

Writing

Fine motor skills

To hold a pencil effectively children need to have developed hand strength.

- Play with play dough, squeeze it, twist it, poke it, pull it, pat it, roll it, push in objects, use a potato masher.
- Practise using scissors to make random snips in paper or to cut up playdough, old birthday cards or anything else you are happy for them to cut.
- Use tweezers to pick up pom-poms, small toys, marshmallows.
- Use fingers to make marks in a sand, salt or mud tray.
- Use squiggles or foam objects and squeeze them.
- Thread pasta on to ribbon, straws or pipe cleaners.
- Play with pegs, opening and closing them.
- Play with nuts and bolts.
- Finger paint with different fingers.

Mark making

Many children say 'I can't write' because they feel that they need to write specific letters. Early mark making and talking about marks will support writing development as well as modelling writing to your child.

- Encourage your child to use pens, pencils, crayons, easy markers, paint.
- Let them use a biro (they feel grown up and are encouraged to do what adults do).
- Use chalk or water outside on the floor or brick walls.
- Put fairy liquid in a zip lock bag to make marks.
- Encourage drawing shapes, lines, circles, zig-zags, dots.
- Use different shape, size and colour paper to make activities more interesting.
- Use stencils.
- Create a drawing or model of their favourite book character or superhero.
- Use clip boards, dry wipe boards, note books.

Writing

When children start to write it is important they develop an effective pencil grip and use correct letter formation as this is tricky to correct later on.

- Encourage writing for a purpose e.g. a birthday card.
- Write invitations to a pretend party.
- Write a shopping list or use 'Post It' notes.
- Send a postcard to school.
- Model writing in play e.g. pretend to be a waiter at dinner time and take your child's order or make labels for a pretend zoo, car garage or a pretend pet shop.

Children may write graphemes (letters) they know, particularly those from their name to represent different words, this is a great way to begin writing.

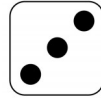
- Children should write in lower case letters (using a capital letter where appropriate e.g. beginning of their name).
- Most letters start at the top e.g. h, b, l, n.
- Some letters start anticlockwise c, o, a, q, g.



Maths

Children need to have a secure understanding of number, counting, quantity and value. Many children can count to 10 and beyond but they need to understand what each number represents and what the value is. Children need to experience different representations of the same number.

What is three?



$$2 + 1 = 3$$

$$1 + 1 + 1 = 3$$

Counting

- Use opportunities to model counting with your child e.g. stairs, sweets, teddies.
- Use number names when you chat to your child. 'Can you pass me two cushions please?' 'I just saw three ducks'.
- Sing number songs that count forwards and backwards.
- Challenge your child to see if they can find 5 things on the way to school or ask how many of something you can see on your way to the park.
- Play dice games.
- Count out fruit at the supermarket.



Number digits

- Use numbers in their play e.g. put numbers on toy cars, make birthday cards.
- Play dice games.
- Look for numbers on doors, shop price labels, envelopes, laptops, the clock, coins etc.
- Remember to point them out to your child too and not always expect them to say what they are so your child can hear numbers being used in context. 'Look that's number 4 the same age as you'.
- Share number books.
- Match digits to objects.
- Put salt in a baking tray to write digits.
- Use fingers to represent digits.



Shape, size, weight, length

- Challenge your child to find something in your house that is a square shape, round shape, triangle shape.
- Use language to describe shapes e.g. long, short, tall, pointy, sides, corners, straight, curved, round.
- Use recyclable materials to build models. Model using language e.g. I think we need a long bit for the dog's tail or a round shape for the wheels of the truck.
- Model using language in conversation to compare weight (heavy, heavier, heaviest, light, lightest, lighter) and size (big, bigger, biggest, small, smaller, smallest as well as words such as huge, massive, tiny).



Letters and Sounds

Games that help children tune into sounds, talk about sounds and make sound patterns all help to prepare children to learn to read and write. These early steps are an important part of the children's learning and help them to distinguish between different sounds, which eventually will help them to hear and listen for sounds (phonemes) in words when they are reading and writing.

| Environmental Sounds | Instrumental Sounds | Body Percussion | Rhythm and Rhyme | Voice Sounds | Alliteration | Blending and Segmenting |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| Identify sounds indoors and outdoors e.g. aeroplane, siren, kettle. | Identify an instrument being played by its sound. | Perform a song or rhyme with actions in time to the beat. | Perform actions to Nursery Rhymes (rocking, marching, skipping). | Make sounds with your voice e.g. tongue clicking for a clock. | Find objects that begin with the same sound e.g. cat, can, carrot. | What am I saying? Adult to say 'Go and get your c-oa-t'. 'Put on your h-a-t'. |
| Identify sounds from behind a door or screen e.g. keys, wrapper. | Stop and start playing an instrument to a signal. | Discriminate and talk about sounds (slow, fast, quiet, loud, long, short). | Make collections of objects or words that rhyme. | Make different sounds with your voice e.g. high pitch eeeeeee, low sound. | Sort a group of objects, find those that begin with the same sound. | Adult to say sounds in a simple word. Child to blend and say the word (f-i-sh - fish). |
| Guess what is in the container when you shake it, e.g. pasta, stones, keys. | Remember and repeat a sequence of sounds e.g. clap, clap, tap. | Copy an action sequence clap, stamp, clap. | Play 'I spy something that rhymes with....' | Use your voice to add sounds to a story e.g. wheeee for a slide, boing, boing for a ball | Say the sound (phoneme) at the beginning of words, c - cat, r - rabbit | Find the toy. Have a selection of objects, adult to say, 'Can you find the d-o-g'. |
| Imitate sounds e.g. animal noises, car, frog. | Play an instrument using different volumes (loud, quiet) | Play follow the leader, creating different actions in time to an instrument, vary the pace (march fast, hop slowly) | Read rhyming stories. Join in repetitive phrases in stories. Identify and clap syllables in words. (Dog 1 clap, Sal-ly 2 claps, ca-ter-pil-lar 4 claps). | Guess who? Child hides behind a door, someone has to say something and the child guesses who it is. | Play I spy... I spy something beginning with the sound | Child to select an object and say the sounds of a simple word e.g 'h-a-t', 'sh-ee-p'. |