

Later things start to look more letter like.

### **Mazes**

Around now a child may enjoy tracing mazes or pictures. Laminated printouts and dry wipe markers mean a child can practice again and again.

### **Copying or tracing letters**

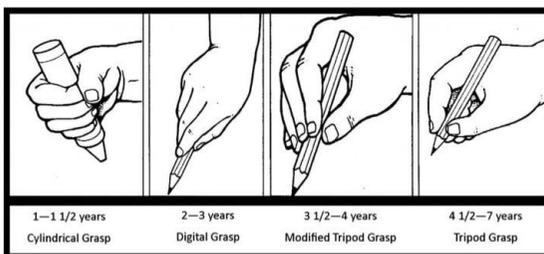
Often the first word a child learns to write is their own name. Write the word normally using a capital letter to begin with and small letters for the rest. (Paul). Small letters are the first letters a child will practice and capital letters come later, although use capital letters normally e.g. at the start of a name.

### **Letters and Sounds**

Linking letter sounds to letter shapes is now very important, much more important than copying out words or sentences. There are lots of play ideas in our Letters and Sounds Leaflet.

### **Pencil grip**

A good pencil grip helps a child be able to control a pencil but again children achieve this at different ages. For older children with a poor grip various rubber pencil grips and different styles of pen can help.



### **So the stages of writing are**

1 Gross motor skills and fine motor skills

3 Scribbling

4 Drawing and representing objects and ideas in picture form. (although you will probably not be able to tell what the child is drawing just by looking at it)

5 Writing like scribbles

6. Odd letters that look like letters, often within a pictures.

7. Mock words, random letters clustered together in to word like patterns.

8. Children may enjoy copying words and are often taught to copy their own name at this stage. They are still a long way from beginning to write and letter and sound recognition skills are more important than being able to copy letters.

9. Words that are similar phonetically to the word the child wants to write. Initial letters may come first before a child can attempt to sound out the rest of the word or they may sound the whole word, e.g. r instead or are

If you require further information or advice please do not hesitate to contact your child's key person.

## Tiny Toes Childcare



## Learning Through Play

## Scribbles and Scrawls



## *The importance of scribbles*

Before a child learns to write they need plenty of practice scribbling and drawing in order to learn the hand eye coordination and fine motor skills needed to write. Before a child can meaningfully learn to write its important they can link letters and sounds and there is a separate leaflet which gives you some simple ideas for games at home to develop this skill. In the meantime scrawling, scribbling and what we call emergent writing are the skills to practice!

### Milestones

There is a lot of variation and much depends on how much time a child gets to play with mark making materials and the interest they have in drawing and colouring.

Around a year children are able to hold crayons or chalks and connect the movements they make with the marks on the paper.

First children make backwards and forwards scribbles, later circular scribbles.

By around 3 children can accurately copy vertical and horizontal lines and circular shapes.

By around 4 or 5 years old they can copy triangular shapes and crosses, when this starts to happen you can start introducing the letters of their name to copy.

By 5 a child is usually showing preference for one hand or the other. Either is fine.

If a child is unable to copy their own name by 6, they may need some extra support.

Confidence in holding a pencil and being able to control where the pencil goes is the first step to writing and this can be developed in lots of fun ways before you child ever tries to copy a letter.

Before a child can develop their fine motor control they need to be secure in their gross motor control, whole body movements, waving arms and wiggling legs. Lots of physical play helps these develop, dancing, climbing, running, balancing and jumping and large arm movement like waving scarves or throwing balls.

There are lots of things to help develop fine motor control, threading toys, using tweezers and scissors, tap a shape boards, play dough and jigsaw puzzles. We will concentrate on what are called mark making activities in this leaflet.

### *Shaving foam*

Squirt shaving foam on to a flat surface and make patterns in it with your hand and fingers.



Try lines, scribbles, loops humps, waves and zig zags. When drawing circular scribbles aim for anti-clockwise scribbling which mimics the movement needed later to form letters.

### *Painting*

For small children may enjoy finger painting and

And later will be able to use a paint brush. Paintings don't have to be of anything or look like anything, the value is in the process of creating them. Children often go through a stage of creating a painting and then covering the entire surface in black or brown. This is a normal part of children's development as is part of something called an 'envelopment schema'.

### *Chalk Drawing*



A great activity for outside, or use a chalk board inside. You can by black board paint quite cheaply and it is easy to create a giant black board on a wall, cupboard or even a door.

As an alternative to chalk, on dry days, water and large paint brushes can be used to paint sheds and concrete/tarmac outside. This doesn't leave a mess and is very cheap and easy to do.

As skills develop children will start to draw things around them, especially faces and you will see writing like squiggles appear. Your child may tell you they are writing something and this is an importance first step, meaning that your child understands that writing has a meaning.

