

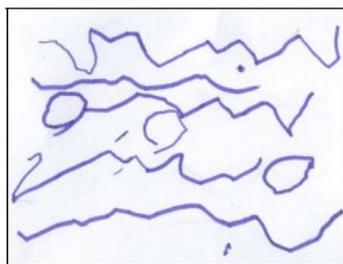
# The Stages of Early Writing

Learning to write requires children to use multiple physical and mental processes at the same time. Writing combines many skills and relies on development in areas not just specific to writing. It requires well developed fine motor skills—the ability to use muscles in the fingers and hands; the attention to concentrate for periods of time; memory to generate ideas and remember what sounds look like to write words; and the language to be able to express themselves.

Below are the stages your child may go through as they begin to write. It is important to remember though that children develop at their own rates and in their own ways.



This is an example of very early attempts at mark making which may feature lots of random marks, often made over other marks which adults may describe as scribbling. A child at this stage may be unable to distinguish between his/her writing and his/her picture. At this stage a child may hold the pencil, in the palm of the hand, in a fist like grip.



At this stage a child is mark making across the page. These are often zigzags and wavy lines. The child has a clear idea of the marks he/she wants to make and gives meaning to them. The mark making may communicate a message or an idea.

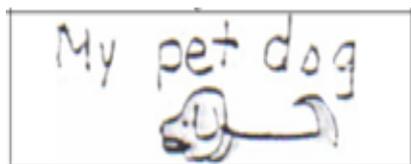


A child may move on to make individual marks and begin to use some recognisable letters from his/her own name to communicate a message. He/she is beginning to understand that drawing and writing are different and that print carries a message.



At this stage a child is using clearly identifiable letters to communicate meaning. He/she may be able to represent some sounds correctly and in sequence.

He/she is able to hear and write the initial sounds in words.



The child is now demonstrating that he/she can hear and write words with initial, medial and final sounds. He/she is able to construct phrases convey a message.

on saturday I  
Went to the  
met for doam  
I swana na pla la wivser  
I Wenoh the side

At this stage the child is using his/her phonic knowledge to write words in ways which march their spoken sounds. He/she can also write some irregular common words. He/she can write sentences which can be read by him/herself and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.

This writing meets the criteria for the Early Learning Goal in Writing which is the expected level for children at the end of Reception.

### Ways in which you could help your child with writing at home

Provide lots of attractive writing equipment, e.g. fancy pens, chalk, crayons and pencils, paper and notebooks etc. will help to inspire them to mark make and write.

Try to encourage them to writing for a purpose following their interests —label their buildings or their pictures, make signs, postcards, shopping lists, cards or invitations. Encourage them to read back their writing to you. Write down the things your child says to support their developing understanding that what they say can be written down and then read and understood by someone else.

Encourage them to sound words out as much as possible, even if they can only write the initial sound or a couple of sounds in a word.

Gently show your child the letter formation—this is tricky for young children to grasp. They need to know where to start the letter and to write in a cursive script. We begin by teaching the children to write in lower-case letters and only introduce capital letters for the beginning of names and then at the beginning of a sentence. It is useful if you can follow this at home too.

Encourage your child to have a go at writing and praise any attempts at writing.

Above all.... Make writing fun!

## Developing Fine and Gross Motor Skills

It is important that children have access to a range of activities that will develop muscles in their hands and wrist which will make writing easier. Any of these fun activities will help:

- cutting out pictures from catalogues, cutting out their own pictures or along different wavy, straight or zig zag lines.
- Using modelling materials such as clay, plasticine, playdough, sand
- Painting and printing
- Threading beads, pasta, buttons to a timer—can they beat their own score?
- Use water pistols to reach a target or paint outdoor bricks with water and brushes or chalks, paint in the bath.
- Fix lego, screw and unscrew lids, post pennies in a box, sprinkle seeds.
- Fold paper to make shapes, envelopes
- Wash walls with soap and brushes
- Paint with mops
- Play swing ball with a pair of tights
- Create lolly stick race tracks
- Make tracks with bikes through shaving foam
- Dig in sand and soil
- Sweep up leaves or shaving foam
- Draw circles onto large sheets of paper
- Use large rollers or brushes
- Pulling their bodies up on ropes/climbing wall
- Ribbon/scarf twirling
- Sticking and pulling plungers from vertical and horizontal surfaces.



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