

Writing in the Early Years at Hayton C of E Primary School: Little Acorns Early Years Provision

Young children begin 'writing' much earlier than you might think. Children's writing skills begin with 'emergent writing skills'. Emergent writing is the first step taken by children learning to write. Emergent writing develops as children begin to understand that writing is a form of communication, and that their marks on paper can be used to convey a message.

Young children from as early as two years old start to imitate the act of writing. They begin by creating drawings and symbolic markings that can represent their ideas and thinking. A child's writing will eventually evolve into proper letters and words, but all the visual and written communication they practise before this stage is emergent writing.

Writing is an important part of children's literacy development; children in 'Little Acorns' benefit from regular experience writing every day, both teacher-led and independent, and from being encouraged to write in our areas of continuous provision.

How does emergent writing develop?

(Please see separate information about the 'early journey' your child's writing takes)

Children improve their abilities and their understanding of writing as they continue to be exposed to writing in the world around them.

As children's emergent writing develops, they learn that writing can have purpose and can be meaningful.

Children's development of their emergent writing skills also includes improving their skills with letter and word writing, as well as spelling and building their alphabetic knowledge.

The ability to write phrases and sentences that can communicate meaning is another important aim of teachers who are working with emergent writers. This grows as children learn to express themselves in both experimental writing and orally. In 'Little Acorns' we enable learning through activities such as: retelling and enacting stories orally; composing sentences and stories; writing notes and making lists; writing labels as well as speaking words and phrases that somebody else (an adult or older child) can write down for them.

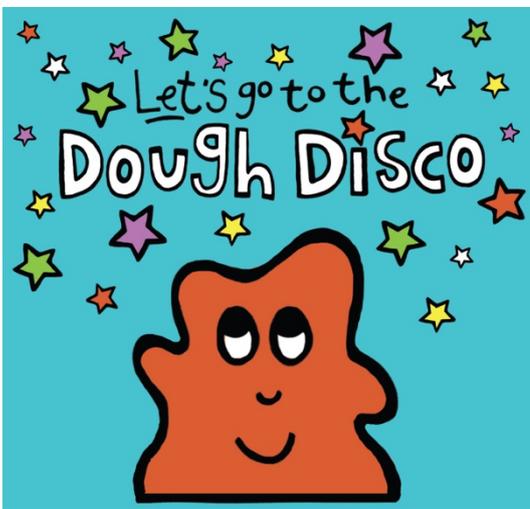
What does emergent writing look like?

Emergent writing develops over multiple stages, which includes scribbles as well as mock letters that may look like letters, but are actually shapes and imitations. Children's writing develops on a continuum described in the stages of emergent writing below.

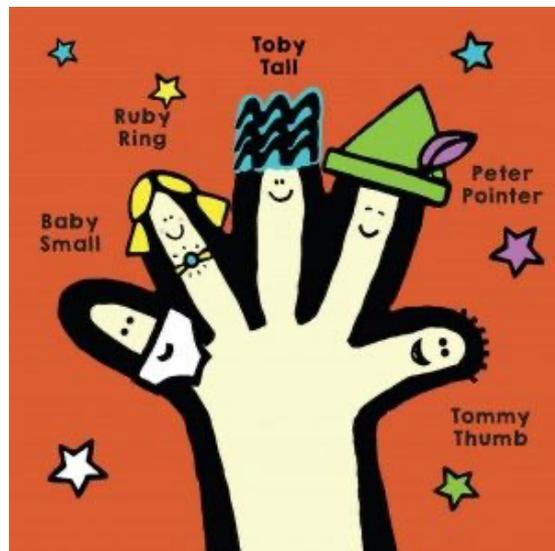
It's usual to see lots of letters arranged into nonsensical strings as children develop their letter formation skills, and it's actually beneficial for children to practise this pretend writing in their play times.

How can you support emergent writing at home?

As emergent writing develops among young learners, parents play an important role in supporting them. The ultimate key to this is for parents to share in the joy and satisfaction that comes from writing, and to encourage children to communicate their thoughts and to record their ideas.



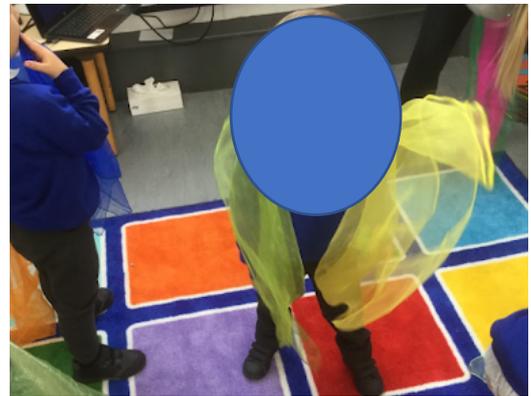
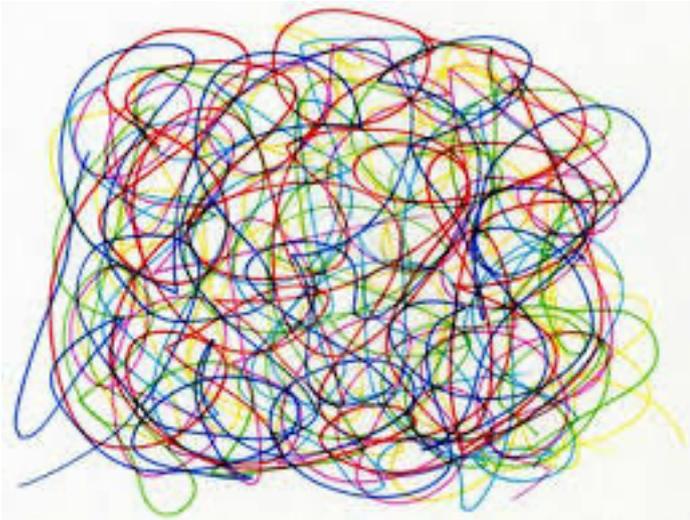
'DOUGH DISCO' is a high tempo, high energy session with play dough. Designed to encourage maximum participation the sessions are created for all levels of ability. Children develop fine motor muscles by manipulating the dough in a variety of ways, which in turn helps to improve their mark making and writing.



What we call our fingers during 'Dough Disco'

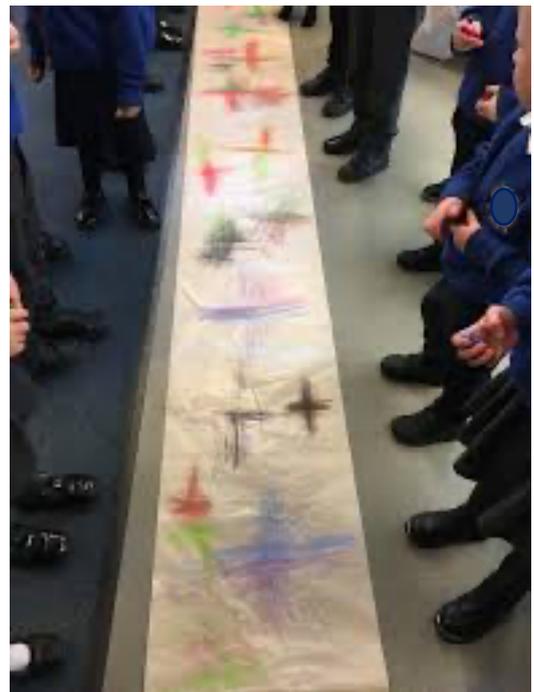
Some of our favourite 'Dough Disco moves'!

Of course, we use 'playdough' in many other ways too and ALL of this supports our 'fine motor skills, which are ESSENTIAL to support children's writing. Why not make some at home – or even better – do some baking and let your child knead, mix, squidge, squash, stretch, roll, poke and prod! Plus, you'll have something delicious to enjoy at the end!



'SQUIGGLE WHILST YOU WIGGLE'

Squiggle Whilst You Wiggle uses dance and large movements to help children develop the fine muscle control they need for writing. They will learn a new gross motor movement to a piece of music whilst holding 'flappers' (small squares of fabric) whilst dancing along to the music following the teacher's instructions. The children then transfer these movements to floor level and swap their flappers for writing tools (crayons/pens etc.) to make marks, this could be in foam, on paper, in sand etc. They will then use this action to think of letters they can form that use this shape. These sessions are great fun but most importantly help your child to be confident mark makers.



Using lots of different writing tools is a good way to improve fine motor skills. It's also a great excuse to create art with your children!

[We have more information about 'Gross' and 'Fine' Motor Skills on our 'Early Writing' page if you would like to know more.](#)

How else can you support your child's writing skills?

1. Sit right to write: Good posture is important for any writing. Encourage your child to sit with their feet flat on the floor, their back straight (no heads on the table) and relaxed shoulders.
2. Learn how to hold a pencil properly: Before any child can learn to write, they must develop the correct way of holding a pencil. This correct grip is called the pincer grasp. To practice this, give them the crayon/pencil so that it's pointing towards them. When they pick it up, and lift their hand, they should be using the pincer grasp automatically!

Model writing

You can help your emergent writers through demonstrations with modelled writing. Showing your children that you write and read every day will help them understand that writing can be meaningful.

Why is handwriting practice important?

Handwriting practice is important because it helps children to develop their fine motor skills. These are the small movements in the hand and wrist that control pencil grip. When children begin school, they are at an age where their motor skills are still at a developing stage, so it's important for them to get lots of practice.

Fluency is a key component of good handwriting, and as your children develop their writing skills they will be able to incorporate seamless joins and confident pen strokes into their handwriting.

Encouraging drawing as writing

While handwriting practice becomes an essential part of children's emergent writing, children benefit from having time and space to engage in drawing experiences.

Giving children the tools to express themselves through drawing can facilitate their emergent writing and written expression.