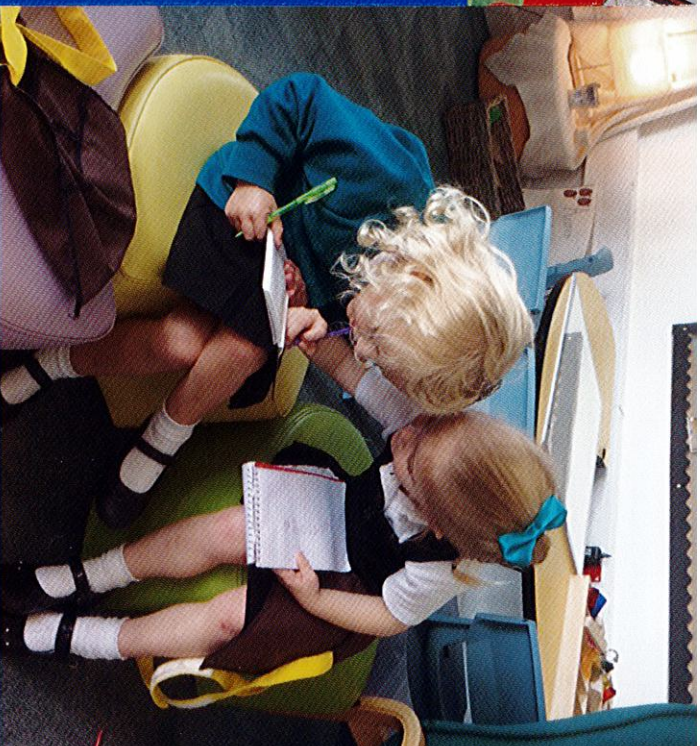


When your child attends nursery, pre-school or a reception class, they will be engaged in a wide range of activities to support their development as a writer.

It may not always be obvious at first glance that the activities and resources available to support children's play and development are so important to their journey. For each child, the journey to mark-maker is different, some choose to mark-make during their time at pre-school, others make this move during their reception year.

Children who are allowed to spend time engaged in purposeful activities to develop their motor skills will develop the skills needed to ensure that, when they do choose to mark make, they are physically ready and able to engage with the tools available.

We hope this leaflet has gone some way in helping show how important pre-writing activities are in ensuring a successful journey to becoming a mark-maker and a first step on the journey to becoming a writer.



SCHOOLS INVOLVED



**Almondsbury CE
Primary School**

littleacorns
Strategic School Development

littleacorns
preschool



In Partnership with
The Olympus Academy Trust

Helping our children become writers...

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND MARK-MAKING

Throughout their time at pre-school and the reception year, if we want children to be enabled and successful writers we need to understand the stages of physical development and dexterity and how they link to mark making.

When children choose to begin to mark make they are not doing it to necessarily convey meaning, but because they can.

They use their body to aid mark making, and then writing, through a sequence of muscle movements - which muscles they use depends on their stage of development and most children follow the same sequence.

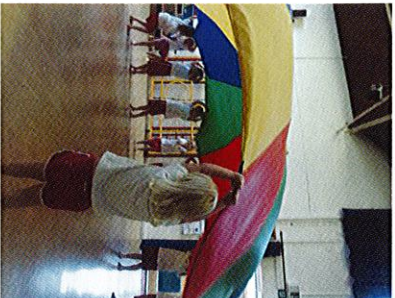


SHOULDER PIVOT

During the early stages of development, when children are learning to support their head, reach, grasp and walk they are using groups of muscles in their pelvis, back, shoulders, arms and neck. It is these upper body muscle groups that they use in the very emergent stages of mark making.

Activities we use to support Shoulder Pivot strength:

- Painting with mops
- Big digging in sand and soil
- Painting with big brushes; fences, walls, floors
- Trains in paint or foam
- Sweeping the floor
- Pushing buggies or wheelbarrows
- Pouring water or sand
- Scooter play
- Mixing mud kitchen ingredients



ELBOW PIVOT

Once the muscles in the back, upper arms and shoulders begin to strengthen there usually starts to be more movement further down the arm at the next point of pivot: the elbow.

Activities we use to support Elbow Pivot strength:

- Chalking on floor
- Whittling a stick
- Water and sand play
- Hammering: nails in a pumpkin!
- Sawing wood
- Making patterns in the sand
- Climbing and pulling their bodies up on ropes/climbing frames
- Ribbon/scarf twirling
- Stick writing in the air



WRIST PIVOT

As the arm muscles and the sense of balance develop further then the pivot changes again, this time to allow an even smaller range of movement. The pivot moves to the wrist.

Activities we use to support Wrist Pivot strength:

- Nuts and bolts (inker tables)
- Threading
- Sewing
- Lacing pictures
- Water and sand play
- Finger football



FINE MOTOR STRENGTH

Once the pivots have worked their way down to the wrist, the journey doesn't stop there, although for many children it can become a lot trickier.

The hand is quite a complex piece of machinery and is made up of lots of different joint and muscle groups that interconnect and work together to provide maximum dexterity.

Activities we use to support Fine Motor strength:

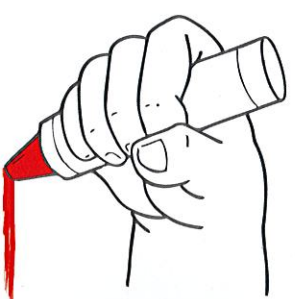
- Washing lines and pegs
- Dressing and undressing toys
- Cutlery
- Dressing up clothes with a range of fastenings
- Peg boards
- Malleable materials (dough, clay, jelly, wet sand)
- Tweezers to pick up small objects



PENCIL GRIP DEVELOPMENT

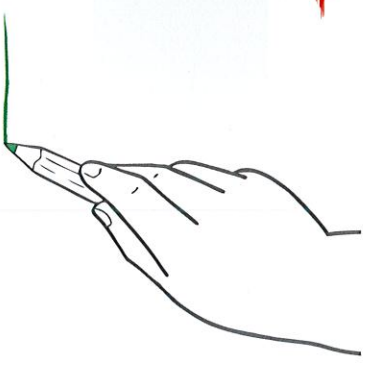
According to their stage of development, children will progress through stages of pencil grip.

They will only be ready to grip a pencil in the most efficient grip (Image 4) once they have developed the fine motor strength to do so.

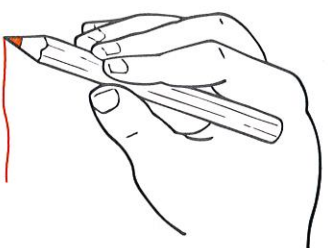


1

2



3



4

