**Writing and the EYFS**

Writing, along with reading, makes up literacy, one of the four specific areas of the[**Early Years Foundation Stage**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2) (EYFS). The Early Learning Goals for writing come from both literacy and physical development. They are:

Children at the expected level of development will:

* Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;
* Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;
* Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

**Best practice and activity ideas**

**Gross motor skills**

Learning to write is closely linked to a child's [**physical development**](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/childcare-professionals/early-years-foundation-stage/physical-development-in-the-eyfs). Before children can control the muscles in their hands, they need to develop their gross motor skills (those that need large or whole body movements). For babies this means the freedom and space to kick, roll and crawl. And for older children this also means the chance to run, climb, balance, throw, push, pull and swing their arms.

Gross motor skills activity ideas:

* use ribbon sticks to make large circular and zig zag movements in the air
* swing and hang from climbing frames
* lift and move heavy objects
* paint with large rollers and brushes on a vertical surface (like a wall or easel)
* marching to music
* anything that encourages children to stretch their arms above their heads.

**Fine motor skills**

As soon as a baby starts to show that they're beginning to control their movements, you can encourage fine motor skills (precise, small muscle movements). Hand eye coordination is a key part of this so provide babies with a range of interesting objects to grasp, squeeze, pat and poke. By handling objects, children are strengthening their hands and fingers, so that they can grip a pencil.

Fine motor skills and hand strength activity ideas:

* use small droppers to drop water on to a target
* use a spray bottle to fire water on to a target
* screw up small pieces of paper
* open and close zip loc bags using index finger and thumb
* squeeze sponges to move water from one container to another
* pop bubble wrap
* push pipe cleaners through the holes of a colander
* prod, poke, squeeze and roll play dough or push it through a garlic press
* pick up small objects and put them in compartments or a cupcake tray
* twist and open containers with lids.

**Mark making**

Before children are able to form letters, they need to learn how to make marks. These marks can be with their finger in yoghurt on their high chair tray or pictures they've drawn or painted. They're working out how writing works, how to hold their pencil, what pressure to put on the paper and how to control the marks they make.

It's important to have mark making and writing resources available for children to use in every area of the early years provision in your setting - including outside. Children need space to explore making marks and boys in particular may enjoy making large scale marks on the floor where they can stretch out. You could use the backs of rolls of wallpaper for this or use chalk or water on the floor outside.

**Writing and language**

When babies first start to scribble, it's simply a physical activity. But through interactions with adults, they'll learn that these marks have meaning and can convey thoughts and feelings. It's helpful to talk to children about what they've produced as it gives them confidence to experiment more with mark making and extends their understanding of how writing works.