

Early writing



Before we get anywhere near writing:

- ✓ We allow lots of time for scribbling, ensuring children can always access crayons, pencils, chalk etc.
- ✓ Children need to be able to draw lines and curves with a steady hand before they can hold a pencil to form letters and numbers.
- ✓ Children need lots of fine motor activities such as threading and messy play to strengthen their hands, wrists and arms – they cannot hold a pencil comfortably if their muscles are weak.
- ✓ We move every day for at least 3 hours – children cannot sit until they have moved.
- ✓ We teach children to start writing letters at the top and either go round or down – ‘d’ and ‘e’ are exceptions to the rule because they start in the middle. We teach the language of writing before we ask children to write letters and numbers – positional vocabulary is important.
- ✓ We start by teaching letters that are important to the children – normally letters from their names.
- ✓ We have made every child their own name label with their photo – this will help them to recognise their names and, as they get older, to write their names using the correct letter formation.

When the child is interested and developmentally ready, this is how we teach them to write letters and numbers in our early years setting: names start with a capital – so we say N for Nigel or S for Sarah – and other letters should be taught phonetically as lower case (a, b, c not A B C)...

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

All schools have their own writing styles – we are happy to use them if asked for a writing frame.

Otherwise, we will teach standard lower case letter formation as above. Some tips from teachers: do not use capital letters or ask children to follow dots; take the chairs away to encourage children to develop good balance, strength and coordination; mark making, movement songs. Reading books and playing in lots of different ways are more important skills than writing in the early years.

Experts advise that the best way to put young children off writing is to stand over them and insist they form letters ‘properly’. In our early years setting, we take writing slowly because we want to encourage a life-long love of reading and writing. We let children experiment with drawing shapes, curves and lines and we start to show them how to write letters and numbers when they are interested and ready to progress – and if that doesn’t happen while they are here, they will learn at school!

If you have any questions about early writing, please ask.

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