



# Cherry Class

## Developing early writing skills in the nursery



### Golden Rules!

1. Praise, Praise, Praise!
2. Follow your child's lead & interest, don't force it.
3. If your child is disinterested try asking an older child to write and draw with your child as part of their play.
4. Work on the physical skills through play first.
5. Model good writing habits to your child.
6. Keep it fun!

### Talking!

Children's oral language plays a vital role in their writing development. They need to have lots of opportunities to experiment with spoken language, and to use talk to develop their ideas. If children can't tell us their ideas, they will never be able to write them down!

Some ways of doing this include:

- Playing with words-making up rhymes and tongue twisters.
- Using puppets and props to retell favourite stories and make up their own.
- Small world toys such as farm animals, train sets and doll's houses to encourage children to use story or imaginative language.
- Encouraging your child to speak in full sentences when describing something or asking a question.
- Extending their vocabulary by exploring the meaning of new words.
- Providing lots of opportunities to develop the skills for joining in a conversation.
- Making sure that you have some time every day when the television and the radio are switched off and

### Listening!

Another important skill needed in the development of early writing skills is the ability to listen carefully. Young children need to learn what this means and the kind of behaviour that a good listener shows, such as sitting still & quietly, looking at the person who is speaking & thinking about what they are saying.

- Model being a good listener by taking account of what they say in your responses to them.
- Say your child's name before giving an instruction or asking a question.
- Use opportunities to stop & listen carefully for environmental sounds

## Motor skills

Children need to acquire a range of physical skills as part of their writing development. This includes control over large scale movements, the development of muscle strength in their shoulders & hands and also hand & eye coordination and fine motor control.

Some ways of doing this include;

- Cutting and sticking, using scissors and glue.
- Using tweezers for picking up small objects.
- Paper tearing, rolling and crumpling.
- Transferring objects from one container to another.
- Pushing objects through slots.
- Using fingers to make marks in sand.
- Threading using strings, laces, large beads or pasta.
- Pegging clothes onto the washing line.
- Cotton buds with paint.
- Bat and ball games.
- Twirling ribbons and scarves.
- Use a range of writing implements such as chubby crayons, pencils,

## Reading

Children need to learn how writing works. Books are a great way to introduce children to the printed word, the more stories that children hear then the more story book language they absorb. Through hearing stories they will become aware of different kinds of characters and the different events that can happen in a story. If reading books is part of a child's daily experience, they will learn that ideas can be written down and shared. They will also see how writing is organised.

- Draw your child's attention to words printed around them such as road signs and labels in shops.
- Model how to use books for example starting from the front, text going from left to right, turning one page at a time.
- Look at pictures to give a clue

## Phonics

Children need to learn to listen for the sounds in words and be able to blend the sounds in a word and break a word down to hear the individual sounds. They also need to match a sound to the correct letter shape.

Some ways of doing this include:

- Bending & forming play dough into letter shapes.
- Painting letter shapes outside using brushes and water, or washing up liquid bottles.
- Using large chalks on the ground outside.
- Writing letters in wet sand, flour or shaving foam.
- Use magnetic or foam letters on the fridge or bath.
- Using arms to write huge letters in the air.
- Play simple games such as I spy to encourage your child to listen for the first sound in

## Mark making

Long before they can write words or even draw recognisable pictures, most children go through a phase called "mark making". This involves making marks with pencils, sticks, fingers or paint, in short almost anything on any surface. Praise this "writing" and pretend it means something-this helps your child to become a "writer".

Give real purpose to your child's writing experiences, without purpose children can quickly be "put off" from writing.

- Model your own writing to your child, let them help with writing shopping lists, notes and messages.
- Start a scrap book of mementos such as tickets, photos or postcards and encourage your child to help you date and label them
- Model how writing works-deciding what I want to write before you begin. Where to