

Literacy – January to March 2019

Our literacy focus over the next couple of months will be developing our fine motor control and experimenting with mark making skills.



Fine motor movements involve the coordination of small muscles in the hands and fingers. Strong fine motor skills are essential to complete tasks such as writing, cutting, using a fork or spoon, threading beads, moving puzzle pieces, zipping, buttoning, and tying shoe laces

The skill of writing begins with mark making. It is easy to dismiss the different lines and circles children create on paper as mere 'scribbles', but actually, children are **mark making**, the first step towards writing. As well as enabling a child to learn to write, making marks can benefit a child physically, and also help to develop their imagination and creative skills. *Mark making* opens the door for children to express themselves in a completely new way, offering them the opportunity to express their feelings and thoughts without relying solely upon verbal communication.

Ways to develop fine motor control at home:

- Water play—using spray bottles, water pistols and squeeze toys.
- Craft activities—glue sticks and paint brushes, finger painting, making collages, folding paper, cutting and snipping.
- Pick up objects using large plastic tweezers such as those found in the Bed Bugs® game or clothes pegs can be used also. Try picking up Cheerios, small cubes, small marshmallows, etc.
- Play dough/clay and plasticine —pinching, squeezing, poking, rolling
- Threading—make necklaces with beads, pasta straws
- Finger rhymes—stretching and curling fingers e.g. 'Tommy thumb', '1,2,3,4,5', 'two little dicky birds', 'Twinkle, twinkle little star'.
- Using a knife and fork to cut food or playdough — using knives to spread butter to make sandwiches, or to chop vegetables.
- Cooking activities— icing cakes—using a plastic dispenser to push and squeeze the icing out, and mixing ingredients using both hands (one to hold the bowl and one to stir—stirring clockwise and anticlockwise).

Ways to explore mark making in the home:

- Finger painting—making marks with fingers in paint or any liquid.
- Make marks in cornflour and shaving foam. Use fingers or a range of different tools.
- Draw on large pieces of paper. Take a line for a walk or a journey—make roads or paths or places for toys to go.
- Mark making in sand. Use sticks or fingers. Make marks in mud. Talk about what you see in the marks—be imaginative and dramatic and join in.
- Driving wheeled vehicles, tyres and balls through paint.
- Make crayon rubbings using natural objects as well as textured surfaces like brick walls, wooden fences, floors etc.