. They spent the whole day on the magical island and had a wonderful time.

Can you draw the big waves?



Smoke

Smoke Signals

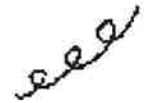
All the children from (name of school) were camping. They were happy because Red Cap, the elf, was with them. The children and Red Cap hiked deep into the forest. After walking a long way, they stopped for the night.

(Child's name) and (child's name) put up the tents. (Child's name) and (child's name) fetched the water. (Child's name) and (child's name) collected firewood. Red Cap, the elf, made the fire. When they had eaten their dinner and picked up their rubbish, Red Cap wanted to look for owls. He said good-bye and began to walk off into the forest.

"Don't go too far." called the children, "You might get lost." Red Cap walked deep into the forest looking for owls. He saw many different kinds of owls. Some owls were big and brown. Some were small and gray. "I like watching the owls. Now I must go back to my friends," he said. Red Cap looked around. The forest was so big. He did not know which way to go.

"Oh no! I'm lost. What will I do?" he cried. He sat and began to think about what to do. "I will stay here. I can make a fire, and they will see the smoke."

He gathered some sticks and made a small fire. The smoke curled up in the sky. It looked like this

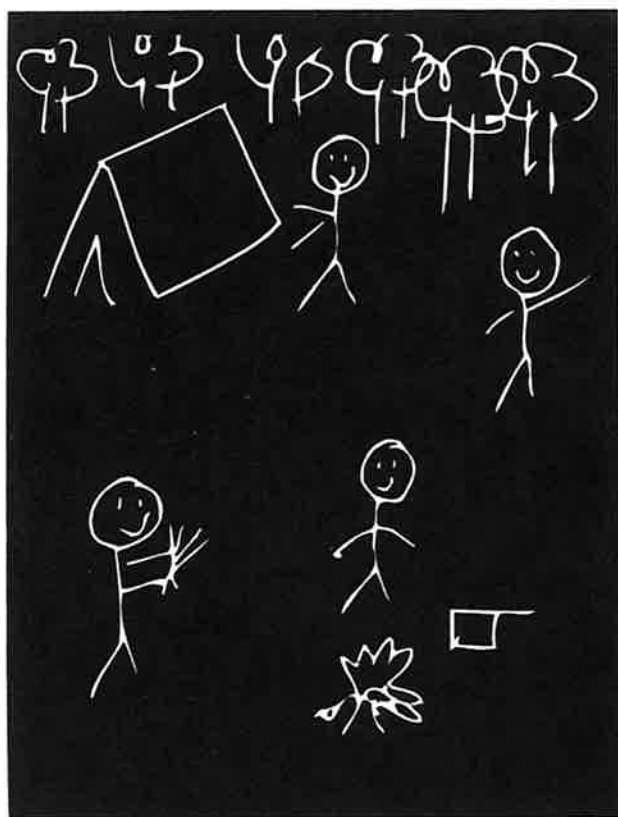


At the tents, the other children were worried, "Where is Red Cap?" One child looked up at the sky and saw curling smoke.

"Look, there is some smoke. That must be Red Cap's fire." The children walked through the forest. They followed the smoke signals. Soon the smoke led them to their friend.

"We are so glad we found you, Red Cap," they shouted. All the children gave him a big hug. Then the children walked back to their tents, happy that they found their friend.

Can you draw the smoke?



'I Can Draw the Sun' is a system of stories that motivate children to develop their early writing. Fun and fantasy fills every story. The children may rescue a stranded dog with a ladder or fly with a balloon to help an injured fairy. Each story focuses around a simple drawing, such as the ladder or balloon. These drawings are also parts of letters. For example, a ladder is similar to the lines of the letters H, I, T, F and E. A balloon resembles the letters O, P and Q. After the story, the children draw the ladder or balloon. As these drawings have meaning to the children, they feel a definite goal in attempting to draw them. 'I Can Draw the Sun' lets young children explore and expand their writing abilities in a meaningful and imaginative manner.