

WRITING

Writing is a vital lifelong skill that helps children to communicate and express themselves. Research highlights that children need opportunities to develop physical strength and control in their core, upper body, hands and fingers to support the development of pre-writing skills. For more information, please consult the dedicated *Supporting Early Literacy* resource.

A dedicated space for mark-making helps children connect spoken and written word, reinforcing the idea that writing conveys meaning and allows ideas to be shared.

There are four main developmental stages of writing. These stages reflect children's growing understanding of literacy conventions, including oral language, fluent reading, and effective writing using letters, sounds, and correct word spacing.

While each setting should include a designated writing space, it is equally important to embed writing opportunities throughout the environment, both indoors and outdoors. This allows children to explore writing in meaningful, real-life contexts, such as writing a shopping list during role play or labelling plants in the garden.

CURRICULAR & DEVELOPMENTAL

Health & Wellbeing

As children learn how to hold a pencil, they develop fine-motor skills. Their pencil grasp develops alongside confidence in mark-making, typically starting with a Palmer Supinate grasp, evolving to a Tripod grasp.

Exploring the wider community helps children understand how writing is used in everyday jobs, for example, doctors writing a prescription. This highlights the purpose and value of writing.



Literacy

Exposure to environmental print, adult writing and their own writing efforts, helps children recognise letters and symbols, often leading to mark-making through imitation.

Introducing new vocabulary linked to interests or events supports language development. For example, "dragon fruit" when creating a shopping list.

Children can explore various writing materials to express and record their ideas and experiences.

A dedicated writing space encourages children to connect spoken and written language, using their growing knowledge of sounds, patterns and words within meaningful contexts.

Maths & Numeracy

Through the use of calendars and diaries, opportunities arise to explore dates and sequences of time, enabling children to incorporate these concepts into their writing.

The writing area affords opportunities to explore number and shape, children can experiment with these to mark-make.

Other

Writing invites exploration of symbols, characters and writing systems across different cultures and languages. These explorations should be meaningful and relevant to children within the setting and their learning interests.

Different events and cultural celebrations support awareness that it's common to write to someone as part of these customs. For example, writing a letter to Santa or sending invitations.



ROLE OF THE ADULT

In some instances, writing areas can appear neglected or uninspiring. It's vital that practitioners ensure the area remains inviting, enticing and is regularly replenished and updated.

The area should be well organised, clearly labelled and have a plentiful stock of resources that are fit for purpose. Writing pencils should be sharpened, pens should work, and a variety of paper should be available.

When modelling for children, practitioners are demonstrating writing and its purpose. Therefore, it's important that practitioners remain mindful of their own handwriting, ensuring letter formation is clear, correct and legible.

Where appropriate, adults should support children to write, scaffolding the process and providing meaningful encouragement to ensure that children can confidently engage in sharing their opinions, thoughts, ideas and stories through mark-making.

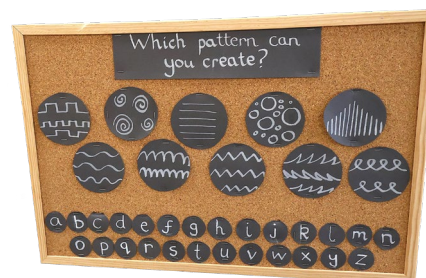
Practitioners should be aware of the different languages spoken within the setting, ensuring these are appropriately represented and reflected in available environmental print, using correct terminology and accurate information.

ROOM STRUCTURE & LAYOUT

The writing area should be in a quiet location, ideally near the story corner. Where space allows, a separate drawing area can be offered. If writing and drawing tables are combined due to lack of space, consideration should be given to the size of the area, ensuring a group of children can write/draw comfortably.

Resources should be easily accessible and stored in a manner that encourages and enables children to select writing materials independently.

There should be a designated space to display examples of writing or environmental print which can act as a stimulus for children.



RESOURCE IDEAS

- Appropriately sized writing table and chairs
- Various sizes of paper, unlined/lined/squared
- Card, slate, white boards, chalk boards (and erasers)
- Sticky notes, envelopes, note pads, diaries, calendars
- Alphabet line with lower and upper-case letters
- Number line (including zero)
- Jumbo writing pencils, normal pencils and pens
- Office supplies: Sellotape, stapler, hole punch, erasers, rulers, clipboards
- Examples of writing and environmental print, greeting cards, postcards, stamps

REFLECTION POINTS

- How do practitioners promote children's ability to write independently? Remember, stencils and worksheets can hinder children's writing development.
- Are additional writing opportunities embedded across the provision areas, including both indoors and outdoors? Remember, outdoors does not mirror the indoors experience.
- Is there a shared consistent approach towards supporting the transportation of tools and equipment that children may need to engage in their writing process? For example, larger pieces of paper and crayons from the art area when creating a comic book.

