

# Two Gates Community Primary School

## How to help children learn

- **Try to see things from their point of view.** Understand how children see the world will help you to help them as they learn.
- **Let children be children.** A skilled five year old grows from a busy four year old, a curious three year old, a cuddled two year old, and adventurous one year old and a communicative baby.
- **Be a playful companion.** You can enjoy childhood with the children as well.
- **Feelings matter** - both the children's emotions and your own are part of any situation with young children. It is very helpful to be aware of your own moods as well as the children's when enjoying yourself with them and during difficult moments.
- **Don't expect to be perfect.** Everyone does something they don't mean sometimes. Children can be very forgiving as long as we are thoughtful most of the time and are ready to say sorry when we should.



## Developing Early Writing



I like Starfishes  
because  
they are pretty.



Information for  
Parent & Carers

Love children, love learning.

**Starting to write** Children begin their journey towards writing by making marks, not by producing letters and words. The first clear signs that children are inter-



ested in mark-making comes when they use thick crayons to make big circular and straight lines. This type of mark making is often dismissed as scribble, but it is actually an important step in learning to write. At first, mark making is a blend of writing and drawing, but most begin to understand the difference between drawing and writing sometime after their third birthday.

**From first words to confident writing** At around four years old, children begin to write their first



words—and their own name is usually the first of all. At first, we may simply notice that their mark making contains a few more letters. Then bit by bit, they learn to write their name. This is not to say that their name will be written in perfect handwriting or that all letters will be in the right order. As children learn about reading, letter shapes and words begin to have more meaning for them. Reading also allows children to work out how to write the sounds of the words that they can hear in their head. This is when adults need to be patient. Learning to read takes time and, while some children crack the code earlier than others, most do not really get into the swing of reading until they are 6 years old. When children are learning to read, they often start to write simple and repetitive sentences such as “I like to .....” because they are confident about how to put these down. Try not to keep correcting children about what they write at this time, as this can stop them from having a go at writing new words.

**Helping children to write:** - Learning to write takes a few years. Patience and support are needed over time. Children who are corrected too often or asked to write things out properly can lose interest. If children enjoy the process of mark making, and know they are going to be praised will write more often and so get better at it.



On a practical level, providing endless supplies of paper, crayons, felt tip and paint will help your child. Mark making outdoors with chalk are fantastic for children to learn to control their movements.

Mark making must be fun for children. Buckets with coloured water and large paint brushes to paint the fence or house which encourages large movements ready for writing.

Objects such as play dough, tweezers to pick up objects, pegs, threading toys, doing up zips and buttons all help children to encourage their motor skills for writing.



Playing games where you answer the phone and write down messages, helps the child to see adults writing which is important to the learning process. When you are making lists, read them out as you write them, this helps the child to formulate words and sentences in their minds.

Children need to know what to write about as they get older, so speaking and listening and reading books to your child is important. If children cannot speak in sentences they cannot write sentences, and if they do not speak, they do not have anything to write about. Answering all the why, what, when questions are exhausting, but are part of the writing process!

## **Handwriting is not the same as writing**

Handwriting is about putting words down on paper while writing is the “thinking” of the actual words..

For young children, learning to control a pencil, pen or even a paintbrush is hard. To do it, they first need to develop their hand-eye coordination, and build up the muscles and control in the hands. They also need to coordinate their arms and shoulders.

So, while young children may enjoy mark-making, we must be careful not to force them into writing small as they will find it easier if they have had the chance to work on controlling their whole arm movement. This will also help them to develop a better handwriting style later on. These movements are natural to children as they throw balls or climbing on slides, when they run, jump, climb, twist and twirl, they are building the muscles they need for good handwriting later on.

To help children develop the skills that will help their handwriting later on:-

- Encourage them to help around the home with odd jobs.
- Take time to show them how to manage buttons and zips and put clothes on.
- Play throwing and catching games together.
- Play games that encourage hand movements.
- Jigsaws, building bricks and threading beads onto laces.