

Hagley Primary School Kindergarten



Writing and Pre-writing skills

Learning to hold a pencil and make marks that ultimately lead to writing is a complex development. As muscle control develops, children are enabled to move through the 4 stages of pencil grip (see accompanying sheet) which in turn will help to develop their writing skills. In order to do this they need to develop the strength in their hands, fingers and wrists; be able to move their fingers separately, and have strong wrists and thumb.

One fun pre-writing activity that we regularly practise in Kindergarten is 'Dough Disco' (moulding dough in time to music and performing different actions such as rolling it into a ball, flattening it, prodding, rolling and squeezing it). Other activities we provide that offer opportunities to develop strength and control involve developing gross motor skills (through climbing, crawling, throwing and catching and dancing), and fine motor skills (playdough, threading, using tweezers and pipettes, finger rhymes, spray bottles in water play).

Mark Making

Parents often assume that their child begins to learn to write when they can write their own name. In fact, although this can be seen as an exciting milestone, first steps in learning to write come way before this.

Children begin the process of writing by making random marks, and then move through several phases to eventually use symbols and letters in linear form. For children to develop these skills, motivation and confidence are vital. Your child should be given the opportunity to draw freely without having the pressures to 'get it right'.

During the pre-school years providing a wide range of fun mark making activities, in an environment where adults respond with praise, provides the best possible foundation for the process of learning to write.

A wide range of media is used in Kindergarten to develop and encourage early mark making skill. These include;

- *Painting with water outside*
- *Making tracks with Toy cars or trains rolled in paint*
- *Drawing shapes in the air*
- *Using rollers or scrubbing brushes in paint or water*
- *Mark making through role play*
- *Mark making in sand or rice with their fingers*

- *Finger painting*
- *Self marking on tally charts*
- *Using twigs to mark make in the mud*
- *Drawing in cornflour 'gloop'.*

Another activity we provide at Kindergarten is 'Write Dance' where the children may make wiggly lines, straight lines, or circles in time to music using one or both hands. We also perform actions to music ('Wake up, Shake up'), for example making large symmetrical movements with both hands or moving towards the midline of the body, across it, and back again. Using music and movement improves motor skills and provides a strong foundation for writing. It also helps to encourage anti-clockwise movements, for example when mixing or mark making.

When will my child be ready to write letters?

When your child is starting to notice print and to ask what something says, they are beginning to be ready for letters. Your child will be working towards the tripod grip as shown on the accompanying sheet.

Correct Letter Formation

Once ready to begin to write letters children need to use the correct formation. Particular letters to look for are the 'o' (anticlockwise stroke not clockwise), 'd' (start in the middle not the top) and 'm'/'n' (there must be an initial downstroke). Letters are formed with continual strokes apart from crossing the 't' and 'f' and dotting the 'i' and 'j'. The attached sheet gives details of where the starting point is and how each letter is formed.

**REMEMBER: Mark making should always be seen as an enjoyable
fun experience!**

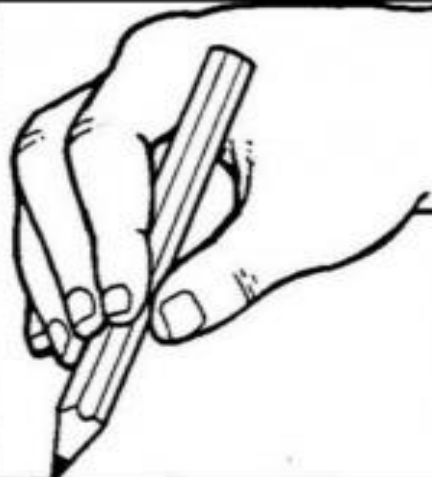




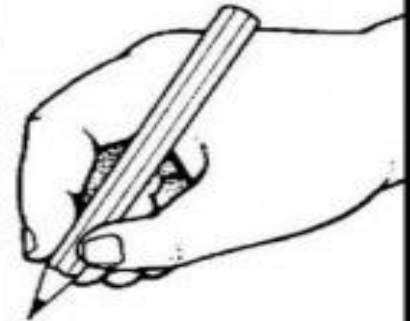
1—1 1/2 years
Cylindrical Grasp



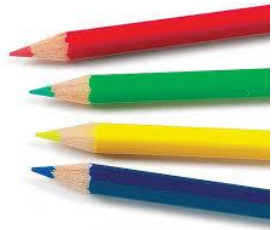
2—3 years
Digital Grasp



3 1/2—4 years
Modified Tripod Grasp



4 1/2—7 years
Tripod Grasp



How we write our letters and numbers

a b c d e f g h i j k l m

n o p q r s t u v w x y z



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

