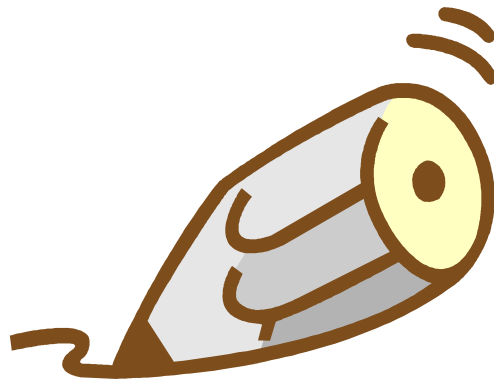


How can I help my  
child develop their  
early writing skills?



A pack for parents

# Writing in the early years



Writing is a gradual process, often known as 'emergent writing'.



First marks are often scribbles and *must be valued*.



These scribbles slowly start to emerge as marks/symbols.

Eventually, at about age five or six years old, letters and sounds will make more sense to them and they will use their knowledge to spell and attempt phonetic writing.

## How will your child learn to write in nursery?



We have a mark-making area, where your child can choose from a range of pencils, pens, biro, paper, envelopes and pads and play at writing.



There are alphabet posters and examples of what we use writing for. Your child's name card is always there for them to use.



Your child will see adults writing throughout nursery, modelling how to write shopping lists, messages, greetings cards in play situations. We do not use worksheets or trace over letters as this is developmentally inappropriate for three and four year olds.



We encourage mark-making throughout nursery, both indoors and outside. We encourage children to 'have a go' and experiment with marks in their play. Over emphasis on neat handwriting does *not* develop your child's self-confidence and can make them worried about getting it wrong.

# Don't worry if...



Your child isn't holding their pencil properly - their bones in their hands are still developing. They need fun experiences like squeezing playdough and moulding sand to strengthen their little hands.



Your child is forming letters the wrong way. At this early stage it is important to praise and value your child's writing, so they will want to keep trying.



Your child reverses letters - this is very common as children are still experimenting and becoming familiar with letter shapes.



Your child spells words wrongly - at first 'having a go' and enjoying writing is much more important.

## Children need parents who act as role models:



Let your child see you write for different purposes. Talk about what you are writing. This may be:

- ~ filling in forms
- ~ writing letters or cards
- ~ jotting a note on the calendar
- ~ writing a shopping list
- ~ writing a cheque



## Ideas for you to try at home



Write a letter to a relative together



Write a letter for your child pretending it is from their toy. Send it in the post to them, let them open it and share it with you. Help your child to write a letter back to them.



Let your child experiment and complete their own forms. Keep junk forms or collect extra forms from the post office.



Provide lots of paper and pens. Let your child 'have a go' and create their own scribbles, marks or letters. These opportunities are better for your child than colouring books and worksheets.



Let your child write inside greetings cards or on gift tags.



Give your child some paper while you write a shopping list and encourage them to have a go making their own.



At bath time, spread shaving foam on the side of the bath and let your child have fun making marks in it.



Buy some chunky chinks and let your child experiment outside on the bricks, flags and concrete. They will also have fun washing it off!



Give your child a tub of water and an old paintbrush, and let them make marks on the ground outside.



Spend quality time each day talking with your child.



Read to your child and discuss the ways that authors use words to shape their ideas.



Be a writing model and encourage your child to write alongside you and maybe correct mistakes that you have made.



Have an exciting selection of writing materials readily available.



Talk to your child about their writing and read through it together



Don't dwell on mistake, focus on the positives.

# Don't forget...praise and encourage!



Stick their mark-making on the fridge door, even if it looks a scribble



Look at their name with them



Read them lots of stories



Let them write their own messages in Grandad's card

## Things you could say...



"Wow! What a good writer you are!"



"I'm writing a list of food we need from the shop"



"Can you describe the weather today"



"Tell me about what you've done..."



" Excellent! Now how can you make the sentence better?"

## Learning spellings

If your child brings a spelling list home to learn, try to make the practice fun by playing games that encourage careful listening to the sounds in the words and looking for letter patterns. Your child may enjoy singing or reciting spellings, or writing them out and colouring letter patterns. You could ask your children to make a word search and then put the words into sentences.

Don't forget to reinforce the school's 'Look, say, cover, write, check' strategy with your child at home!



**Look:** Let your child see the word for a few seconds.

**Say:** Pronounce the words reinforcing sounds.

**Cover:** Cover the original spelling.

**Write:** Write the spelling from memory.

**Check:** Check to see if they spelt the word correctly.

Remember that writing can be difficult, so be available, supply help if asked and marvel at how well your child is doing.

*Mrs Madan*

(Leader of parental and community involvement)