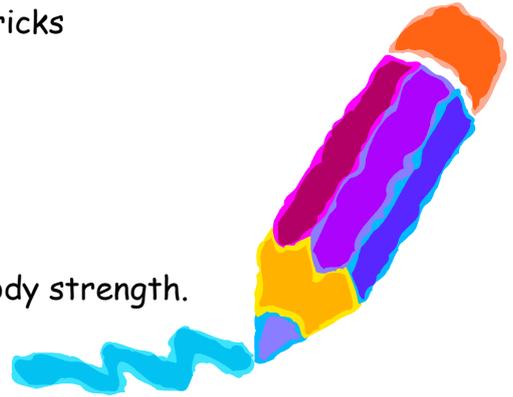


Top Tips For Writing!

Being able to write is something most of us take for granted- but it is a complex skill for children to learn, and like so much during their childhood, develops gradually.

To be able to write successfully a child needs a significant amount of physical control - shoulder, arm and hand muscles all need to be developed. You can help at home by providing the following toys and opportunities:-

- Lacing cards, threading beads
- Peg Boards
- Construction such as Duplo and Stickle bricks
- Play dough
- Jigsaws
- Finger Rhymes
- Cutting with scissors
- Doing up buttons
- Climbing and swinging to develop upper body strength.
- Cooking-stirring
- Throwing and catching games



Children begin their 'writing journey' by making marks not by producing letters. A clear sign children are interested in mark making is when they begin to use thick crayons to make big circular and straight lines - this is often dismissed as 'just' scribble - but it is an important step in learning to write. At Scantabout we use **Write Dance** to encourage children's creative scrimblings and to develop the key physical requirements needed for writing.

Children like to copy you so let them see you writing and encourage them to join in with 'pretend' writing.

Provide lots of different writing and drawing materials. Many of these can also be used in the garden! e.g.

- Pens, pencils, felt tips crayon, chalks, paints
- Variety of paper and cardboard (the back of cereal packets)
- Notebooks and pads
- Post it pads
- Envelopes and cards
- Buckets of water and big paint brushes for 'painting' outside on pavements, patios, walls and paths.



Around the age of 4-5 children become interested in learning to write their own name - they will not use perfect hand writing and the letters might not be in the right order, but this is a spectacular milestone in understanding writing. Now they can sign their drawings and add their names onto the bottom of cards. Give lots of praise and use the following opportunities to encourage your child to write:-

- Cards for family and friends
- Letters
- Shopping lists
- Birthday and Christmas present list
- Signs and labels for their bedroom and toy boxes

The next stage of writing is closely linked to reading - as children learn about reading, letter shapes and words will begin to have more meaning. In the Reception class at Scantabout your child will be introduced to letters of the alphabet and the sounds that they make (phonics) through the 'Jolly Phonics' programme. This knowledge will continue to be consolidated and expanded throughout their primary education through the Government's '**Letters and Sounds**' phonic programme.

They will gradually learn how to write the sounds they can hear in words.

BE PATIENT! Learning to read and write takes time and most children do not really get into the swing of it until they are at least six years old. Children who are corrected too often or asked to write things out 'properly' can lose interest in doing it at all!

REMEMBER - always encourage your child to have a go and praise their efforts. Children will not be ready to write until they have good pencil control and can draw a variety of lines, circles, squares and triangles. Introducing them to writing too soon, before they are physically ready, just introduces them to failure.

Some Common Worries

Pencil Grip

Children who develop a strange pencil grip do so because they are looking for a way to control their movements. This usually improves as their hand control improves. Try not to put them under pressure to produce neat, small writing until they have mastered control of their pencil.

Back to front Letters

Nearly all children will reverse their letters early on as they have to rely on memory to write - as they become good readers their writing and spelling improves.

Left Handers

Left handed children can find it easier to write if the paper is placed at an angle .

If you have any concerns at all do talk to your child's teacher.