



Mark Making to Writing Journey

The physical act of writing

Foreword

by Bolton Early Years and Childcare Team

We are delighted to introduce Bolton's New Mark Making to Writing Guidance. This guidance has been designed to support practitioners to conquer the challenging task of helping children from birth to 60mths+ develop the physical skills needed to write. It recognises that all children are unique and acknowledges that young children grow and mature at different rates.

Emphasis is placed on unpicking the typical and broad physical stages of writing outlined in Development Matters. Focus has been placed on nurturing communication, gross motor skills (using large muscles in the legs, upper body, shoulders, stamina and strength) and fine motor skills (use of smaller muscles in the arms, hands and fingers) that enable children to effectively make marks and eventually become fluent writers.

This material is intended to support EYFS Practitioners to foster the development of mark making to writing through:

- **Planned, responsive and authentic interactions** (1:1, in small groups and throughout the continuous provision)
- **Effective observation, assessment and planning** (identifying, assessing and planning for key milestones, common concerns and interventions)
- **Partnership working with parents and multi-agencies** (to support children's physical stages of writing development beyond the setting)

We would like to acknowledge and thank the following settings, schools and childminders who contributed to the development of this guidance:

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- St James CEP Farnworth
- The Valley CP
- St Mary's CEP Deane
- St Michael's CEP

“Almost every interaction
in a child's world is preparing
them to become a reader
and writer”

Reading Rockets 2010

How do I use this guidance?

Leaders and managers should familiarise themselves with the guidance to decide how best to use it with their own staff team and parents. Leaders and managers should be confident that colleagues understand the mark making to writing journey as a whole and the importance of each stage. You can then dip into sections and use separate parts of the guidance with staff working with different age groups.

The guidance is organised into sections linked to the broad Development Matters/Early Years Outcomes bands.

Within each section you will find the same headings to make it easy to use.

The headings are:

- **Mark making to writing milestones** show key developmental points for each band of development from birth to 40-60+ months
- **My early mark making stage** provides summary information about the role of the key person and other adults, makes links to the Characteristics of Effective Learning, provides images of typical development and suggested next steps plus common concerns and solutions for this stage
- **Links across the EYFS** highlights cross curricular opportunities
- **How can the environment support me?** This focuses on resources and continuous provision and will help you evaluate the enabling environment
- **Planned opportunities to support my mark making development** consider the routines of the day and adult led activities at each developmental stage
- **Activities to try at home** are suggestions to be shared with parents and carers of simple, low or no cost activities and experiences to share
- Finally the **Mark making to Writing Journey overview** is a summary across the whole EYFS which can be used to inform accurate assessment and precision planning. This will support early identification of children who are not progressing typically and may need additional or different support



Physical

Gross and fine motor development tends to follow a predictable sequence.

Practitioners need to be aware of each of these stages in order to successfully nurture this area of development.

Mark making

Mark making is a term used to describe the different lines, patterns and textures that young children make to communicate.

Writing

Writing conveys information which is meant to be read.

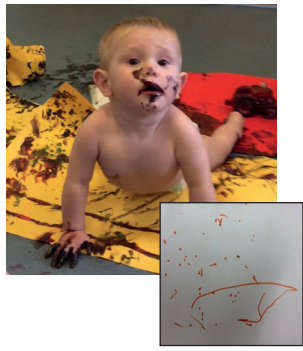
It is an awareness that marks can represent a constant message through numbers and letters.

Handwriting

Handwriting is about the style and manner of putting words down on paper.

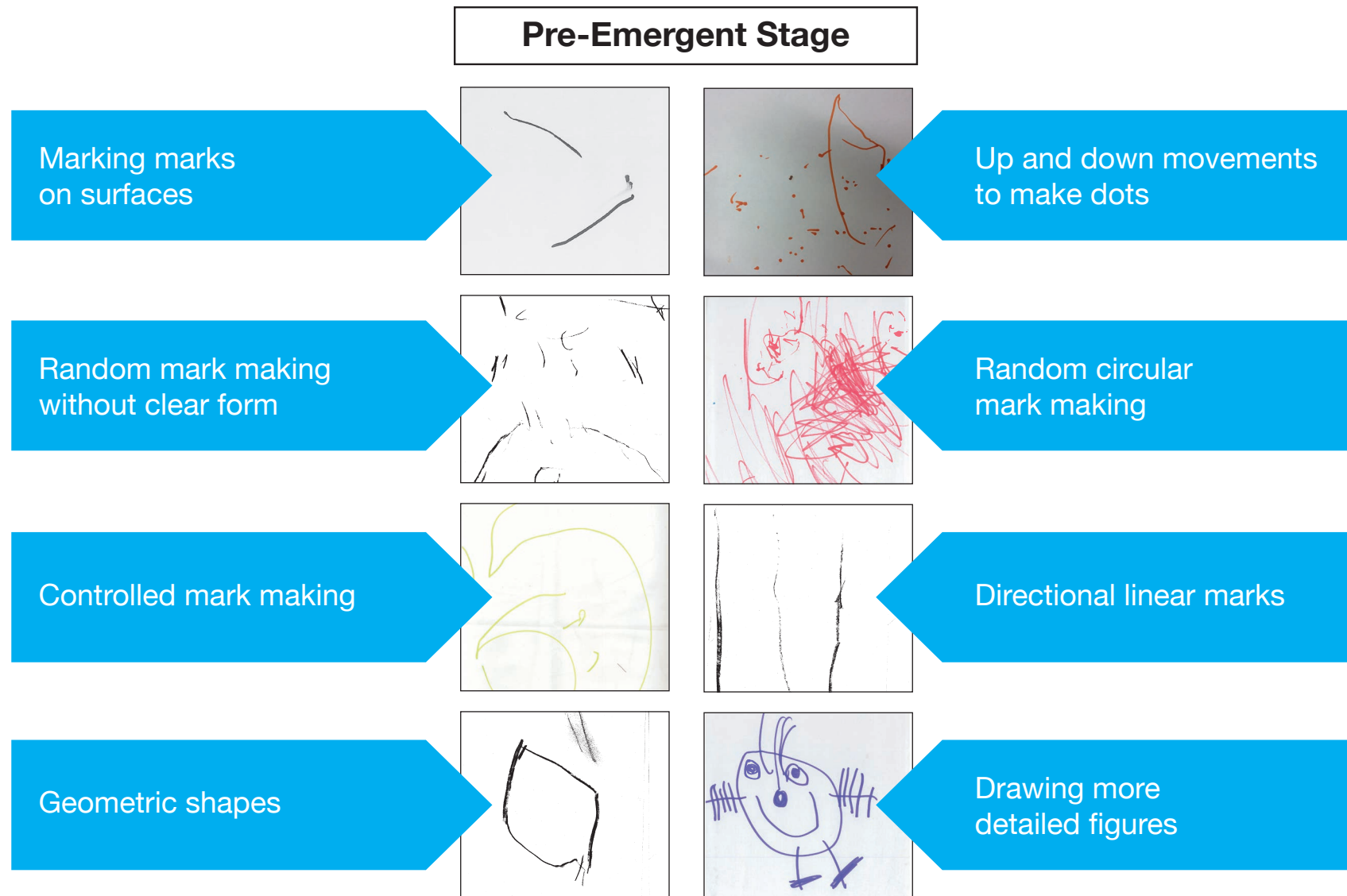
Communication

- Becoming a skilful communicator is fundamental for all aspects of development
- Writing is a vehicle for communicating thoughts and feelings

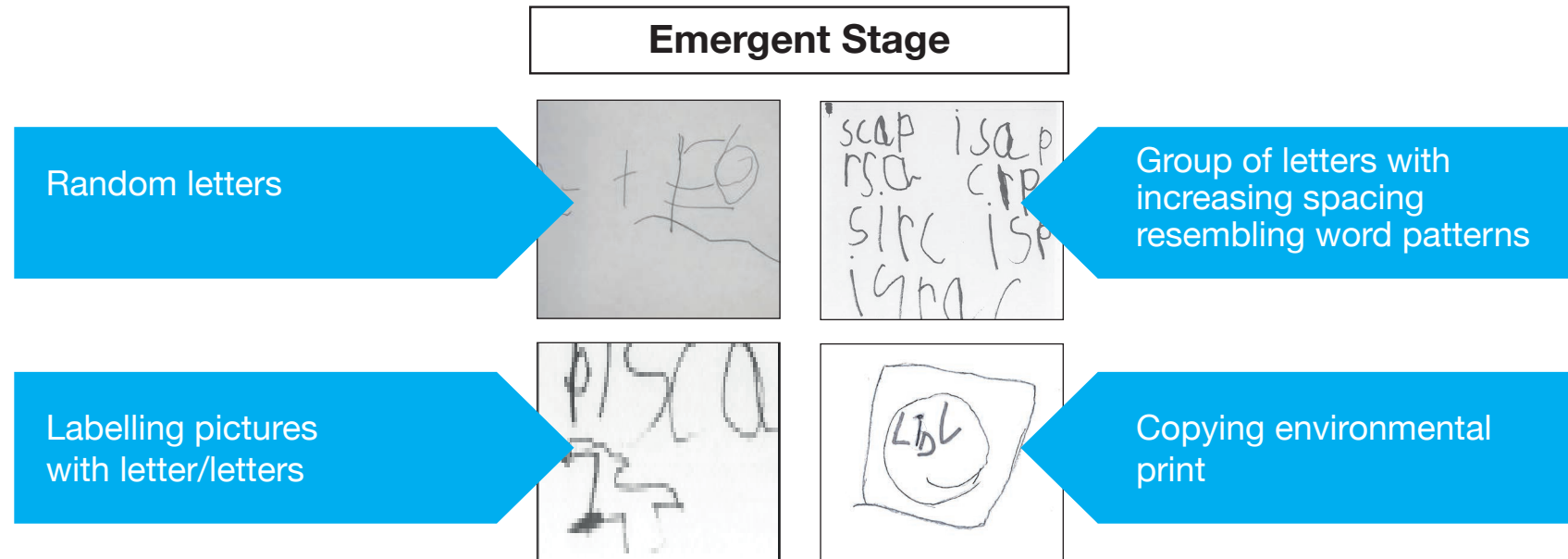


Every child is unique and may follow a unique developmental pathway

Images of mark making development



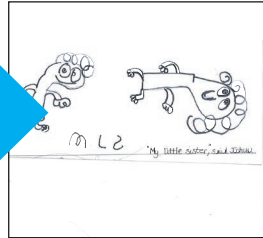
Images of writing development



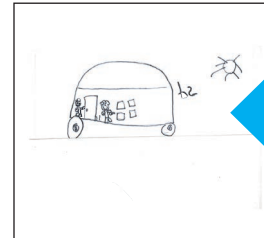
Images of writing development

Transitional to becoming a fluent writer

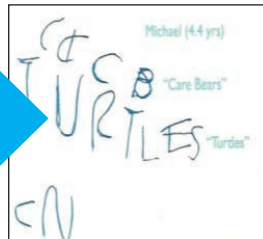
Using the first letter of a word to represent a word or using letter-sound relationship



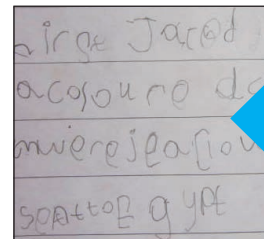
Using initial and final phonemes effectively to represent words



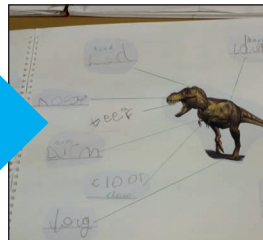
Using medial letter sounds



Invented spellings



Writing captions and labels

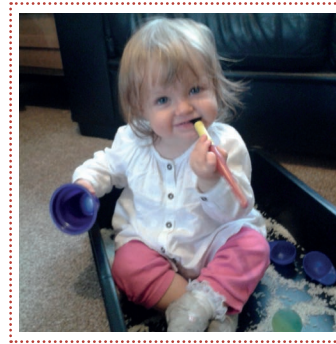


Attempting to write short sentences in meaningful contexts





Birth to 11 months





Birth to 11 months

Mark making to writing milestones

Communication development - The early communicator

Communicates in a variety of ways including crying, gurgling, babbling and squealing.

Stops and looks when hears own name.

Takes turns with sounds and facial expressions.

Understands frequently used words.

Uses cries, sounds, babble and body movements to communicate.

Gross motor development

Turns head in response to sounds and sights. Head control improving.

Gradually develops rolling from side to side, stomach to back, back to stomach.

Sits with arm support then alone briefly.

Random batting at objects.

Develops crawling movements.

Assumes quadruped and rocks and stands with support.

Fine motor development

Takes tiny objects with fingers.

Uses thumb and fingertips to grasp objects.

Uses thumb and side of index finger to grip objects.

Holds two objects, one in each hand, at the same time.

Uses two hands to pick up large objects.

Key physical development milestones

Body awareness e.g. pivots around when on stomach.

Reaches out toward objects on stomach.

Hands to midline (moving the right arm or leg towards the left arm or leg).

Sensory perception enables children to identify objects and textures through touch.

Mark making

Moves arms and legs and increasingly uses them to reach for, grasp and manipulate things.

Writing

Plays with own fingers and toes and focuses on objects around them.



My early mark making stage



How can my Key Person help me?

I support parents to understand significant milestones.

Stay and play sessions are planned for us to reflect on key milestones and establish an agreed way of supporting babies to meet their next steps.

My key children's care and routines are tailored to meet developmental needs.

I spend quality time with my key children to ensure playful face to face interactions.

I use recordings to support other practitioners and parents to celebrate, assess and plan for next steps.

I celebrate communication and physical milestones with practitioners and parents.

I respond playfully to babbling and link meaning.

I copy the sounds that children make.



Look what I can do...

I am learning to use my voice in a range of situations

I am moving my arms, hands, legs and feet with increasing control

Characteristics of effective learning

- I seek ways to move my hands and feet to explore the world around me
- I am curious to see how my hands and feet move
- I like to concentrate on facial expressions
- I will persist until I grasp and explore objects
- I will find ways to crawl around obstacles
- I will test how objects feel

How can other adults help me?

We record and note recognisable sounds and find ways to weave them in to meaningful interactions.

We create communication friendly spaces where we actively encourage babies to initiate vocalisations by copying and praising babbling.

We provide time and space for quality 1:1 interactions.

We practice turn taking to develop concepts of conversation.

Face to face interactions are created to support and model word development.

Quality sensory experiences are planned to nurture exploration with hands and feet. These sessions are reviewed in partnership with parents.

Action songs and rhymes are tailored to match listening and understanding skills.

We model meaning and words linked to gestures e.g. waving good bye.

We make and respond to different sounds that gain responses.

We create opportunities to support physical development through carefully planned games, treasure basket sessions, tummy times, 'flying' with support and stretching sessions etc.



Birth to 11 months

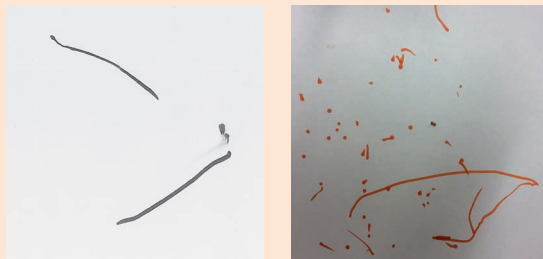
My early mark making stage



Next steps for development...

- I need to hear, learn and use new words
- I need to explore what happens when I use my hands, fingers, toes and feet

My early mark making stage...



The unique child

Common concerns and solutions

Unusual Social Interactions

Children are unique and develop at different rates. If parents raise concerns, take those concerns very seriously.

Observe and note if there are concerns about baby not smiling, looking away, turning away from unfamiliar faces, becomes tense with excess crying and hard to comfort more than usual in new situations.

Create opportunities for quality social interactions in new situation. For example, model how to respond and learn appropriate ways that bring comfort.

Create time for face to face contact e.g. time and space to allow for face scanning and face to face games e.g. peek-a-boo etc.

If concerns continue, work in partnership with parents to raise concerns further with doctors and health visitors following Early Help Processes.



Birth to 11 months

Links across the EYFS

Additional links

Reflective prompts

PSE

I am learning that I can communicate and imitate by using my eyes to make contact, my facial expressions and voice to make sounds.

Have you created time and space to develop sensitive attachments?

Priority should be given towards firmly embedding the prime areas which are the basis for successful learning of the four specific areas pg. 8 EYFS Statutory Framework.

L

I am tracking sounds with my ears and movement with my eyes.
I am starting to understand contextual cues.

Have you noted the range of sounds that your key children respond to?

M

I notice different objects and how they change.

Have you noted how your key children copy your playful sounds?

UW

I enjoy playing with familiar toys.
I am developing understanding of repetition through my repeated actions.

Have you noted how children track toys?

EAD

I am beginning to explore how to move my hands and feet in different materials.
I am beginning to realise that my hands and feet can move under and through a range of textures.
I enjoy the sensation that I feel as I build up tactile memory and perception.

How often do you create opportunities for children to experience different tactile sensations and make marks with their whole body?



Birth to 11 months

How can the environment support me?



Indoors

Quiet area cosy corner

Cloth books encourage me to develop grasping skills.
Soft and comfy chairs enables snuggle time and quality face to face interactions.
I am learning about speech patterns as you read to me.

Sleep/rest area

I am building up strength and stamina.
I am learning about patterns and sequencing as you respond to my care routines.

Sensory area/messy area

I am learning to develop core strength as I lift my head and crawl towards toys (just out of reach).
I am learning how to control my hands and feet as I touch new materials, media and objects.
I am developing command of my two hands.
I am learning how to judge the pressure I need to apply when I explore a range of natural resource objects in both hands.

Nappy change

I am learning to track objects as I look at mobiles.
I turn my head in response when I track displays in the nappy changing area.

Meal times/snack

By allowing me to hold food with my hands I am learning tactile perception and hand eye coordination.

Outdoors

Physical areas

I am learning to pivot my limbs as I push myself up on appropriate equipment.
I enjoy reaching for living objects e.g. plants, grass etc.
I am building up my core strength as I crawl around large sheets on the grass, through mud, bubbles etc.
I enjoy using my muscles to push balls and rolling toys away from me.
I am developing coordination as I move around obstacles.

Space to explore

Tummy time in different sensory media enables me to develop core strength, tactile perception and grasp.
I am developing stability and coordination as I move around the space by rolling from side to side, crawling, rocking and trying to stand.
I use my voice as I respond to new sensory experiences e.g. play with ice, taste different temperature food, squeeze wet sponges, bubble wrap.
I am gaining confidence to use both hands as I reach for objects under transparent sheets/fabric/in custard etc.

Quiet areas

I am learning to build up my visual tracking skills as I lie under trees and watch the leaves move.
I am learning to develop my sensory perception as I explore and snuggle through comfort bins (special box with soft cloth, toys etc.).

The role of the adult:

Create a safe and secure environment: This encourages babies to freely explore, under close supervision.
Observing: Look, listen, note, understand and share significant moments and milestones.
Tuning in: Listening carefully to the different sounds being made. Observe body movements and signs of body awareness.
Showing genuine interest: Giving whole attention, maintaining eye contact, affirming, smiling, and nodding.
Modelling language: Responding to sounds made through turn taking and gestures.
Facilitating challenges: Responding to the babies discoveries and finding ways to respond to extend new explorations.



Birth to 11 months

Planned opportunities to support my mark making development

Care routines



- Optimise my communication development by carefully planning daily routines (sleeping, feeding, nappy changing etc.)
- Recognise and respond to personalise learning cues for physical activity and sleep
- Appropriate use of toys, songs and resources to nurture visual tracking e.g. nappy changing resources

Adult led opportunities



- Adult led 1:1 sessions or a group of three children support me to achieve key physical mile stones e.g. tummy time
- My gross motor movement is nurtured when you create 'safe play spaces' for me to use my arms, feet and mouth
- I enjoy quality time for exploration e.g. treasure basket sessions, sensory experiences, engaging with stories and songs
- I learn to take turns in conversations during planned 1:1 moments e.g. sharing books, singing rhymes, peek-a boo, action and reaction games repeated

Interventions:

- Look, listen, note, share and understand any concerns
- Create opportunity to support and reinforce my significant physical milestones e.g. body awareness song (head, shoulders, round and round the garden) and sensory perception activities (treasure baskets)

Activities to try at home

- ✓ I like singing the same nursery rhymes with you over again and again
- ✓ Shine a torch around a dark room, can I follow the light with my eyes?
- ✓ I like hearing different sounds and music. Watch me giggle when I listen to your recorded voice
- ✓ I enjoy watching myself on the changing mat. Place child proof mirrors around the room and talk about what I can see
- ✓ Record the different sounds I make and play them back to me
- ✓ I am a rock star! Let me hit pots and pans with wooden and metal spoons
- ✓ Create obstacle courses with cushions and small weight-bearing furniture that won't tip over. Help me to move around them
- ✓ Carefully select special objects that can be explored with my mouth e.g. toothbrush, wooden spoon etc. Let me pull these objects out of a special bag and watch me explore
- ✓ I need time and space for tummy time on different textured surfaces e.g. soft rug, grass etc. I am safe because you are always there to watch and praise me as I raise and lower my head

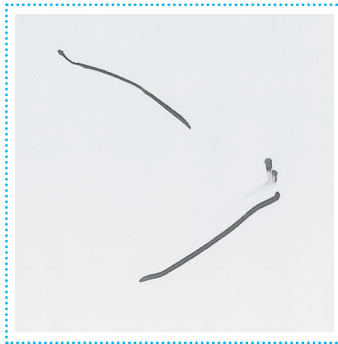


Want to find out more?

'What to Expect, When? A Parents' Guide'
www.foundationyears.org.uk



8 to 20 months





Mark making to writing milestones

Communication development - The attentive communicator

Take pleasure in making and listening to a wide variety of sounds.

Easily distracted by noises or other people talking.

Likes being with familiar adult and watching them.

Understands single words and gestures in context.

Understands more words than they can say.

Uses around 10 single words and babble/gestures to communicate.

Gross motor development

Sits unsupported on the floor.

When sitting, can lean forward to pick up small toys.

Pulls to standing, holding on to furniture or person for support.

Crawls, bottom shuffles or rolls continuously to move around.

Walks around furniture lifting one foot and stepping sideways (cruising), and walks with one or both hands held by adult.

Takes first few steps independently.

Fine motor development

Puts small objects in a cup or other container.

Turns book pages a few at a time.

Attempts to imitate new gestures.

Pokes and points at things using index finger.

Grabs crayons in fist. Builds tower of two or more blocks. Stacks 2-3 cubes.

Can hold an object with one hand and can manipulate it with the other hand.

Key physical development milestones

Core strength - required for balance and stability and supporting coordination skills.

Mastering Tactile Perception - Pressure Able to judge the appropriate pressure required to hold and release objects safely.

Bilateral co-ordination (the ability to coordinate both sides of the body e.g. both hands).

Mark making

Will frequently alternate hands for leading activities.

Marks a piece of paper with a crayon and scribbles haphazardly.

Writing

Play with own fingers and toes and focus on objects around them.

8 to 20 months

My early mark making stage



How can my Key Person help me?

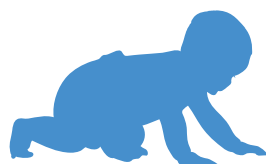
I form positive attachments which allow me to support children's exploration of new objects and surfaces.

I work with my key children's parents to extend challenging experiences at home.

I work in partnership with parents to celebrate the new sounds and words that my key children are making and look for opportunities to extend and consolidate these.

I work in partnership with parents to build up a bank of songs and rhymes that my key children enjoy.

I am able to follow my key children's lead as they explore new ways to use their body, hands and feet.



Look what I can do...

I can use my whole body and feet

I can hold an object in my fist to make a mark, dots and haphazard scribbles

Characteristics of effective learning

- I am curious to explore a range of sensory materials with my whole body, hands and feet
- I like to reach for new objects of various sizes
- I am beginning to notice print
- I am fascinated with surfaces with different textures
- I enjoy finding ways to explore objects in my treasure basket
- I like to test how to use my hands to clap and wave

How can other adults help me?

We are skilled at tuning into the different sounds that are made during every day routines.

We plan quality exploration sessions that enable us to record and respond to significant milestones.

We create a bank of adult led and child initiated activities based on children's needs e.g. treasure baskets sessions, listening games, dance and music time and role play with real objects.

We audit the provision to ensure it is communication friendly.

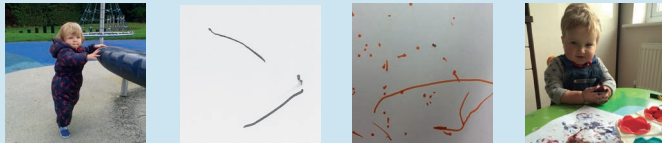
We create challenging physical experiences to develop bilateral coordination and tactile pressure e.g. squeezing, grasping, crawling and cruising activities.

We create quality experiences for children to make marks on different surfaces, in large trays, on big sheets of foil, wallpaper over boxes and plastic sheets on walls. We are effective in finding ways to extend children's hand and feet exploration in dough, cornflour and mud.



8 to 20 months

My early mark making stage



Next steps for development...

- I need to hear and learn how to use new words
- I need opportunities to use my hands and feet during quality uninterrupted sensory and exploration sessions

My early mark making stage...



The unique child

Common concerns and teaching strategies

- **Immobile babies**

Encourage babies that show little signs of bottom shuffling or crawling to build up core strength by using for example, tummy time games

Vary hold positions to support babies to push themselves up

Provide furniture for cruising and obstacles to build up strength, spatial awareness and speed

- **Coordination and equal use of both hands and legs**

Provide a range of stimulating resources and turn taking games to encourage babies to use both hands to grasp at the same time

- **Visual, hearing and sensory development delay**

Work in partnership with parents to contact a doctor or health visitor for specialist assessments, advice and support

If concerns continue, work in partnership with parents to raise concerns further with doctors and health visitors following Early Help processes



Links across the EYFS

Additional links	Reflective prompts
PSE I am learning that my own voice and actions have effects on others.	Have you created time and space to develop sensitive attachments?

Priority should be given towards firmly embedding the prime areas which are the basis for successful learning of the other four specific areas pg. 8 EYFS Statutory Framework.

L	I am interested in images and print in special books	What are your children's favourite nursery rhymes? Are they beginning to join in with the finger actions?
M	I enjoy action rhymes and songs that relate to number. I can recognise big things and small things in meaningful context.	Are treasure baskets differentiated to nurture hand-eye coordination?
UW	I am looking at everything in detail and am now aware when items are out of sight. I like to bang objects together as I learn that things fit together in different ways.	Have you noted if your children are able to touch their left hands and feet to their right hands and feet when they move and interact with the world?
EAD	I need to explore and experiment with a range of media through sensory experiments by using my fingers and whole body. I enjoy moving my whole body to sounds; clapping, waving and moving to songs. I wonder why and how I can make more marks with hands and feet.	Have you recorded the range of marks made with hands and feet on different surfaces and textures?



8 to 20 months

Planned opportunities to support my mark making development

Care routines



Well-planned daily routines create opportunities to reinforce, model and support my communication, physical and mark making development:

- Expectations and opportunities for me to join in with daily routines e.g. pulling off my shoes
- Challenge and facilitate my grasping skills during snack times e.g. finger foods, using utensils and helping to wash my hands
- Learning to take turns in conversations during daily events e.g. waving at arrival, sharing books, singing rhymes, peek-a boo, action and reaction games repeated

Adult led opportunities



1:1 or small group opportunities both inside and outside help me to develop communication and physical development. Some opportunities include:

- Carefully planned co-creator sessions e.g. joint sensory explorations
- Uninterrupted planned exploration sessions e.g. multi-sensory play
- Planned physical challenges e.g. collecting leaves and gathering feathers
- Consolidate my learning e.g. putting on and taking off different hats
- Modelling and demonstrating to me how to use resources. e.g. pouring, pushing and pulling
- Challenge and encourage my gross movements by creating 'safe play spaces' matched to my specific stages of development e.g. effectively planning to use different surfaces, platforms and sturdy surfaces etc.

Interventions:

- Look, listen, note, share and understand that toddlers mature at different rates
- Create opportunity to support and reinforce my significant physical milestones e.g. core strength games (e.g row row your boat), bilateral co-ordination such as symmetrical moments/both hands at the same time (e.g. beating pots and pans). Alternate leg and hand movements (marching games and tearing activities) and tactile perception (e.g. sensory play).



8 to 20 months

How can the environment support me?



Indoors	Outdoors
<p>Quiet area cosy corner</p> <p>Real board books encourages me to develop grasping skills. I am building up my vocalisation skills. I am imitating your facial responses and words.</p>	<p>Physical areas</p> <p>I have space to pull up to a standing position as I move around climbing equipment. I am learning to coordinate my hands as I move through tunnels and under blankets and around obstacles. I am developing bilateral coordination as I drag push-a-long toys. I am learning to use my whole body as I explore different equipment placed at different angles and heights. I am learning bilateral coordination as I crawl under large scale fabric, chase bubbles and stretch for out of reach toys.</p>
<p>Sleep/rest area</p> <p>A range of soothing music, lullabies and nursery rhymes inspires me to respond with my whole body.</p>	<p>Space to explore</p> <p>I am developing stability and coordination as I move around the space by crawling, cruising and walking. I am inspired to develop my grasp by reaching for a range of resources that I find curious. Large space allows me to use my whole body without limitations e.g. large scale painting, gloop, water play etc.</p>
<p>Sensory area</p> <p>I enjoy having space and time to explore. A range of different textures and objects strengthen my grasp. I can manipulate different objects. I am learning to use both hands to connect everyday objects. I am learning to balance as I shake musical instruments. My visual tracking skills are developing as I watch various stimulus move up and down, left to right.</p>	<p>Space to be imaginative</p> <p>I make connections with the purpose of real everyday objects. I develop my vocabulary, imagination and desire to be an effective communicator.</p>
<p>Exploratory/messy area</p> <p>I am learning how to judge the pressure I need to apply when I explore a range of natural resources.</p>	<p>The role of the adult: inviting children to elaborate: using gestures and praise to encourage children to show you their new movements and repeat new words. Suggesting: using body language and gestures to encourage children to repeat a new movement or try an alternative approach. Observing: Look, listen, note, understand and share significant moments and milestones. Exploring: role modelling how to grasp, roll etc. new resources. Creating time and space: creating time to reassure children that you are watching but will not interrupt until invited into their play. Modelling: modelling how to use new words and language</p>
<p>Nappy change</p> <p>I am learning to see and hear the sequence of actions as you carry out my care needs.</p>	
<p>Meal times/snack</p> <p>By using my hands to feed myself I am learning to develop my upper trunk control and coordination.</p>	

Activities to try at home

- ✓ Make up silly songs using my name
- ✓ Look at family photos with me – encourage me to point to myself
- ✓ Hide different musical objects around the room. When I find them let's make music together
- ✓ Play turn-taking noise games with me. Encourage me to copy you and then take the lead
- ✓ Take me on a feely walk to explore tree trunks, grass, flowers and hidden treasure
- ✓ Create problems for me to solve such as pulling ribbon out of small containers
- ✓ You are my favourite climbing frame. I like using you to climb on, under and around
- ✓ Taking turns to roll the ball to you will help me to focus on a moving object
- ✓ Let's wave and shake tinsel and scarves to our favourite music
- ✓ Set challenges for me. I grow stronger as I stretch for objects out of reach
- ✓ Help me to take supported risks – I can climb on to the sofa under your watchful eye

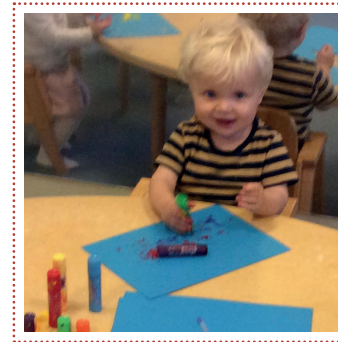
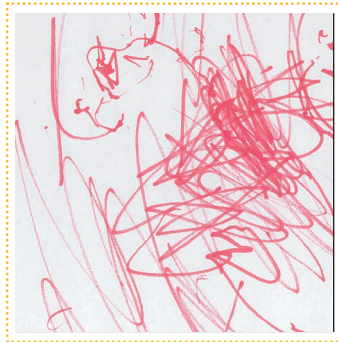
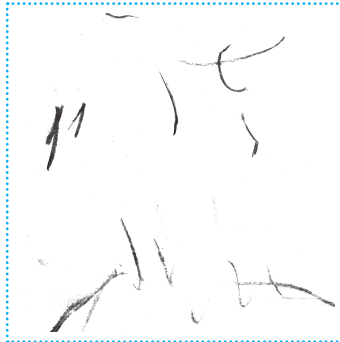
Want to find out more?

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www.foundationyears.org.uk





16 to 26 months





Mark making to writing milestones

Communication development - The innovative communicator

Likes to do their own activity rather than what an adult wants.

Able to understand and use two word phrases without visual cues though words are not clear; can get frustrated when not understood.

Gross motor development

Walks down one step at a time with rail or holding hand.

Begins to squat in play and stands back up.

Begins to jump in play.

Begins to kick a stationary ball.

Jumps off 30cm box with 1 foot leading.

Walks on balance beam with 1 foot on/1 foot off.

Walks up and down stairs alone.

Fine motor development

Starts using fingers and thumb to grasp crayons.

Imitates vertical and circular scribbles.

Turns pages of a book one at a time.

Strings 2 to 8cm beads.

Cuts paper using snips/scissors.

Builds tower with three to five blocks.

Key physical development milestones

Balance is an essential element of core stability and gross motor movement.

Balance and coordination improves as posture develops.

Mastering shoulder control is essential for stabilising the shoulder and arm. This helps to strengthen and develop dexterity of the hand and fingers.

Mark making

Examine the marks they and others make.

Horizontal or vertical scribble.

Writing

Make random marks with their fingers and some tools.

Whole arm movements.

Holding objects with whole hand and thumb often pointing up.

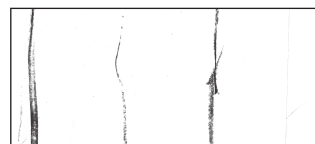
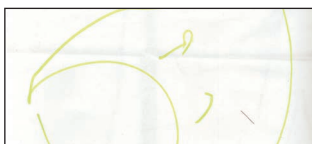
Palmer Grip





16 to 26 months

My early mark making stage



Look what I can do...

I can hear new words and I am learning how to use them.

I can explore what happens when I use my feet and hands.

I know that the marks I make on different surfaces look the same as the movements I made with my hands.

How can my Key Person help me?

I celebrate each milestone and share new words and marks enthusiastically and quickly with parents.

I provide a secure and safe environment for my key children to use new words by repeating and expanding on what they say.

I model how to put words into sentences as I talk about the things they did at home.

Whilst carrying out care routines I encourage my key children to take the lead in our conversations.

I actively find ways to observe how my key children engage with unfamiliar objects. I know when to respond to a prompt or wait for my key children to initiate a conversation. I encourage my key children to take the lead in selecting favorite stories and turning pages during story times.

I encourage my key children to take the lead in helping with care routines e.g. climbing up the nappy changing steps, washing drinking beakers and putting sleeping blankets away.

I plan family time sessions with parents to discuss ways to support development at home and in the local community.

I encourage my key children to mimic me writing to their parents and friends.

How can other adults help me?

We have regular meetings to reflect and plan opportunities to personalise fine motor and gross motor opportunities, giving careful consideration to different learning styles, schemas and developmental milestones.

We provide a rich and stimulating environment where children can communicate in groups, 1:1 e.g. recording voice, play listening and singing games, create time to offer and pass objects to friends.

The indoor and outdoor area is enhanced to support jumping, kicking, squatting and pulling activities. Large scale opportunities to draw and make marks on different surfaces, angles, using one or both hands are carefully planned and available daily.

Reading resources such as story props, nursery rhyme bags and puppets encourage toddlers to recognise themselves, repeat simple sentences and book language.

Mark making tools are highly attractive and used effectively in a range of media to support shoulder and arm strengthening.

We plan to work 1:1 or in small groups to support motor/hand eye coordination e.g. rolling, stacking blocks etc.

Characteristics of effective learning

- I am curious to see how tools make marks
- I initiate making marks on different surfaces
- I look carefully at the marks my hands make
- I know when I try new words you smile
- I know when my hands move up and down
- I will make up and down movements when dancing



16 to 26 months

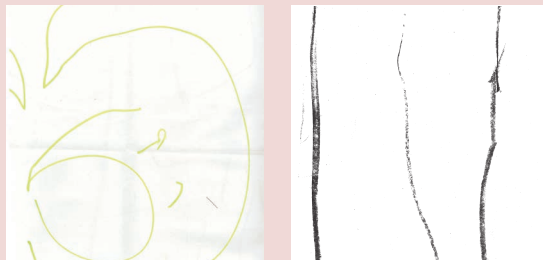
My early mark making stage



Next steps for development...

- Opportunity to build up a bank of rhymes and favourite stories
- Opportunities to make marks with hands and feet on different surfaces
- Opportunity to strengthen my grasp by exploring a variety of textures and mark making movements e.g. rolling

My early mark making stage...



The unique child

Common concerns and teaching strategies

Communication Concerns

Every child is unique and may not appear to be meeting communication milestones at the same rate as other toddlers. It is important to act upon any concerns raised by parents.

Observe and assess if there are no signs of babbling, little or no signs of using gesture or pointing to communicate, no signs of saying key words such as mamma, dada, saying less than 50 words by 24 months or showing signs of social uneasiness i.e. avoiding interactions, face to face contact etc.

Create opportunities to develop listening skills through quality face to face time e.g. singing rhymes or a range of tunes and music. Observe how babies respond to different styles and tempos. Make a note of the tastes and preferences. Explore sounds in the environment inside and outside of the setting.

Introduce a wealth of new sounds i.e. instruments, sounds that they may hear at home.

Take time to share books and develop an appreciation of text by varying the pitch of your voice, making noises or singing as you read.

Play visual tracking games hiding resources behind, under etc.

NB: children achieve different milestones in unique ways. If there are persistent concerns encourage parents to contact doctors and/or a health visitor following Early Help processes.



16 to 26 months

Links across the EYFS

Additional links

PSE

I can play co-operatively with adults.

Reflective prompts

Are you creating opportunities to play a range of visual tracking, sound discrimination and midline crossing games?

Priority should be given towards firmly embedding the prime areas which are the basis for successful learning of the other four specific areas pg. 8 EYFS Statutory Framework.

L

I am beginning to learn rhythmic patterns in words and stories.
I am aware that rhymes and songs have specific actions.
I am beginning to understand simple sentences.
I have a list of favourite stories, rhymes and songs that I need you to share with me.

Have you completed the communication friendly environment audit?

M

I can say some counting words randomly.
I am learning how to group/sort my ideas by grouping and sorting objects.

Are you starting to introduce new mathematical vocabulary?

UW

I am looking at everything in detail and am now aware when items are out of sight
I like to bang objects together as I learn that things fit together in different ways

Have you noted the balance, coordination skills and shoulder control of your children?

EAD

I need to explore and experiment with a range of media through sensory experiments by using my fingers and whole body.
I enjoy moving my whole body to sounds, clapping, waving and moving to songs.
I wonder why and how I can make more marks with hands and feet.

How can you support parents to extend sensory exploration at home?



16 to 26 months

Planned opportunities to support mark making development

Care routines



Well-planned daily routines create opportunities to reinforce, model and support communication, physical and mark making development:

- Expectations and opportunities for me to join in with daily routines collecting plates and cups, putting the plates on the table, putting toys in a basket and pulling a nappy out of my bag
- Learning to take turns in conversations during daily events e.g. taking simple messages to others

Adult led opportunities



- 1:1 or small group activities to extend my locomotor skills, skills I need to move from one place to another e.g. co-playing running and climbing games and scrambling activities
- 1:1 or in small sessions to refine my non-locomotor skills i.e. gross motor skills that do not involve moving from one place to another i.e. balancing, swiping, reaching and bending. Joint dancing sessions, playing throwing games, using pull-along toys and picking up objects
- Fine motor activities, 1:1 or small groups i.e. sensory mark-making activities, finger exploration, ripping, squeezing and moulding

Interventions:

- Look, listen, note, share and understand that young children progress at different rates
- Create opportunity to support and reinforce my significant physical milestones e.g. core stability (crawling games, rolling objects to you whilst lying on my tummy) and shoulder and upper arm pivoting games e.g. (swing games, passing extra large balls from one side to another, rolling cars whilst kneeling, push-along toys etc.)



16 to 26 months

How can the environment support me?



Indoors

Quiet area cosy corner

Downloads of my favourite rhymes and stories allows me to take a lead initiating when I listen to things that I enjoy.

Real books allow me to see and label the world around me.

A range of quality books linked to my interest captivates me.

I am beginning to see myself as a reader as I say single words whilst holding books.

Sleep/rest area

A range of soothing music, lullabies and nursery rhymes inspires me to make vocalisations and utterances as I sing/hum myself to sleep.

A range of snuggle toys allow me to manipulate my hands in a light and soft way.

Sensory/ exploratory/ messy area

I am building up my finger dexterity as I pull, drag, rip and scratch textured slime.

I use isolated fingers as I finger paint, dig holes in moon rock paste and textured dough.

I develop hand eye coordination as I push pasta through, in and over different objects and play with blocks.

I am developing hand eye coordination as I cut suspended string, wool and fabric.

Nappy change

I am learning how to communicate my personal needs.

Meal times/ snack

I am learning to develop shoulder control and core stability, two handed coordination as I pour water from jugs.

I am developing my hand-eye coordination as I help you use tools to prepare snacks.

Outdoors

Physical areas

I am learning to balance and coordinate my leg muscles as I walk down and up steps on climbing frames.

I am developing my posture and core stability as I pull and push toys, crawl through tunnels, jump on different surfaces etc.

I am learning bilateral coordination as I play marching games, action games that move across the body and dancing games around large open spaces.

I am developing upper body strength as I wheel toys back and forth.

I am learning to experiment with my marks as I spread mud or paint and draw on large surfaces.

I am developing my grip as I squirt water, scatter seeds etc.

Space to explore

I am excited to explore my jumping skills as I jump off climbing trees, small steps etc.

I use my visual tracking skills as I watch the bugs in the bug hotel, butterflies in the wild areas and mud slip and set in different containers.

I use a range of hand manipulations as I grasp tools to mark extra large marks on different surfaces.

Space to be imaginative

I enjoy using everyday objects in role to tell my stories.

I am developing hand-eye coordination as I construct and recreate scene with bricks, large cardboard boxes etc.

I am developing hand eye coordination, and upper body strength as I help to put on different hats etc.

Space to reflect

I am learning to reflect as I snuggle up and say one or two words to express how I feel.

I am learning to communicate and share my views with friends as I relax.

The role of the adult:

Using open ended questions: creating opportunities for children to share their learning.

Using encouragement to further thinking: encouraging alternative ways of moving, holding tools.

Observing: Look, listen, note and understand and share significant moments and milestones.

Extender: taking cues from the children to join in new physical games, offer alternative solution's and praise attempts.

Activities to try at home

- ✓ Take every opportunity to explain what I am doing and name different objects in and outside the house. This helps me learn new words
- ✓ Please give me a range of tools to make marks on different surfaces in the garden
- ✓ Play visual memory games with me e.g. place an object in an egg box, shake it and see where the object ends up within the box
- ✓ If you place a small toy, glitter, food colouring and oil in a bottle (and secure safely) I will enjoy watching the toy move up and down
- ✓ Create challenging ways for me to manoeuvre around the room using different furniture to support me along the way
- ✓ Create opportunities for me to climb, jump, kick in large open spaces such as the park, during swimming etc.
- ✓ Provide a range of materials for me to hide under e.g. den building
- ✓ Provide bubble bursting and balloon play outdoors
- ✓ Make play dough with me outdoors using a range of tools and different size containers. I like getting messy with you

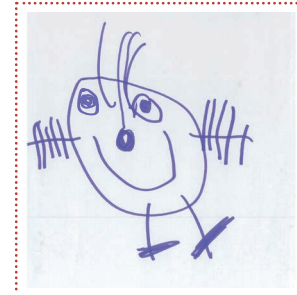
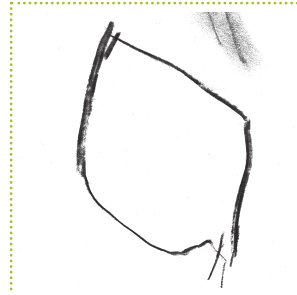
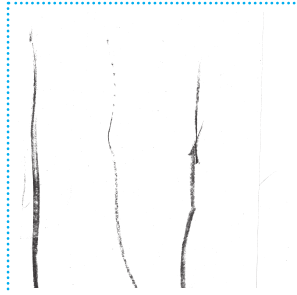
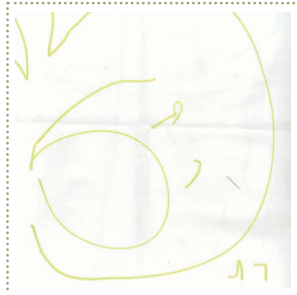
Want to find out more?

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www.foundationyears.org.uk





22 to 36 months





22 to 36 months

Mark making to writing milestones

Communication development - The developing communicator

Can follow an adults lead for a short time.

Can understand and use three word phrases including simple concepts e.g. size, prepositions, emotions and questions who?, what? and where?

Continues to understand more than they say, some speech sounds still not clear.

Gross motor development

Runs safely on whole foot.

Squats with steadiness to rest or play with object on the ground and raises to feet without using hands.

Climbs confidently and is beginning to pull themselves up on play equipment.

Can kick a large ball.

Fine motor development

Turns pages in a book, sometimes several at once.

Shows control in: holding and using jugs to pour, hammers, books and mark making tools.

Beginning to use three fingers (tripod grip) to hold writing tools.

Imitates drawing simple shapes such as circles and lines.

Key physical development milestones

Crossing the midline e.g. scratch an elbow, cross our ankles and read left to right.

Forearm control-key for a range of movement from the elbow.

May be beginning to show preference for dominant hand but not yet established.

The child will also continue to alternate lead and assist roles between right and left hands.

Mark making

Distinguish between the different marks they make.

Draw horizontal and vertical lines.

Writing

Begin to show some control in their use of tools and equipment.

When drawing, children hold the crayon or pencil with their fingers pointing towards the paper
pronated pencil grasp.





22 to 36 months

My early mark making stage



How can my Key Person help me?

I actively find ways to work in partnership with my key children's parents to celebrate language, physical and mark making milestones.

I plan regular sessions to encourage parents to model writing at home.

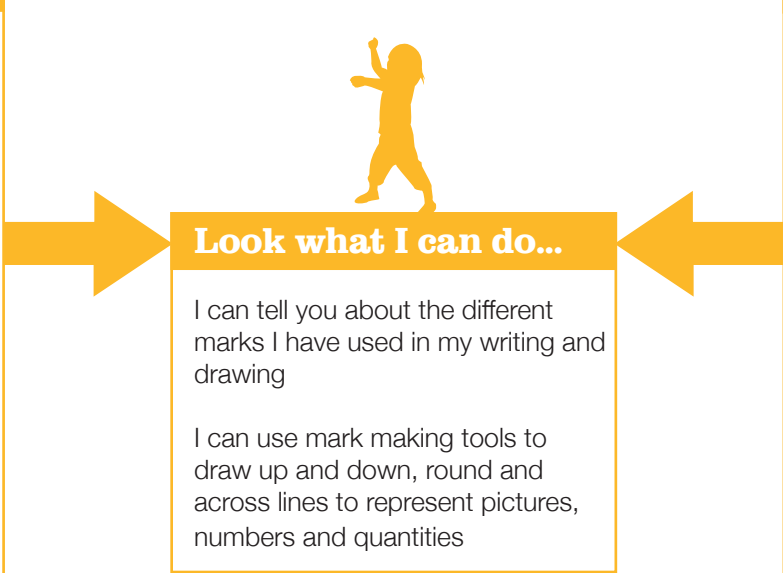
I keep a regular diary where my key children take photographs and take turns to make marks that explain what we have been doing.

I actively record and note what my key children say about their marks.

I plan regularly times to build up my key children's expressive language, new vocabulary by re-reading and singing books that I have deliberately chosen to meet key milestones.

I find creative ways to encourage children to use fine motor skills to help me throughout the day e.g. self-registering.

Encourage children to make marks during care routines, e.g. making marks when drinks are finished.



Look what I can do...

I can tell you about the different marks I have used in my writing and drawing

I can use mark making tools to draw up and down, round and across lines to represent pictures, numbers and quantities

Characteristics of effective learning

- I am interested to see how you react when you read my writing
- I like to write in role play
- I am proud of my up and down marks
- I challenge myself to use different lines
- I like to think of things to write
- I check if I have made the right marks

How can other adults in the settings help me?

We use observations based on children's milestones to enhance the indoor and outdoor environment. Children's skills are supported by introducing different sizes of tools and taping large sheets of paper to the floor etc.

We provide a communication friendly environment with emphasis on listening to the child's voice, participation in storytelling, talking about their marks and learning and practicing new words.

The indoor and outdoor areas are enhanced to nurture gross and fine motor skills through activities that strengthen co-ordination, balance and grip.

Daily and regular opportunities to model and support writing is carefully planned to challenge children to meet their next steps.

Reading resources are used to extend children's interests as well as providing templates for group writing opportunities.



22 to 36 months

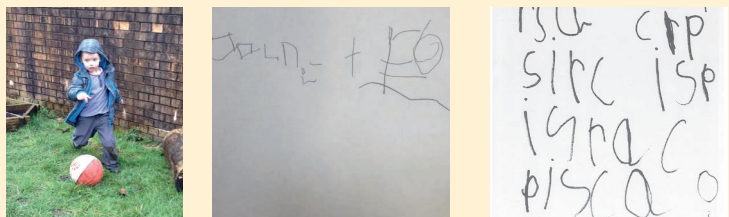
My early mark making stage



Next steps for development...

- Opportunities to recognise and talk about environmental print
- Opportunity to use fingers to pinch and grasp e.g. fine motor games and exploration of small, tactile objects (loose parts) and playing with different sized tools on different surfaces
- Opportunity to use both hands to make large marks
- Opportunity to see adults model writing for different purposes using words that are personal to them e.g. card writing etc.

My early mark making stage...



The unique child

Common concerns and teaching solutions

Difficulties with hand eye-coordination

Observe and assess if children have difficulty making movements guided by vision e.g. may have difficulty following large gross motor movements during dance or may have difficulty placing blocks during building.

Practice developing hand-eye coordination games e.g. rolling balls between partners, hitting suspended objects and pegging large objects. Examples of these are den building, hanging washing up, playing passing games, weaving games and using various tools during sensory play, posting activities, jigsaw playing and playing with construction toys.

Difficulty with visual memory

Observe and assess if children struggle to remember patterns and movements that they are very familiar with and have performed previously. Visual memory games may strengthen this stage of development e.g. play memory games e.g. Kim's Game, what's missing games and look what I can see activities. Children should be encouraged to look closely at objects and things around them.

If concerns continue, work in partnership with parents to raise concerns further with doctors and health visitors following Early Help processes.



22 to 36 months

Links across the EYFS

Additional links

PSE I am learning to express my feelings, views and thoughts and respond to the feelings of others.

Reflective prompts

Are you able to teach children the correct word for their feelings e.g. angry or scared?
Do you display posters with different facial expressions?

Priority should be given towards firmly embedding the prime areas which are the basis for successful learning of the other four specific areas pg. 8 EYFS Statutory Framework.

L	I am beginning to recite repetitive book language, rhymes and poems. I am beginning to understand more complex sentences and simple concepts. I can use puppets to talk in role.	Do you create authentic opportunities for children to talk through and role play solutions to problems?
M	I am beginning to use graphics to recreate symbols, shapes and images. I am beginning to develop the sequence of events by exploring patterns and counting. I am beginning to notice that terms such as size apply in the wider context.	Do you recreate opportunities for children to record scores when playing games?
UW	I am learning about real and imaginary life. I notice and talk about the features in books, the environment and things that interest me. I am developing hand eye coordination when I use the mouse and ICT equipment.	Do you have child friendly ICT resources i.e. child size mouse/keyboards and robust cameras?
EAD	I can use my hands to make specific graphical representation. I can use my fingers to hold small tools for sustained periods. I can select which form of media to use to communicate e.g. a painting of my family.	Do you create opportunities for children to talk about the meaning of their art work?



22 to 36 months

Planned opportunities to support mark making development

Care routines



Well-planned daily routines create opportunities to reinforce, model and support communication, physical and mark making development:

- Opportunity for me to take a lead in my routine. Climbing up the stairs to the changing mat, learning to spoon food on to my plate, learning to hold a beaker and wipe the table
- I enjoy using caring hands e.g. feeding pets and serving others snacks
- I can begin to use both hands to help tidy under and on top of different surfaces

Adult led opportunities



Daily opportunities both indoor and out for:

gross motor skills activities – this could include encouraging me to take risks to use new upper body strength, such as two handed waving and two handed hitting games. Challenging me to explore my lower body coordination e.g. learning new circle and team games or moving and dancing to a range of music.

- Fine motor activities within a small group. This could include finger gym activities and small group art projects
- Opportunity for me to see you model and demonstrate writing for a purpose, 1:1 or in a very small group
- 1:1 opportunity for me to talk to you about my marks

Interventions:

- Look, listen, note, share and understand that young children progress at different rates
- Create opportunity to support and reinforce my significant physical milestones e.g. upper body stability games (throwing bean bags whilst kneeling, snake crawling games). Hand dominance games (e.g. scooping games, screwing lids on jars, ball games, lacing and threading activities, pick-up activities (e.g. picking up and posting small objects)



22 to 36 months

How can the environment support me?



Indoors

Quiet area cosy corner

I know why I like certain books and can use some of the repetitive phrases and vocabulary accurately.
I am learning how to identify the beginning and the end of stories.
I can match props to stories and rhymes.
I can talk about characters and use my voice to imitate them.
I am beginning to master how to hold books appropriately and turning pages to find the characters/scenes I like.

Sleep/rest area

I can follow a visual timetable and know what I could do after I have a nap.
I can use new words to tell you I would like to rest, or sleep.
I can use my coordination skills to pull my own blanket out of my snuggle bag.

Sensory/ exploratory/ messy area

I am learning to show preference for a dominant hand as I reach for materials and objects in the DIY invention boxes.
I am learning to strengthen my hands and shoulders as I twist my wrist to manipulate sand foam, moon dust, to pull Velcro, use tape and tags.
I am developing my grip and wrist as I stir water, beads, leaf soup, puffy soap sand and kinetic sand etc.
I am beginning to use tripod grip as you encourage me to put my name on my work, replicate artists work and still life drawings.

Imaginary areas

I am learning to sequence as I role play the beginning and end of stories.
I am learning hand and wrist control as I manipulate toys through small world sensory environments e.g. grass, mud and water trays.

Meal times/ snack

I am learning that my marks have meaning as I mark a mark to show I have had a snack.
I am learning to label as I find my picture for my milk.

Outdoors

Active areas

I am developing coordination as I explore how to use the outdoor equipment.
I am beginning to coordinate my hands as I balance and push my feet on ride along toys.
I am developing bilateral coordination by setting up dens, hang up items to dry, weave etc.
I am learning to use a dominant hand as I throw bean bags and soft balls.
I am learning to develop shoulder pivot as I swing off climbing equipment.

Space to explore

I am developing stability and coordination as I move around the space by running, climbing and pulling myself up the climbing tree etc.
I am inspired to develop my tripod grip by collecting and touching small items e.g. toy animals, stones etc.
I am developing shoulder strength as I lift up rocks to explore.

Space to be imaginative and creative

I am learning to use the range of writing templates to make my marks on.
I am learning to use everyday writing templates as I role play outdoors e.g. parking tickets.
I am learning to hold large tools to cover large surfaces and add different media.
My pencil grip is being supported when I am encouraged to write my name on cards for my plants.
I am developing hand-eye coordination as I take photos of the things I can see.

Reflective spaces

I am learning to use books to relax, reflect and influence my feelings.
I enjoy imitating you reading books to my friends and can say key word and phrases.
I appreciate that I can make marks quietly to send to my friends or take home.

The role of the adult:

Tuning in: listening carefully to what is being said.

Co-playing: extending the explorations of tools, new movements and new language in character.

Reinforcing: using praise to reinforce new movements, language and mark making attempts.

Observe: gathering child's voice and selecting work to celebrate milestones.

Activities to try at home

- ✓ Take every opportunity to introduce new words to me e.g. naming items when shopping
- ✓ Continue extending the range of music that I listen to. Can you teach me some new dance moves or play musical bumps?
- ✓ Go for a listening walk around the house and outdoors. Which sounds can you hear?
- ✓ Point to every day words e.g. child's name on the bedroom door, shop signs
- ✓ I enjoy looking at new toys in catalogues and magazines
- ✓ Strengthen my hands by allowing me to cut, paint and squeeze playdough
- ✓ Strengthen my fingers by playing on all fours, picking up small things with tweezers and pegs
- ✓ I enjoy soft cushion jumping time!
- ✓ Praise, celebrate and display my work. Keep photo albums of my work or use my pictures on your phone screen
- ✓ Find creative ways for me to make marks e.g. using bath crayons
- ✓ Provide a wide range of mark making and special writing materials for me e.g. notebooks

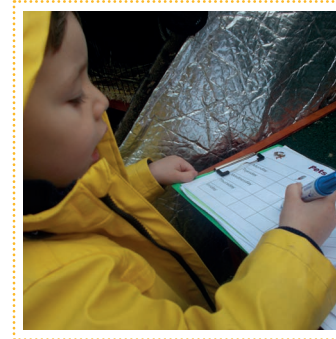
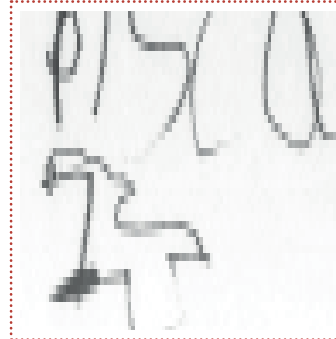
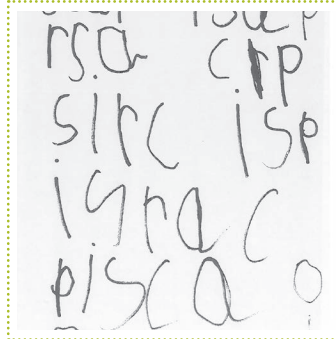
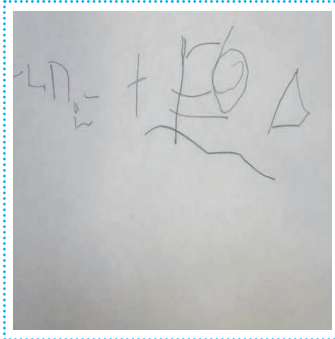
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 **30 to 50 months**





30 to 50 months

Mark making to writing milestones

Communication development - The questioning communicator

Takes turns in conversations with adults and peers, though can still only do one thing at a time.

Able to understand and use longer, more complex sentences, including two parts and harder concepts e.g. narrow, behind

Still has difficulty with some speech sounds e.g. r, th, ch, sp, bl, gr etc.

Gross motor development

Moves freely and with pleasure and confidence in a range of ways, such as shuffling, rolling, crawling, walking, jumping, skipping, sliding and hopping.

Mounts stairs, steps or climbing equipment using alternate feet.

Walks downstairs, two feet to each step while carrying a small object.

Runs skilfully and negotiates space successfully, adjusting speed or direction to avoid obstacles.

Can stand momentarily on one foot when shown.

Draws lines and circles using gross motor movements.

Fine motor development

Cuts across paper with small scissors.

Draws a complete circle.

Key physical development milestones

A strong preference for a lead/dominant hand, but switching continues.

The assisting hand often turns the paper to help with cutting around a shape.

Holds pencil between thumb and two fingers, no longer using whole-hand grasp.

Holds pencil near the point between first two fingers and thumbs and uses it with good control.

Mark making

Defined lines, circles and imitating crosses.

Writing

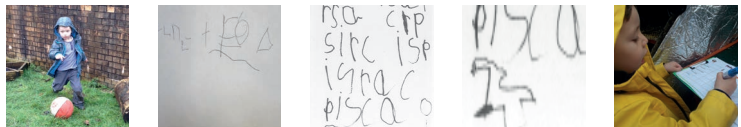
Can draw some letters, e.g. letters from their name

Tripod pencil grasp.



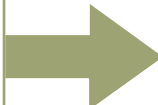
30 to 50 months

My early mark making stage



How can my Key Person help me?

- I support my key children to see themselves as confident and successful writers.
- I work in partnership with parents to identify and celebrate my key children's milestones.
- I ensure that all barriers to writing are minimalised and development areas supported in daily practice. e.g. bilateral games, hand eye coordination skills supported during continuous provision.
- I ensure that the interest, views and achievements of my key children are linked to real and meaningful writing opportunities.
- I model effective ways of sharing my views in print and think of imaginative ways to engage my key children to do the same e.g. special notes.



Look what I can do...

Sometimes I can tell you what my writing means.

I notice your writing and can attempt to tell you the meaning.

I can make deliberate lines and marks.

I can attempt to write some of the letters in my name when I look at my name card.



How can other adults in the settings help me?

- We create a positive writing culture where children see themselves as authors and an audience.
- We create daily opportunities for children to write independently and support children to apply and extend their phonics, fine and gross motor skills during adult lead and independent playful experiences.
- We create high quality literate environments where we sensitively challenge children to engage in irresistible opportunities to write for a purpose to convey feelings, express ideas, share information and use imagination to write in role.
- We scaffold the writing process by developing expressive language, rich vocabulary, modelling sentence structure and the mechanics of writing.
- We find and create ways for children to read their work e.g. to a friend, group, video link, talking book etc.

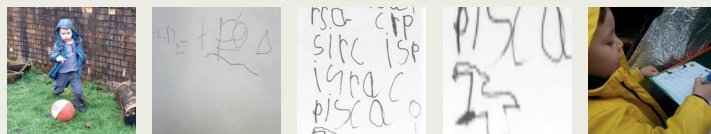
Characteristics of effective learning

- I am keen to explore how print works
- I take risks in the different types of lines I make when writing in role
- I enjoy showing you my name on my work. I keep trying different hands to write with as I am fascinated with the different techniques and pressure I can apply
- I recognise that my ideas can be spoken and written down
- I test when to draw or make marks to communicate



30 to 50 months

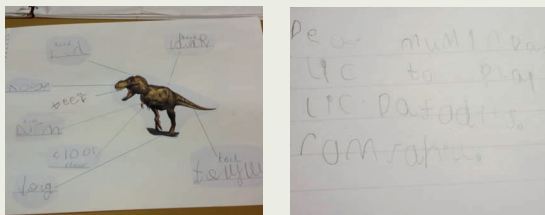
My writing stage



Next steps for development...

- Opportunities to see writing in progress for lots of different purposes and in different forms with emphasis on how print works (e.g. left to right, top to bottom)
- Opportunity to write my name in different formats e.g. on my work, messages, cards
- Develop an interest in some words that are personal and beyond my name (e.g. mum, pet)
- Gain confidence to read what has been written

My next writing stage...



The unique child

Common concerns and teaching solutions

Pencil grip

Observe and assess if the child has a grip that is uncomfortable for them to use fingers and wrist in a free flowing movement. A tripod grip is often the most appropriate grip for most children, but not all children. Assess why a poor grip has been established e.g. muscle strength or copying an inappropriate model.

Support correction effectively i.e. modelling correct positioning, finger strengthening activities, pencil grip aids and games to reinforce pencil grip, for example sponge javelin, drip drop painting, etc.

Non dominant hand/left hand

Observe and assess how children use hands during routines and in continuous provision. Hand preference is usually established during the nursery stage of development. Work in partnership with parents to dispel any fears and recognise and celebrate each child's unique stage of development along this journey.

Play a range of games for example:

- Pushing cars or trains around a track laid on the floor
- Using tools such as a hammer or screwdriver
- Hanging up clothes or other objects
- Pouring or putting things in to different size containers
- Pick-up games using a finger pincer grip
- Rolling or bowling a ball with one hand (start with a larger ball moving to smaller)
- Lacing cards, sewing and bead stringing (start large then move to small)
- Cookie cutter in clay or dough

If concerns continue work in partnership with parents to raise concerns further with doctors and health visitors following Early Help processes.



30 to 50 months

Links across the EYFS

Additional links

PSE	I like to choose a range of marking tools and different writing formats to use I am confident to tell you my view and may like to write things down.
R	I am beginning to understand story structure and can decide main events. I can suggest how stories can end. I know information can be represented in print.
Phonics	I discriminate phonemes; listen and remember sounds and use sound-talk to segment words into phonemes. I am given plenty of authentic opportunities to apply my Phase 1 knowledge independently. I may be learning how to use and apply my new Phase 2 skills.
M	I am given a wealth of opportunity to record and make numerical graphical representations. I am developing my understanding of print related to numbers and number language. I am encouraged to link my marks when counting and sorting.
UW	I am given opportunity to write to different people in my community. I am learning that special occasions can be recorded through print e.g. Eid cards etc. My labels can help care for things around me e.g. water my plant etc. I am learning the right words for everyday objects and can make attempts to write them down. I can sequence my ideas using ICT equipment e.g. photos, video. I enjoy listening to myself tell stories and singing songs I have made up.
EAD	I am building up my gross motor skills through dance and ring games. I am developing my pincer grip when I explore, create and build. I am developing wrist control as I use tools effectively. You are my best role model and I enjoy imitating the marks you make.

Reflective prompts

Do you have writing areas that reflect children's interests and mark making styles?
Do you have a good range of published and children made non-fiction books?
Do you have effective systems in place to track and monitor Phase 1 development?
Have you audited the range of number labels and symbols that are displayed?
Do you share letters to the children that are typed as well as written? Do you take the children on environmental print walks to copy signs and labels?
Do you ask children to respond to music through marks? Do you introduce vocabulary linked to techniques e.g. twisting, grip, etc.? Do you offer a range of imaginary and real stimulus for writing?



30 to 50 months

Planned opportunities to support mark making and writing development

Care routines



Well-planned daily routines create opportunities to reinforce, model and support communication, physical and mark making development:

- Signing in during registration
- Replenishing resources in the continuous provision areas
- Signing into different continuous provision areas
- Recording the completion of my independent challenges
- Displaying my work
- Cleaning and clearing tables of resources
- Hanging up role play items on hangers

Adult led opportunities



Daily opportunities for:

- Gross motor skills activities - this could include large, upper body, mid-line movement balance and coordination sessions i.e. making marks in time to music, dancing with objects such as scarves and shakers
- Fine motor activities within small groups/ whole group. This could include a rolling programme of sensory and fine motor activities such as finger strengthening, using individual fingers, hand dexterity and pincer grip activities i.e. following instructions to mould dough in time to music
- Shared reading and writing activities
- 1:1 and small group phonics sessions/activities

Weekly opportunities for:

- Supported independent writing activities that supports me to express thoughts and feeling through mark making, mathematical graphics, drawing and writing through a cross curricular approach (both indoors and outdoors) e.g. Talk for Writing
- Frequently planned opportunity for dance and movement sessions and circle games

Interventions:

- Look, listen, note, share and understand that young children progress at different rates
- Identify my significant development gaps and targets. 1:1 support during continuous provision or small group time reinforces my significant physical milestones e.g. tripod grip activities (finger fun activities), core stability games (e.g. crab walking, lying on my back to make a bridge), bilateral coordination activities (e.g. threading, playing instruments with both hands, using tools to roll/twist, marching games, pulling and swinging games etc) and balancing games (e.g. imaginary tight-rope walking)



30 to 50 months

How can the environment support me?



Indoor area

Book area

A range of quality books entices me to look at print in meaningful context.
 Story props enable me to build up my understanding of stories.
 Everyday reading materials enables me to see a range of reasons to communicate. Albums and books that my friends have made makes me make links with wider experiences and feelings.
 Having book review templates makes me comment on print that I like.

Construction area

Maps, photos of the local community make me realise that print is purposeful. Signs and captions allow me to comment on the meaning of print all around me.
 Travel guides and brochures make me aware of print in different languages.
 Labels and signs enable communication through symbols.
 Label cards, templates for my writing enables me to write to save my projects and share my ideas.
 Writing resources placed in tool bags inspire me to write in character.
 Non-fiction books give me opportunity to imitate writing for information.
 Clip boards enable me to write on different surfaces and angles.

Water/sand

I can apply my phonics as I fish/ dig for objects with letters on.
 I know that marks can be made in different surfaces with a range of tools.
 I can strengthen my grip as I use pipettes, tweezers and scoopers to transport small amounts of water/sand.
 I can explore the sequence of writing as I role play the beginning middle and end of a story.

Creative area

I am mastering hand and wrist control whilst exploring a range of techniques e.g. mixing my own powder paint, tearing, using tweezers, sprinkling glitter.
 I am mastering shoulder and pivot control when I work on large surfaces, e.g. murals, shaving foam.
 I am strengthening my grip when manipulating paper mache etc.
 I am strengthening my finger digits when working on small scale resources e.g. lacing, tooth picks etc.
 I am developing hand-eye coordination when pouring paint, glue etc.

Malleable

A range of tools such as hammers, rolling pins, tweezers, pipe cleaners enables me to master wrist and finger manipulation.
 My imagination and story telling is developing whilst I recreate scenes, design props for characters.
 My hand-eye coordination is being strengthened when I thread beads through spaghetti, press straws into dough etc.

Maths

I am learning to record my calculations as I solve problem games, share objects etc.
 I am using numbers to label a range of objects, items and toys.
 I recognise the way to write numbers in this country and have seen the way numbers are represented in different cultures.
 I am experimenting with a range of graphical representations when I record symbols, tallies and numerals.



30 to 50 months

How can the environment support me?



Indoors

Technology

I am learning how to be an author, editor and publisher.
 I am learning to use IT to help me illustrate stories e.g. taking/sequencing photos, recording ideas, views, feelings etc.
 I am developing hand-eye coordination when using the recording devices/ touch screens etc.

Writing spaces

I am developing an understanding of the range of writing genres (shopping lists, small books, post cards, cards, maps, calendars, diaries, notebooks etc.).
 I am inspired to persevere with different lengths of writing (small books, notelets etc.).
 I have access to my name card to help me write my name on my work.
 I am developing authentic solutions to problems (replying to the mystery letter, wanted posters etc.).
 I am enthused to meet a writing challenge (notes to other children, posting letters home etc.).

Space to explore

I am mastering hand and wrist control whilst exploring a range of objects in character. e.g. farm animals, cutting the grass with scissors, opening bags etc.
 I am writing for a purpose e.g. labels, menus, café signs etc.

The role of the adult:

Observe: tuning in and noting significant learning experiences, through spontaneous observations, peer observations and the voice of the child.

Asking open ended questions: using key questions to explore understanding, extend thinking and consolidate learning.

Demonstrating: demonstrating how to extend and strengthen movements, grip, positioning and posture.

Modelling: modelling how to apply movements, hold tools, markers and use different formats etc.

Co playing and extending: joint opportunity to use new meaningful sources in a creative and challenging way.

Respecting: praising children's choices and selection of resources, marks and attempts to apply new words.

Challenging: facilitating high expectations and appropriate challenge to sustain independent activities.

Provide a narrative: A running commentary to support children's thinking process, make links and extend ideas.

Outdoors

Physical areas

I am developing balance and stability as I complete outdoor scavenger hunts e.g. find things to climb, jump over, use like a drum etc.

Space to reflect

I am developing an understanding of the range of writing genres (shopping lists, small books, post cards, cards, maps, calendars, diaries, notebooks etc.).
 I am inspired to persevere with different lengths of writing (small books, notelets etc.).
 I am developing authentic solutions to problems (replying to the mystery letter, wanted posters etc.).
 I am able to use a range of new vocabulary (guess what's in the bag).
 I am enthused to meet a writing challenge (notes to other children, posting letters home etc.).

Space to be imaginative

A range of tools such as hammers, rolling pins, tweezers and pipe cleaners enables me to master wrist and finger manipulation.
 My imagination and story telling is developing whilst I recreate scenes and design props for characters.
 My hand eye coordination is being strengthened when I thread beads through spaghetti and model with dough etc.

Space to explore

I am mastering hand and wrist control whilst exploring a range of objects in character e.g. farm animals, cutting the grass with scissors, opening bags etc.
 I am writing for a purpose e.g. labels, menus, café signs etc.

Activities to try at home

- ✓ Encourage me to dress and undress myself. This is good for my coordination and my upper strength
- ✓ Let's go on a print hunt. e.g. "I can see the sign for Asda, let's stop for milk"
- ✓ Whilst singing songs encourage me to complete missing words
- ✓ Encourage me to write when outdoors e.g. write orders in Argos, draw whilst waiting in the doctors
- ✓ Provide irresistible themed writing tools e.g. Hello Kitty diary, Minion notelets
- ✓ Encourage me to write in real and meaningful ways e.g. post my written birthday cards, take my shopping lists to the supermarket etc
- ✓ I enjoy core strength games i.e. making bridges, pretending to sky dive, rolling games
- ✓ I like balance and coordination games e.g. balance a cushion on your head, jumping over cushions
- ✓ Provide large scarves, materials to make kites
- ✓ Play wrapping games e.g. wrapping toilet roll around objects and you!
- ✓ Provide opportunities for me to use small finger movements e.g. knitting on your hand, construction games

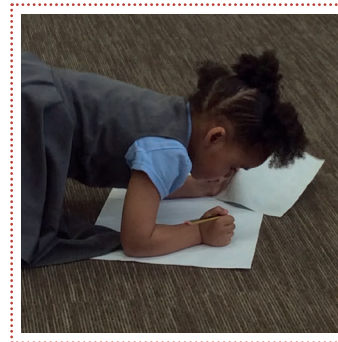
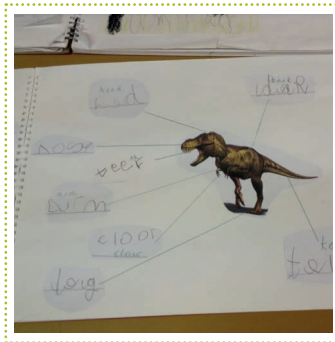
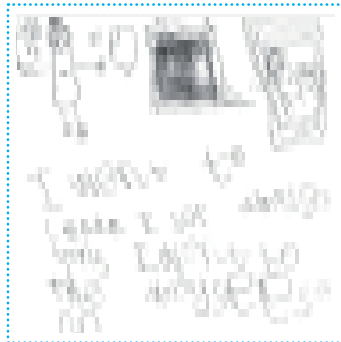
Want to find out more?

'What to Expect, When? A Parents' Guide'
www.foundationyears.org.uk





40 to 60+ months





40 to 60+ months

Mark making to writing milestones

Communication development - The skilled communicator

Able to listen and continue with an activity at the same time. Able to understand sequence instructions and why questions. Uses language to gain information, problem solve, negotiate, discuss ideas and give opinions.

Occasional speech sound errors e.g. th, r.

Gross motor development

Experiments with different ways of moving.

Jumps off an object and lands appropriately.

Negotiates space successfully when playing racing and chasing games with other children, adjusting speed or changing direction to avoid obstacles.

Travels with confidence and skill around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment.

Shows increasing control over an object in pushing, patting, throwing, catching or kicking.

Fine motor development

Use simple tools to effect changes to materials.

Handles tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control.

Key physical development milestones

Hand use is characterised by refined wrist and finger movement and decreased elbow and shoulder movement.

Preference for a dominant hand.

Mark making

Begin to use anti-clockwise movement and retrace vertical lines.

Begin to form recognisable letters.

Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.

Writing

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.

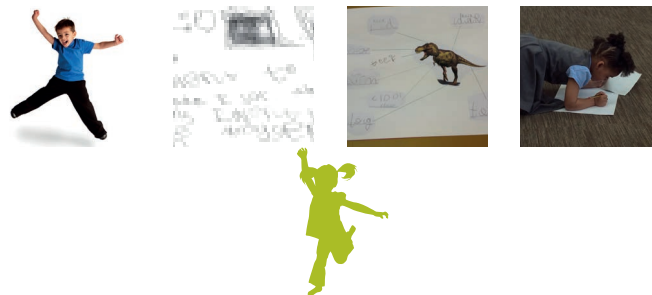
Uses some clearly identifiable letters to communicate meaning, representing some sounds correctly and in sequence.

Writes own name and other things such as labels, captions.



40 to 60+ months

My early mark making stage



How can my Key Person help me?

I find creative ways to celebrate my key children's writing achievements e.g. publish them on the setting's blog.

I discuss with my key children their next steps in writing development and encourage them to recognise how they have progressed over the time in the setting.

I work in partnership with parents to help children to achieve their next steps in writing by supporting phonics, reading and writing through games and activities beyond the setting.

I set challenges that encourage my key children to take risks in their writing on a daily basis.

Look what I can do...

I can tell you the meaning of my marks, images, symbols, numbers and letters

I know that when I say a word you can put each word down separately on paper

I can hear and tell you the first sound in a word

I can say each of the sounds in a short word like "cat". When you say each of the sounds like "c-a-t" I can blend the sounds together

I can link the sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters in the alphabet

Sometimes I write the right letter and sounds correctly and in the right sequence

Characteristics of effective learning

- I am keen to write for an audience as I know my writing carries meaning
- Writing challenges fascinate me
- I pay attention to how writing templates can be used in my role play e.g. lists
- I know I make spelling mistakes but I keep trying
- I know how to capture my ideas in print
- I can choose the right words to use

How can other adults in the settings help me?

We observe, assess and plan for personalised gross motor and fine motor opportunities to support different rates of writing development.

We plan for authentic, meaningful and cross curricular writing opportunities and resources throughout the indoor and outdoor provision.

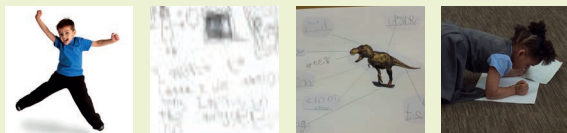
We effectively plan adult led sessions to promote physical and writing development e.g. phonic sessions, guided writing, modelled/shared writing, guided reading, PE etc.

We create a print rich environment to embed children's understanding of the written language e.g. labels, notices, signs, templates, quality books, word banks, dictionaries, everyday objects.

We plan effective ways for children to apply and extend their phonics, punctuation and handwriting skills.

40 to 60+ months

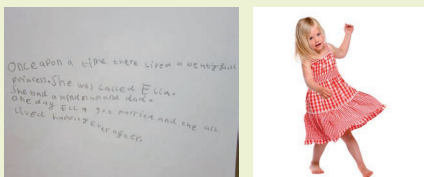
My writing stage



Next steps for development...

- Guided and shared writing opportunities of genre beyond the personal e.g. instructions, stories with imaginary settings, explanations etc.
- Develop an understanding of grammar and punctuation through meaningful contexts, both in reading and writing. Examples are capital letters, full stops, exclamation marks etc.
- Develop re-reading techniques
- Encouraged to 'have a go' with spelling alongside using specific theme word banks
- Practice spelling high frequency words
- Continue to concentrate on letter formation and fluidity, use phoneme mats to aid recall

My next writing stage...



The unique child

Common concerns and teaching strategies

Writing layering

Identify if the child has difficulty with gross spatial awareness, i.e. may appear to be clumsy, fine motor spatial awareness i.e. difficulty forming letters that they know and writing letter and mark repeat on top of each other. Support spatial awareness development through a range of direction games such as heads and shoulders, twister, play positional games, action songs for example, Hokey Cokey and Geo board/bands and tube games, crawling and midline games.

Reversal of letters

Strengthen children's ability to remember how to use the muscles to form letters correctly through a range of motor memory activities e.g. dancing with large fabric/scarfs to form different writing patterns, using large chalk on the floor or on the wall to music e.g. write dance.

Reluctant writer

Observe and assess key issues with appropriate support.

Developmental concerns relating to posture and shoulder/wrist/hand control (support with additional gross motor and fine motor learning experiences).

Additional physical concerns i.e. hand eye coordination and motor memory (support with visual memory games i.e. Kim's game, marble tracking, sensory bottles, hand eye coordination games).

Uncomfortable holding a pencil (hand strengthening games i.e. hold punch games, pull apart velcro games/resources, pencil grip aids).

If concerns continue, work in partnership with parents to raise concerns further with doctors and health visitors following Early Help processes.



40 to 60+ months

Links across the EYFS

Additional links		Reflective prompts
PSE	<p>I am aware of the audience I am writing for and able to share my work with a small group.</p> <p>I can capture my options and feeling in print.</p>	<p>Have you taken the time to discuss how confident children feel about being a writer?</p> <p>How often is writing shared with a real audiences?</p>
R	<p>I am beginning to read a range of tricky, high frequency and words that are personal words.</p> <p>I am beginning to gain an awareness of written conventions e.g. characters, settings, non-fiction text.</p> <p>I am beginning to build up book language and an understanding of a vast range of different print.</p>	<p>How often do children read their work to a whole group?</p>
Phonics	<p>I am gaining confidence in my ability to distinguish between phonemes. I am gaining confidence in my ability to use the right phonemes to represent a letter in words. I have knowledge of a small bank of common consonants and vowels to write CVC words that are phonologically plausible.</p>	<p>Do you have effective systems in place to track and monitor phonic phase development?</p>
M	<p>I am learning to write familiar numbers consistently.</p> <p>I am beginning to use marks to make charts that carry meaning i.e. pictograms, registers etc.</p> <p>I know that when I write numbers they can be applied in different contexts e.g. writing ages on birthday cards, labelling groups of toys.</p>	<p>Do you display the development of mark making to support mathematical calculations?</p>
UW	<p>I am able to use print to record festivals and experiences.</p> <p>I can label features in the environment.</p> <p>I enjoy working in small groups to write stories, labels and captions related to objects in the environment.</p> <p>I am able to add my words to a shared blog.</p> <p>I enjoy selecting the right ICT resource to help illustrate my picture.</p>	<p>How often do you create shared writing projects?</p> <p>Do children have access to speech bubbles so they can read their views?</p>
EAD	<p>I am learning to make up dance routines and teach them to my friends.</p> <p>My work is labelled and if challenged I could write a sentence to explain what I have done.</p> <p>I can use a range of tools to make scenes form my favourite story and can write a caption about events.</p> <p>I enjoy working with friends to act out the words that characters say. I maybe able to capture some of these words/letters to represent words in a speech bubble.</p>	<p>Are children supported to make marks to record their dance routines?</p> <p>Are children encouraged to extend, develop their views through collaborative projects?</p>



40 to 60+ months

Planned opportunities to support my mark making and writing development

Care routines



Well-planned daily routines create opportunities to reinforce, model and support communication, physical and mark making development:

- Writing 'you are special' notes to my friends
- Requesting new snacks or voting for my lunch preference
- Recording the enhancement for the continuous provision areas
- Recording my comments about my learning during the day
- Record the completion of my independent challenges
- Sending and replying to notes from my friends
- Recording my comments on child voice templates
- Helping to label the days of the week

Adult led opportunities



Daily opportunities for:

- Shared reading and writing activities enable me to express my thoughts and feelings through mark making, mathematical graphics, drawing and writing through a cross curricular approaches (both indoors and outdoors) e.g. Talk for Writing
- Phonics input and application sessions/activities
- Independent writing/graphical mark making activities
- Fine motor activities small groups/whole group included in continuous provision

Weekly opportunities for:

- Guided reading and writing activities
- Letter formation activities - (e.g. air writing during phonics, write dance etc.)
- Gross motor skills activities e.g. PE, dance, gymnastics and circle games

Interventions:

- Look, listen, note, share and understand that young children progress at different rates
- Identify my significant development gaps and target 1:1 support during continuous provision or small group support to reinforce significant physical milestones e.g. hand dexterity and pincer grip activities (e.g. marble maze games), hand dominance games (e.g. ball games, lacing and weaving games) co-ordination games (e.g. suspended ball games, keep balloons in the air, passing balls over and under games)



40 to 60+ months

How can the environment support me?



Indoor area

Book area

I see myself as an author. My books are displayed and celebrated with my friends.
I can write book reviews.
I am learning a wide breadth of book language e.g. narrative, dialogue.
I am beginning to recognise that writing can be factual as well as imaginative.

Construction area

I am beginning to realise that my words can be powerful e.g. writing a STOP! sign.
I am learning that my thoughts and plans can be recorded in print e.g. filling in construction design templates.
I am learning that I can explain how I work in short sentences e.g. instruction templates.
I can use key topic words to write captions about my models.
I am learning to master my balance and stability as I reach up high to label large models.

Water/sand

I can apply my phonics as I fish, dig and scoop for lower and upper case letters.
I can explore the sequence of writing as I role play the beginning, middle and end of stories.
I can use water bottles and puppets to write CVC words.
I am learning punctuation as I practice blowing bubbles to represent full stops.

Creative

I am mastering hand and wrist control whilst using different techniques e.g. scratching, scouring, plucking, layering, twisting materials, dough etc.
I am sharpening my hand-eye coordination as I draw still life paintings.
I am strengthening my fingers as I use dough to make upper and lower case letters, CVC word etc.
I am strengthening my knuckles and fingers as I knead my own playdough/slime/rock sand etc.
I am applying my knowledge of books as I make several props for book setting and characters.

Listening

I am developing my sentence structure as I record my views.
I am learning that words can be recorded in different formats as I write, illustrate and record my own audio book.
I can be an illustrator as I listen to a description and draw and label my character.
I am sharpening my Phase 1, 2 and 3 skills as I play a range of listening and phonics games e.g. phonics bingo, trash or treasure.

Maths

I am learning to record my calculations as I solve problem games, share objects etc.
I am using numbers to label a range of objects, items and toys.
I am learning to master my positional language as I write instructions for friends to hide and seek a superhero toy.
I am sharpening my grip as I make a range of patterns in different sizes.
I am learning how to use my graphical representations in authentic ways to record, tally and draw shapes



40 to 60+ months

How can the environment support me?



Indoor area

IT

I appreciate that a range of technology can be used effectively to support my writing e.g. photo writing, video footage (using photos and recordings to sequence stories and capture factual writing experiences).
 I am learning the specific meaning of words as I play word jumble games.
 I am able to recognise CVC word as I play, write and record my feelings.
 I am able to apply my phonic skills as I type captions.
 I am able to communicate my views as I reply and make comments to my friends' tweets.
 I am learning how to use social media safely e.g. tweeting, blogs and vlogs.
 I am learning how to use a range of apps to support my application of phonics.

Writing spaces

I am learning to write repetitive phrases from my favourite book for displays.
 I am learning to use narrative language when completing challenges to use story opening and endings.
 I am able to see myself as an author as I use story frames to plot my stories.
 I am able to write captions to capture facts about objects I am interested in e.g. minions are yellow.
 I have access to phoneme mats to remind me how to form my letters.
 I have access to name card to help me write my name and my friend's name.

Role play and small world

I am mastering hand and wrist control as I recreate scenes in different books.
 I am organising my story language as I create the beginning and end of stories.
 I am beginning to label different parts of my story map.
 I am able to create story maps by writing a few key words related to my story.
 I am able to use writing props to good effect e.g. accident form, appointment card.
 I am able to use CVC word when recording what my characters say on wipeable speech bubbles.

The role of the adult:

Observation and reflections: tuning in and note significant learning experiences and characteristics of effective learning
Asking open ended question: using key questions to clarify understanding, recap ideas and reinforce learning, 'What do you think?' 'I wonder what would happen if...?'
Demonstrating: demonstrating how to apply new skills whilst co-playing along children.
Modelling: modelling how and when to use different movements, use different hand gripping techniques and different templates, in different situations.
Challenging: advertising and promoting the application of writing throughout.
Communication: modelling new vocabulary and supporting children to make connections whilst playing independently.
Exploring ideas: encourage children to explain and discuss their movement and purpose for writing etc.
Making links: encouraging children to apply skills i.e. correct grip, phonic skills etc.



40 to 60+ months

How can the environment support me?



Outdoor area

Active area

I am mastering my balance and stability as I jump, climb, roll and dance on, over and around a range of fixed and portable outdoor equipment.

Opportunities to build, weave, dance with large fabric and play target games enables me to master my shoulder, arm and wrist control.

Time to ride, kick toys and travel in various ways enables me to master bilateral coordination.

I am learning to imitate character speech, sequence events in stories and write for an audience as role play in, over, under, through and on various outdoor equipment.

Reflective area

I am developing an understanding of the range of writing genres (shopping lists, small books, post cards, cards, maps, calendars, diaries, notebooks etc.).

I am inspired to persevere with different lengths of writing (small books, notelets etc.).

I am developing authentic solutions to problems (replying to the mystery letter, wanted posters etc.).

I am able to use a range of new vocabulary e.g. guess what's in the bag.

I am enthused to meet a writing challenge e.g. notes to other children, posting letters home etc.

Space to explore

I am applying my phonics as I write for a purpose about real and imaginary topics that I have explored e.g. labels, writing captions, making information books, posters, letters and sending messages.

I am learning hand eye coordination as I collect mini-beasts, explore loose parts and hidden treasures in foam dough, sand, straw, mud etc.

I am learning to use ICT effectively as I record, edit and delete information about things that interest me.

I am writing as a group as I record what we have discovered.

Space to be imaginative

A range of tools such as different size paint brushes, rollers, clay making tools, different edged scissors, etc., small and delicate objects e.g. sequins, feathers, small world toys etc. enables me to master wrist and finger manipulation.

My imagination and story telling is developing whilst I recreate scenes and design props for characters.

My hand-eye coordination is being strengthened when I fix and join or thread beads through spaghetti etc.

I am developing a greater understanding of letter patterns as I make horizontal, vertical and round strokes in my large art work in the air, to music, in tuff trays etc.

Enhanced resources, outdoors challenges me to write in role e.g. mark making kits, items for displays, real world templates, functional labels, signs, fiction and non-fiction templates etc.

Activities to try at home

- ✓ I like writing about my family and sharing this in my setting
- ✓ Can I record what my pet/siblings likes to do?
- ✓ I like baking with you. Can we try different techniques such as rolling and kneading?
- ✓ Encourage me to enter craft making competitions. This gives me a real purpose for writing, recording numbers and expressing myself through art and design
- ✓ Join me in a race using different parts of my body e.g. bottom shuffling races and hula hooping
- ✓ Encourage me to make up different dance routines to share with the whole family
- ✓ Take me to local events e.g. park runs, family fun days and family splash time
- ✓ Try doing something different with me each month e.g. climb a tree, run down a hill or kicking leaves
- ✓ I enjoy helping at home - make it fun e.g. empty bins in less than five mins or carrying piles of washing
- ✓ Encourage me to collect a range of flyers that come through the door and circle the things that I like

Want to find out more?

'What to Expect, When? A Parents' Guide'
www.foundationyears.org.uk



I am ready for handwriting

Letter formation requires the combination of visual, gross motor, sensory and perceptual development. Sufficient fine motor coordination is needed to form letters accurately. It is vital to check how each child is progressing through the following stages:

I can write recognisable letters

Can I practice my letter formation in a stimulating and authentic way?

I can hold a pencil appropriately

Can I use my three fingers comfortably when holding a pencil? (See The Pencil Grip Journey)

I can make lines, circles, waves and dots with a range of tools

Can I manipulate my fingers to pick up and release objects?

I can produce fluent and repeated patterns

Can I arch and cup my hand together (without this I will find it difficult to hold objects with control)?

Can I demonstrate good spatial awareness (without this I find it hard to form letters)?

I can coordinate both hands - a dominant hand with a supportive hand

Can I use both my right and left side of my body in unison?

I can make large letter-like movements with my whole hand

Can I walk and sit with good posture?

Can my strong muscles support my shoulders and arms effectively?

I can make deliberate large movements with my arms

Can I use my core strength for balance and stability (without this I will struggle to master coordination skills)?

Planned opportunities to support letter formation

Adult led opportunities

- Let the children make different body shapes/actions in response to music to help them to remember the shapes. Ensure you create opportunity to introduce and reinforce the language of movement and shape i.e. up, down and round
- Two handed movement opportunities e.g. skywriting, movements with objects
- Activities to reinforce fine motor development e.g. sensory and finger manipulation activities
- Activities/games to systematically introduce letter patterns and letter families (x,l,r,c etc.) e.g. write dance



Look, listen, note, share and understand that young children progress at different rates.

It is important that letter formation activities meet the age and stage of children and are differentiated accordingly.

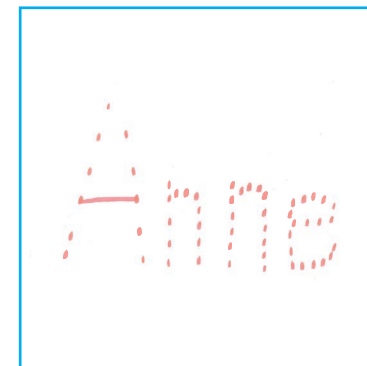
Name writing

Name writing is highly significant for young children. A child's name is one of the first things that parents encourage their children to recognise and replicate. Children's names are a useful source of learning for both phonics and handwriting. However, some children who come to school/settings already able to write their names may have developed a few misunderstandings (i.e. writing every letter of their name in capital letter) or associating the wrong movement with certain letters (i.e. forming /o/ and /a/ letters using a clockwise movement). Sharing an understanding that writing is a journey, providing activities to try at home, modelling and reinforcing effective practice is a sensitive approach to tackle this.

Best practice



Pitfalls to avoid

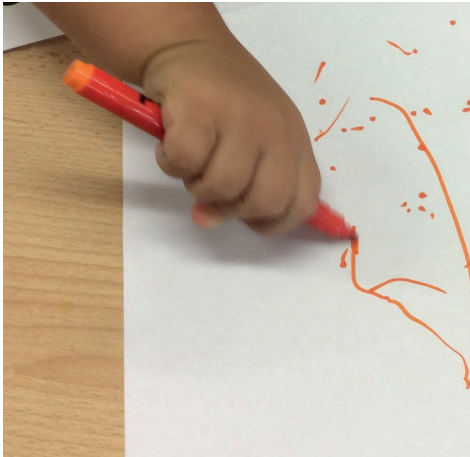


Plan plenty of fun and creative experience in drawing, modelling and manipulating letter shapes without constraints and purposeful name labelling.

NB: Worksheets, tracing and writing over dots can restrict natural fluent movement. Older children would benefit from having easily accessible name cards.

The pencil grip journey

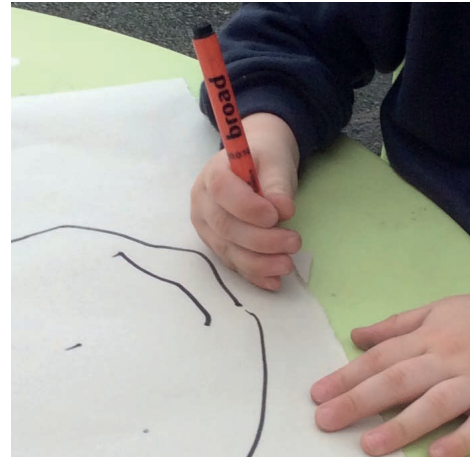
Palmer grip



Pronated grip







Modified tripod








Tripod grasp



See common concerns 30-50mths and solutions to help children with ineffective grasps.

Development stage	Com. development	Gross motor development	Fine motor development	Key physical development milestones	Mark making	Writing
 <p>Birth - 11 months</p>	<p>Communicate in a variety of ways including crying, gurgling, babbling and squealing. Make sounds with their voices in social interaction.</p>	<p>Turns head in response to sounds and sights. Head control improving. Gradually develops rolling from side to side, stomach to back, back to stomach. Sits briefly with arm support then alone briefly. Random batting at objects. Develops crawling movements. Assumes quadruped and rocks and stands with support.</p>	<p>Takes tiny objects with fingers. Uses thumb and fingertips to grasp objects. Uses thumb and side of index finger to grip objects. Holds two objects, one in each hand, at the same time. Uses two hands to pick up large objects.</p>	<p>Body awareness, e.g. pivots around when on stomach. Reaches to objects on stomach. Hands to midline (moving the right arm or leg towards the left arm or leg). Sensory perception enables children to identify objects and textures through touch. Core strength – required for balance and stability, and supporting coordination skills. Mastering Tactile Perception – (able to judge the appropriate pressure required to hold and release objects safely).</p>	<p>Move arms and legs and increasingly use them to reach for, grasp and manipulate things. Will frequently alternate hands for leading activities. Marks a piece of paper with a crayon and scribbles haphazardly.</p>	<p>Play with own fingers and toes and focus on objects around them.</p>
 <p>8-20 months</p>	<p>Take pleasure in making and listening to a wide variety of sounds. Easily distracted by noises or other people talking. Likes being with a familiar adult and watching them. Understands single words and gestures in context. Understands more words than they can say. Uses around 10 single words and babble/gestures to communicate.</p>	<p>Sits unsupported on the floor. When sitting, can lean forward to pick up small toys. Pulls to standing, holding onto furniture or person for support. Crawls, bottom shuffles or rolls continuously to move around. Walks around furniture lifting one foot and stepping sideways (cruising), and walks with one or both hands held by an adult. Takes first few steps independently.</p>	<p>Puts small objects in a cup or other container. Turns book pages a few at a time. Attempts to imitate new gestures. Pokes and points at things using their index finger. Grabs crayons in a fist. Uses both hands. Builds towers of two or more blocks. Stacks two to three cubes. Can hold an object with one hand and manipulate it with the other hand.</p>	<p>Bilateral coordination – (the ability to coordinate both sides of the body e.g. both hands). Balance – an essential element of motor control and development of balance will help improve core stability and gross motor movement. Balance and coordination as posture develops.</p>	<p>Examine the marks they and others make.</p>	<p>Begin to bring together hand and eye movements to fix on and make contact with objects.</p>
 <p>16-26 months</p>	<p>Likes to do their own activity rather than what an adult wants. Able to understand and use two word phrases without visual cues, though words are not clear and can get frustrated when not understood.</p>	<p>Walks down one step at a time holding rail or hand. Begins to squat in play and stands back up. Begins to jump in place. Kicks a stationary ball. Jumps off 30cm box with one foot leading. Walks on balance beam with one foot on/one foot off. Walks up and down stairs alone.</p>	<p>Starts using fingers and thumb to grasp crayons. Imitates vertical and circular scribbles. Turns pages of a book one at a time. Strings 2cm-8cm beads. Cuts paper using scissors. Builds tower with three to five blocks.</p>	<p>Mastering shoulder control essential for the stability of the shoulder and arm and strength and dexterity of the hand and fingers.</p>	<p>Horizontal or vertical scribble.</p>	<p>Makes random marks with their fingers and some tools. Uses whole arm movements. Holding objects with whole hand and thumb often pointing up.</p> 

Development stage	Com. development	Gross motor development	Fine motor development	Key physical development milestones	Mark making	Writing
 <p>22-36 months</p>	<p>Can follow an adult lead for a short time. Can understand and use three word phrases including, simple concepts e.g. size, prepositions, emotions and questions who?, what? where? Continues to understand more than they say, some speech sounds still not clear.</p>	<p>Runs safely on whole foot. Squats with steadiness to rest or play with object on the ground and rises to feet without using hands. Climbs confidently and is beginning to pull them up on play equipment. Can kick a large ball.</p>	<p>Turns pages in a book, sometimes several at once. Shows control in holding and using jugs to pour, hammers, books and mark making tools. Beginning to use three fingers (tripod grip) to hold writing tools. Imitates drawing simple shapes such as circles and lines.</p>	<p>Forearm control-key for a range of movement from the elbow. May be beginning to show preference for dominant hand but not yet established. The child will also continue to alternate lead and assist roles between right and left hands.</p>	<p>Distinguish between the different marks they make. Draw horizontal and vertical lines.</p>	<p>Begin to show some control in their use of tools and equipment. When drawing, children hold the crayon or pencil with their fingers pointing towards the paper, pronated pencil grasp</p> 
 <p>30-50 months</p>	<p>Takes turns in conversations with adults and peers, though can still only do one thing at a time. Able to understand and use longer, more complex sentences, including two parts and harder concepts e.g. narrow, behind. Still has difficulty with some speech sounds e.g. r, th, ch, sp, bl, gr etc.</p>	<p>Moves freely and with pleasure and confidence in a range of ways, such as slithering, shuffling, rolling, crawling, walking, running, jumping, skipping, sliding and hopping. Mounts stairs, steps or climbing equipment using alternate feet. Walks downstairs, two feet to each step while carrying a small object. Runs skilfully and negotiates space successfully, adjusting speed or direction to avoid obstacles. Can stand momentarily on one foot when shown. Draws lines and circles using gross motor movements.</p>	<p>Cuts across paper with small scissors. Draws a complete circle. Uses simple tools to effect changes to materials. Handles tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control.</p>	<p>A strong preference for a lead/dominant hand, but switching continues. The assist hand often turns the paper to assist with cutting around shapes. Holds pencil between thumb and two fingers, no longer using whole-hand grasp. Holds pencil near the point between first two fingers and thumbs and uses it with effective control.</p>	<p>Sometimes gives meaning to marks made whilst painting and drawing. Defined lines, circles and imitating crosses.</p>	<p>Can draw some letters, e.g. letters from their name. tripod pencil grasp</p> 
 <p>40-60 months</p>	<p>Able to listen and continue with an activity at the same time. Able to understand sequence instructions and why questions. Uses language to gain information, problem solve, negotiate, discuss ideas and give opinions. Occasional speech sound errors e.g. th, r.</p>	<p>Experiments with different ways of moving. Jumps off an object and lands appropriately. Negotiates space successfully when playing racing and chasing games with other children, adjusting speed or changing direction to avoid obstacles. Travels with confidence and skill around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment. Shows increasing control over an object in pushing, patting, throwing, catching or kicking.</p>		<p>Hand use is characterized by refined wrist and finger movement and decreased elbow and shoulder movement. Preference for a dominant hand.</p>	<p>Begin to use anticlockwise movement and retrace vertical lines. Begin to form recognisable letters. Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.</p>	<p>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 and captions. Attempts to write short sentences in meaningful contexts.</p>

Glossary

Bilateral coordination

The ability to coordinate both sides of the body e.g. both hands

Bilateral games

Games to support movement across the body e.g. passing ball from one side to the other

Core stability

The muscles of the upper body that assist good posture, balance and movement

CVC word

A consonant-vowel-consonant word, such as cat, pin or top

Finger dexterity

The ability to use the small muscles of the fingers with adequate strength and coordination

Geometric shapes

Using simple geometric forms such as circles and squares in design and decoration

Hand dominance

Hand dominance is the preference for using one hand over the other to perform fine and gross motor tasks

Hand-eye coordination

The coordinated control of eye movement with hand movement

Medial letters

a letter sound, occurring between the initial and final positions in a word e.g. c/a/t or t/ur/n

Modified tripod grip

Four fingers are used, to form marks. Movement will occur mostly from the wrist and the hand and fingers move as one whole unit

Phoneme

Phonemes are the smallest unit of speech-sounds which make up a word

Pronated grip

Overhand or reverse grip

Tactile pressure

The sensation produced by pressure receptors in the skin when squeezing, grasping etc.

Tripod grasp

Consistently using only three fingers are used to write



Additional references

Resources

Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS 2012) www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/opengovernment

What to Expect, When? – Guidance to your child’s learning and development in the early years foundation stage. www.4Children.org.uk

Mark Making Matters, The National Strategies DfE, 2008. Still available as a download from www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

Dough Disco/Dough Gym www.shonettebasonwood.com/education.html **Cached Similar**

Write Dance in the Early Years, Oussoren Write Dance | SAGE Publications Ltd

The National Strategies. Early Years Gateway to writing – The crucial role of the Early Years practitioner

A good place to be two – Community Playthings with Jan White

The Early Help Assessment should be undertaken when there are initial concerns about a child’s development and progress, you can check if a child has an Early Help Assessment by contacting the Early Help team by phone: **01204 331392** or email: boltonISA@bolton.gov.uk

If a child has not had an Early Help Assessment you can find further information about starting the process at www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/working-with-children-and-young-people/early-help-and-working-together/

www.shonettebasonwood.com

www.wakeupshakeup.com

www.babymoves.co.uk/

www.icancharity.org.uk/resources/babbling-babies

www.spacekraft.co.uk

www.finger-gym.com

www.talk4writing.co.uk

www.socialbaby.com/shop/dvds/baby_and_me_dvd.html

www.icancharity.org.uk/resources/toddler-talk



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