

Mark Making

Introduction

This factsheet explores what mark making is and how you can support your child to develop the early skills needed to start writing and develop mathematical understanding, creative expression, art and drawing.

Key points

Children love to imitate adults and will use a wide variety of tools and resources to make marks, these early 'scribbles' are an important part of children developing the necessary hand eye co-ordination needed for handwriting. For young children mark making is a sensory experience, it is as they develop they begin to understand that marks can carry meaning.

Children start to make marks from the time they can control the movements of their hands and feet, whether that is swishing food around on their tray or picking up a crayon, pressing it down and watching colour appear on the nearest clean surface.

Learning to hold a pencil and make marks that ultimately lead to writing is a complex development. Children move through stages in their mark making, initially it is a physical activity. The child grasps tools with their whole hand, moving their arm from the shoulder, over time this becomes more refined until children can hold a pencil between their thumb and index finger.

Children of all ages make marks to explore textures, feelings, to express themselves and make sense of the world, before and alongside using symbols to convey and represent messages.

What does this mean for me?

Talk to your child about the marks they make, ask them what they are doing, and describe what you can see, this will indicate to your child that these marks are important and that you value them.

Value any mark making your child may bring home from their setting and share any mark making your child has done at home with their key person.

What can you do to support your child?

Marks can be made in all sorts of media, for example clay, sand, soil, as well as on different types and colours of paper. Remember too that cutting and sticking is another way that your child can make their mark.

Peg a piece of paper to a fence and paint with spray bottles filled with watered down paint.

Ice cakes and biscuits, letting your child explore the different colours.

Children just love messy activities, such as jelly, shaving foam, corn flour and water, and wallpaper paste.

Share with your child the importance of print, that words on food packets and street signs as well as number and letters on car registrations and buses all carry meaning.

Have a bucket of water with large brushes, and a selection of sponges for mark-making on a hard ground outside or walls. As well as large chalks for making marks on tarmac.

Gather seasonal natural materials to inspire mark-making, for example, leaves, seed pods, fir cones, dried flowers. Do leaf rubbings, flower pressing and collages.

Strengthen the muscles in your child's arms and hands by providing activities such as playdough, threading, picking up small objects, making shapes in the air with a wand and dancing with a ribbon in their hand.

Statutory Guidance

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014

www.foundationyears.org.uk/eyfs-statutory-framework/

The Foundation Phase – Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales
<http://learning.wales.gov.uk/docs/learningwales/publications/130424-framework-for-childrens-learning-en.pdf>

Additional resources

Website - Earlyarts.co.uk

Art and craft resources can be bought from many high street stores and supermarkets