



Parents and Carers Information Sheet 2: Mark Making

Why is mark making important?

- Your child's marks are their first steps into writing.
- Making marks on a small and large scale develops children's fine and gross motor skills.
- It encourages creativity and imagination.
- It offers another outlet for the expressing feelings and sharing thoughts non-verbally.
- Even if it may look like scribbling, children's mark making will give them confidence to have a go at writing as they develop.

How can you support your child's mark making?

- Praise them for having a go. Children quickly lose interest if they feel that they are being corrected too often.
- Support the process - it is more important than the product.
- Encourage your child to throw balls, climb, run, jump. This will support hand-eye coordination and muscles in their upper body as well as core strength. These need developing for them to have control over the smaller movements of a pencil.
- Let them see you writing for a purpose. You could try shopping lists, notes, greetings cards.
- Don't worry about trying to get them to write small letters in words.
- When your child shows an interest, get them to write in lower case (a,b,c and not A,B,C etc)
- Use a range of resources on both large and small scales.
- Encourage them to do up their own buttons and zips to develop fine motor control.
- Drawing anti-clockwise circles, lines and zig-zags are all important stages of writing development.
- Limit the amount of overwriting and tracing as it can make children anxious about writing independently and can often develop a fear of 'getting it wrong'.

Follow your child's lead.

Your child will develop in their own way and at their own pace.

Soon after their third birthday most children begin to understand the difference between mark making and writing.

Ideas to try at home:

Jigsaw puzzles.

Moving the pieces to fit will help fine motor skill development.

Get your child to help with everyday tasks

E.g. folding clothes, pouring drinks, drying up. This will help with hand-eye coordination.

Use rice, or flour sprinkled onto shallow tray or work surface and use a finger or paint brush to make marks in it.

Ask your child to tell you a story and then write it down for them.

Modelling writing helps them to have a go.

Use old wallpaper for making large scale marks. Try drawing circles, zigzags and long roads together.

Pick items with fingers and thumb and move them from one bowl to another. E.g. raisins, peas, buttons, beads or dry pasta.

Ideas to try at out and about:

'Paint' the garden fences and paths. Use large brushes and water. shopping.

Take paper and wax crayons or pencils outside and have a go at **bark rubbing** on trees. You could also try **rubbing** over wooden decking and bricks.

Balance on play equipment

This will help to develop essential core strength ready for writing.

Use natural objects to make marks. Use sticks in mud, gravel, snow or sand.

Water the garden or indoor plants using a **spray bottle**. This will develop hand strength.

Attach some **ribbons on sticks** and use them to make large scale movements and patterns in the air such as circles.

Please supervise your child during their play.

Remember small objects can be choking hazards. Ensure that hands are thoroughly washed after playing outside and with messy resources inside.