



Help your child to learn at home.

Writing

Physical development is a crucial part of learning to write. Encourage your child to do activities that require a pincer grip between the thumb and index finger such as picking up small objects, threading beads using a peg board or manipulating playdough.



Gross motor skills that develop the shoulder and elbow pivot points are important for writing too e.g. using an easel, sweeping or mopping, reaching up to post objects, swinging on monkey bars.



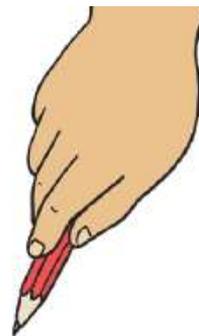
These physical development skills will enable your child to develop their pencil grip and create writing movements.

Children are likely to change their pencil grip as their motor skills develop. By the end of nursery most children should hold a pencil with a triangular grip – usually a **static tripod grip**.



Fist or Palmer Grip

The pencil is held in the palm. Movement is mainly from the shoulder.



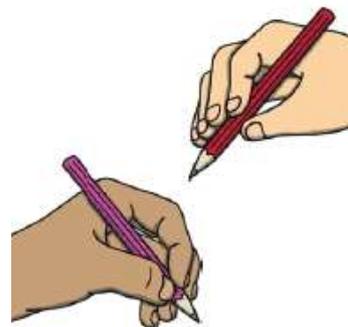
Digital Grip

The fingers hold the pencil with the palm facing down towards the page. Movement is mostly from the elbow.



Four Finger Grip

The pencil is held between the thumb and four fingers. Movement occurs from the wrist.



Static Tripod / Quadropod Grip

The pencil is held by the thumb and two (or three) fingers. Movement is still mainly from the wrist.



Dynamic Tripod Grip

The pencil is held in a comfortable tripod grip. Movement comes from the fingertips.

Motivation to Write

In an increasingly digital world your child needs to understand the purpose of writing.

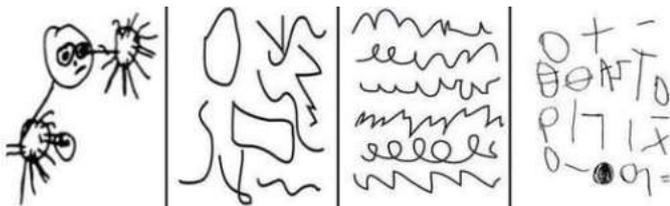
Encourage your child to watch you write. Tell them what you are writing and why. Good opportunities to model writing include:

- lists
- letters and postcards
- labels
- notes
- cards
- events on calendars / in diaries
- invitations
- envelopes

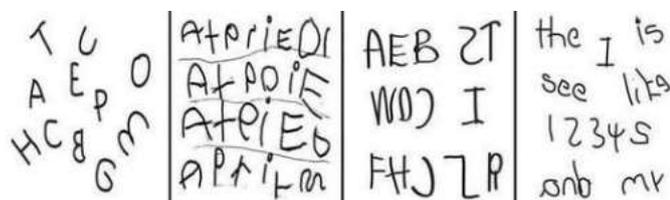
Letters to imaginary characters often provide motivation to write. Your child can tell you what they want you to write or make marks of their own to represent writing.



Valuing Mark Making



Early writing takes a variety of forms. All stages need to be celebrated to encourage your child to continue to 'have a go'. Being able to say what their marks mean is an important achievement. Other milestones include forming some letter shapes, learning how to write their name and beginning to include some sounds from the words they are writing e.g. 'ct' for cat or 'luk' for look.



Phonics



I have a blue hat.

Phonics provide the building blocks for spelling and writing. Children need to segment words into sounds to spell. Initial and final sounds are usually the easiest sounds to hear and record e.g. 'm' to represent Mummy or 'dg' to write dog. Eventually children hear middle sounds too e.g. 'compyootr' for computer.

Names are Important

Your child's name is likely to be one of the first words they want to write. Here are some ideas to help at home:

- count the letters in their name
- talk about the first letter being a capital and the others being lowercase
- make their name into a jigsaw or matching game
- copy over the letters in different ways – highlighters, paint, water to rub out chalk, dough
- look for the letters in their name in the environment

Remember to praise all their name attempts.



The Early Years Curriculum

Not all children develop at the same rate but by the end of nursery most children will...

Writing – 30-50 months:

Sometimes gives meaning to marks as they draw and paint. Ascribes meanings to marks that they see in different places.

Writing – 40-60 months:

Gives meaning to marks they make as they draw, write and paint. Begins to break the flow of speech into words. Continues a rhyming string. Hears and says the initial sound in words. Can segment the sounds in simple words and blend them together. Links sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet. Uses some clearly identifiable letters to communicate meaning, representing some sounds correctly and in sequence. Writes own name and other things such as labels, captions. Attempts to write short sentences in meaningful contexts.