



Hillsborough Primary School

Support your child at home with mark-making and writing.

Children learn a great deal from other people. As parents and carers you are your child's first teachers. You have a powerful influence on your child's early learning.

From a very early age your child will need to experience a wide range of activities and experiences with you, for example, singing and saying rhymes, making and listening to music, listening to them and joining in conversations, painting and pretend play, to develop their early reading and writing skills. These activities will help your child take the first important steps towards reading and writing.

If you can be involved in helping your child we know it can make a big difference to your child's learning.

How will my child be taught to write?

At Hillsborough Primary School children take part in a high-quality communication, language and literacy development programme designed to promote every child's learning through a play-based approach. We use a variety of activities to get your child 'ready to write.' Children need to develop their gross motor and fine motor skills in order to write; therefore we make sure we plan carefully for these activities. Children do a range of activities to develop these skills such as write dance which is gross motor movement to music, use water with large paint brushes and paint rollers to write outdoors, use tools such as tweezers or chop sticks to pick up objects and place them in a container as well as getting objects out of 'gloop.' Children also need to explore using their fingers, we often have trays of shaving foam, hair gel, sand for children to mark make in. Many of the linked provision activities in FS2 are aimed at fine motor development, these include placing buttons or beads to follow a pattern or threading cut up straws onto pipe cleaners or simply popping bubble wrap.



Children also have the opportunity to take part in dough disco; this activity gets children to roll, pinch, squeeze and press a ball of play dough in time to their favourite music track.

It is a known fact that children's spoken language supports reading and writing therefore we have to place an emphasis on speaking and listening. From a very early stage, children develop an awareness of the different sounds in our spoken language. They learn to use their voices to make contact with you and to let people know what they need and how they are feeling. As parents and carers, you best understand your baby or young child's communications; you are key people in helping them develop their speaking and listening skills.

Children need lots of opportunities to talk with others as they develop and practise their speaking and listening skills. This helps to build their confidence and improves their ability to communicate with other people. This is a really important aspect of learning to socialise and will help your child feel confident when the time comes to make friends.

In order to make a good start in reading and writing, children need an adult to talk to and listen to them. So switch off the TV, radio and mobile phone and really listen, show you are interested in what they are talking about.

Opportunities to support **speaking and listening** include:

- preparing meals
- tidying up
- putting shopping away
- getting ready to go out
- reading books to and with your child
- As you meet them from nursery/school and travel home together
- In the supermarket as you shop
- At meal time



- At bath time/bedtime

In fact at any time!

The importance of mark-making

Your child will notice adults around them reading and writing and they will want to copy them.

Mark-making is the first step towards writing. Mark-making in the early stages is closely linked to **physical** development. The more opportunities your child has to develop large and small movement in their arms, hands and fingers, the easier it will be to make marks with a variety of tools. Activities such as digging, 'painting' outdoor surfaces with water and a large brush, sweeping, and swishing a scarf through the air in different shapes will help develop large motor movement.

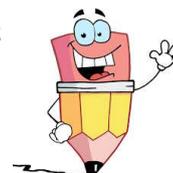
Small or fine motor movement will be needed to hold pencils and pens correctly. Hanging out the washing and playing with pegs, using a pegboard and picking up grains of rice with fingers and tweezers will help develop the pincer grip needed for writing.

In the early stages of learning to write, your child will like to experiment, making marks on paper with a variety of writing tools such as brushes, pens, pencils and felt-tip markers. They will often include drawings with their writing. Sometimes you will write for them. It is a good idea at this stage to use lower-case letters when you write for your child, introducing capitals only for names.



Opportunities to support **mark-making and writing** include:

- Make sure your child sees you writing.
- Writing cards for any occasion.
- Shopping lists
- Set up a place where your child can experiment with mark-making, both outside and inside, using gloop, paint, pens, stamps and stencils onto a variety of surfaces such as paper, cardboard and material.
- Collect a variety of pencils and pens, and keep them handy for your child.
- Create a special writing bag to keep little writing tools in, for travelling in the car or visiting the doctor's. Change the contents regularly.
- Compose an email together inviting a friend over to tea.
- Make words together using magnetic letters.
- Make up a story together about one of their toys. You write for them, repeating the sentences as you write. When it is complete, they can draw pictures to go with it.
- Buy stickers of a favourite film or TV programme and make a book about it.



What to do if your child is reluctant to read or write at home

Relax!

It is important not to worry if your child shows no inclination to write at home; the important thing is to keep on sharing books and talking together. There is no need to insist that your child does some writing - more often than not they will choose to do so when they have a real reason to.



Remember: Above all writing should be fun and enjoyable!

