**Supporting Early Writing During Centers: Professional Development Module**  
**Transcript for Slide 4 – What is Early Writing?**

Narrator: Let's talk about early writing. What is it? How does it fit in with the rest of our language and literacy areas, and what does it look like? We'll explore the answers to these questions in this lesson. First, let's define early writing. When you think about what early writing is, what's the first thing that you think of? For most of us, several different ideas come to mind. Maybe you thought about the physical aspects of writing – how children form letters or how they hold a pencil. You may have thought about the communication aspect of writing – how children are trying to share their thoughts through the writing process. And finally, maybe you thought about the actual marks that children make – how the words that children write look and become more like adult writing over time. All of these ideas define early writing, and they're more formally known as handwriting, composing, and orthographic knowledge, which is our understanding of how the writing system works. Now that we've defined let's shift to our next question. How does it fit in with the rest of the language and literacy areas, specifically, our two literacy areas, print knowledge and phonological awareness? We know that children are developing important skills in both of these areas during preschool. At first, these two areas function separately, but as children's knowledge of print and sound come together, they're able to combine these skills. And we know this combination is important to start engaging in reading. But where does early writing fit into that picture? Well, at first, children's writing mainly represents their knowledge of print. A child might write the letter M because he recognizes it from his name, but he has no understanding that this letter is connected to a specific sound. But, as children's knowledge of print and sound come together, this growing understanding is reflected in their writing. So, we might see a child write the letters M and N for the word moon, because he can connect those letters to the beginning and ending sounds. So, through early writing, we can see children apply their knowledge of both print and sound on the page. These three areas have a reciprocal relationship. As print and sound knowledge grows, so does writing, and vice versa. The more children have opportunities to write, the more they learn about print and sound and how to use those together to form words. Let's address our final question. What does early writing look like? Children typically move from drawing and scribbling to making letters and letter-like forms, then to writing salient and beginning sounds, and then, finally, to writing the beginning and ending sounds of words.