

Information about mark-making

- Mark making is a skill which develops gradually. It is the first step towards writing.
- Initially, children make marks; they do not produce letters and words. Babies make marks in liquid, when they spill their drink, older children make marks with paint which eventually become lines and circles
- Marks slowly begin to have meaning for children, and they may talk about their marks e.g. "I am writing a shopping list", "I have drawn a cat"
- After a while, children begin to understand the difference between drawing and writing
- Mark making in the early stages is closely linked to physical development. The more opportunities your child has to develop large and small movement in their arms, hands and fingers, the easier it will be to make marks with a variety of tools.
- Activities such as digging, 'painting' outdoor surfaces with water and a large brush, sweeping, and swishing a scarf through the air in different shapes will help develop large motor movement.
- Small or fine motor movement will be needed to hold pencils and pens correctly. Hanging out the washing and playing with pegs, moulding dough and clay and picking up buttons with fingers and tweezers will help develop the pincer grip needed for writing.
- A child who is drawing people with arms coming out of their head will not benefit from being taught how to form letters
- When children begin to write, it is usually their name they write first. They may only write one letter and it may not be formed correctly but it is the beginning of writing
- Sometimes you will write for them. Please use lower case letters when you write for your child, introducing capitals only for the initial letters of names.
- Learning to write takes a few years. Children who are corrected too often can lose interest in writing. Children who are regularly praised for their mark-making attempts will write more and will therefore get better at it.

Information about Letters and Sounds

- Letters and Sounds is a 6 phase phonics teaching programme
- Playing with sounds and tuning your child's ears into sounds will develop phonological awareness, which is the ability to discriminate different sounds.
- During Phase 1, child will be learning to listen carefully, develop their vocabulary, speak confidently to you, other adults and children and they will have fun with sounds as they listen, remember and talk about a range of different sounds

Phase 1 consists of seven interlinking parts:

- **environmental sounds** e.g. listening walks, sound lotto, sound stories
 - **instrumental sounds** e.g. which instrument, matching sounds
 - **body percussion** e.g. action songs, pass the sound
 - **rhythm and rhyme** e.g. rhyming books, rhyming bingo, listen to the beat
 - **alliteration** (words that begin with the same sound)
e.g. sound box/bag with objects beginning with the same sound
 - **voice sounds** e.g. mouth movements – oo, ah, whee, voice sounds in stories
 - **oral blending and segmenting**
e.g. get your c- oa- t (coat), clapping sounds, I Spy, sound talk e.g. d -u -ck (duck)
- The purpose of **Phase 2** is to teach children at least 19 letters and it will move children on from oral blending and segmentation to blending and segmenting with letters