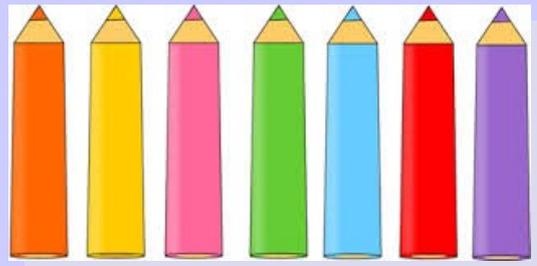


Learning to Write

**Writing
Making
their mark**



1-7 below, are the stages of Early Writing

7. Beginning to develop their sight vocabulary and write words which they recognise by sight.

6. Beginning to use phonic knowledge to write most sounds they can hear.

5. Writing initial and dominant sounds in words.

4. Writing strings of letters usually those in their own name.

3. Writing their first words, usually their own name.

2. Ascribing meaning to these marks.

1. Early mark making Children make shapes often circles and squares.



Early Writing



As children begin to understand the difference between drawing and writing they often enjoy making their marks over adults own pieces of writing, for example on a shopping list; by doing this they begin to see themselves as writers.

Children begin to tell you what some of these marks mean. Again this is usually linked to the writing that they have seen adults do e.g. “To Mummy Love George”

Children begin to write their first words – and their own name is usually one of the first. Children can use this skill to label their pictures or sign cards and this helps them to see how important the skill of writing can be in life.

Children will write letters in their name and will often ask you to tell them what it says. It is always acceptable to ask them what they would ‘like it’ to say.

As children start to learn more letter sounds they will begin to write the dominant sounds in words especially initial sounds. ‘I went to the park.’ may be written using these letter sounds *l w t pc*

Gradually children will use their knowledge of letter sounds (phonic knowledge) to write all the sounds they can hear in a word e.g. slip. As their reading skills develop children will build up their sight vocabulary and will begin to write words which are not phonetically correct. We call these ‘tricky words’ e.g. the, said, to, no, go l.



Letters and Sounds

Letters and Sounds

As children begin to learn to read and write it is vital that they hear and practise blending and separating letters orally.

We call it 'robot talk.' A really important skill to practise at home is to say a word in robot talk h - e - n. Can they guess the word by blending the sounds? Alternatively say a whole word 'hen' and ask your child to say it to you in robot talk. This is a **vital** skill to practise at home.

Blending: To read, children learn to blend letters together eg c - a - t says cat when all the sounds are put together.

Segmenting: To write, children need to think of a whole word e.g. cat and they have to split that word up to write down each individual sound.

www.phonicsplay.co.uk has some free blending and segmenting games.

Terminology:

Phoneme: A single unit of sound.

Digraph: Two letters that make one sound eg ch in chip ee in feet.

Order of phonemes introduced: We teach 4 phonemes a week and different children may be learning different sounds depending on their developmental stage.

s a t p i n m d g o c k

ck e u r h b f,ff l,ll ss

j v w x y z,zz qu

ch sh th ng ai ee igh oa oo ar or ur ow oi ear air ure er



Handwriting

Handwriting:

Handwriting is **not** the same as writing. Handwriting is about forming letters on paper, while writing is the ‘thinking’ of the actual words. For young children, learning to control a pencil, pen or even paintbrush is hard. To do it, they first need to develop their hand–eye coordination and build up the muscles and control in the hands. Children also need to be able to coordinate their arms and shoulders. Controlling these larger movements is what comes first. So, while young children may enjoy mark-making it is important not to force them into writing small letters.

As well as everyday skills, children may also enjoy playing games that need hand skills, such as ‘Kerplunk’ or ‘Pick up Sticks’, and using jigsaws, building bricks or threading chunky beads onto laces. To help children develop the skills that will help their handwriting later on:

- encourage your child to help around the home with odd jobs
- make time to show your child how to manage buttons/zips and to put on clothes
- play throwing and catching games together
- play games that encourage hand movements

One very important aspect to focus on at home is pencil grip. It is vital that children develop this skill and this is one area where it is appropriate to correct where your child puts their fingers. It is also extremely important that your child uses the correct sequence of movements for letter formation.

Some Do’s and Don’ts to help with your child’s writing at home.

- Mark-make outdoors by getting out some chinks. Water and paintbrushes are also a great non permanent way for children to make marks or form letters.
- Write notes and letters to your child. This may encourage your child to write a note back and help them see the value of writing.
- Where possible try to find real reasons for children to write— shopping lists, invitations, birthday cards and school registers are very popular.
- Try not to correct your child’s writing. Children who are corrected too often can lose interest in doing it at all.
- Do not encourage your child to copy your writing unless practising actual handwriting. Giving children the opportunity to sound out their own words is a higher level skill and much more important. It does not matter if all the sounds are not there. Spelling usually becomes more accurate as children learn to read. It is worth taking a relaxed approach.