



Ready for.....

There are very complex steps involved in becoming a confident writer and many skills that need to be in place before a child can confidently “put pen to paper” and for those marks to convey legible meaning

A writer needs to....

- Understand what writing is for, eg to give information, explain something, convey feelings
- Understand the idea of writing for an audience, eg is the letter for a friend, formal?
- Understand the genres eg lists labels, letters, stories
- Have developed sufficient motor control over arm, wrist, hand and fingers to make controlled marks
- Know what they want to write, to have gathered ideas
- Understand the purpose of print, the alphabet and words as units of meaning
- Know about and use letter/ sound relationships
- Know about tricky words that do not follow a pattern
- Construct a sentence

The most important thing is that we create an “I Can” attitude with young writers and help them to be confident in trying out their skills and celebrate their attempts and achievements without too much emphasis on correctness in the early stages



## How can we help?

**Provide activities** to encourage motor control and strengthen arm and hand muscles

- Playdough and clay activities-rolling, squeezing, twisting and prodding
- Putting on clothes and using buttons zips and laces
- Threading beads pasta onto laces or string, sewing
- Paintbrushes and buckets of water to “paint” pavements, fences etc
- Pegging items onto washing lines
- Using tweezers to pick out small items from jelly, sand
- Constructing with bricks
- Using scissors
- Using finger paints and writing in sand salt, foam, mud or flour
- Using rolled up paper as a wand to write letters in the air with both hands

**Provide appropriate and diverse materials for writing.** We need to give them a reason to write and fantastic tools to do so with so writing becomes an intrinsic pleasure and not a chore.

- Triangular pens, chalk to use inside and outside, Chunky crayons whiteboards and pens, magnetic letters, paper of different sizes and textures, envelopes. Order forms, diaries, post its, clipboards, cards and postcards, notepads

**Provide a literary rich environment,** words for children to link to items and begin to recognise, help and encouragement to label and illustrate their own pictures.

**Provide opportunities for writing**

- Encourage risk taking and having a go
- Opportunities inside and out, some children(often boys) find paper and pens off putting and respond well to whiteboards or chalkboards outside, making scoreboards or using clipboards to record findings
- It can be useful to Scribe for reluctant writers and re read to them so that they can see that their thoughts and ideas can be written down and kept. This allows children the freedom to express their thoughts and ideas without the constraints of actual writing



### **Provide reasons for writing**

- Making shopping lists together
- Writing instructions with pictures and text of how to do something eg a recipe
- Write and post letters
- Create letters to the child from favourite book characters or from fairies in the garden that they can reply to
- Make signs and labels for items around the house or garden

### Some common worries

**Pencil grip**- children may develop a strange pencil grip when they are trying to control their movements and find a comfortable way to hold the pencil. Their grip will usually improve as their hand movements become more controlled. Try showing them the tripod grip or providing a triangular pencil to help them develop a comfortable grip.

**Back to front** –children have to rely on their memories to write letters until they become good readers. Nearly all children will reverse letters or their name at some point. Don't worry about this but model writing left to right and praise all their efforts.

**Children who seem disinterested in writing**- seeing other children, adults and parents writing is a great way to encourage reluctant writers. Role play is a great way to encourage writing e.g. by setting up an office space, pretending to be a teacher and taking registers or being a waiter and taking orders. These will help to engage with the concept of writing and understanding what it is for.

## What does the EYFS say?

Remember this is a general guide, Children develop at their own rate in their own way

### Writing

Age band	Developmental stages
22-36 months	Distinguish between different marks
30-50 months	Give meaning to marks as they draw and paint
40-60 months	Hear and say the initial sound in words Link sounds to letters. naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet Use some letters to communicate meaning Write own name and other things such as labels
Early learning goal (by end of reception year)	Use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match sounds Write simple sentences Spell some words correctly