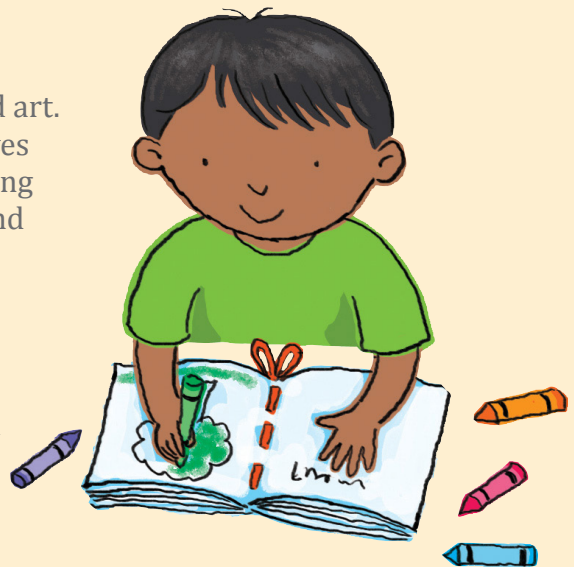


MAKE A MARK, MAKE A START

Before letters, numbers or pictures come simple marks. Mark-making is a great start to writing and art. Marks are how children learn to express themselves and portray the world around them. So, get mark-making and have some fun along the way. Use hands, fingers and feet. Squishing dough, swirling colours together or making footprints in the snow – there are lots of ways to experiment with marks.

Encouraging your child to experiment with confidence will mean they are well on their way to being prepared for when those marks start to form into letters and numbers when they start school.



GET STARTED



OUTDOOR MARK-MAKING

- Use brushes or squeeze bottles to 'paint' with water on a patio, fence or wall.
- Draw with sticks in damp sand or mud.
- Zoom bikes and toy cars through a puddle to make track marks.
- Sketch with chunky chalks on tarmac.

MESSY MARK-MAKING

- Mix table salt with glitter in the lid of a biscuit tin, then make letter shapes and patterns in the 'sparkledust'.
- Draw with fingers in a tray of flour, shaving foam or 'gloop' (cornflour and water).
- Trickle different colours of icing onto fairy cakes.
- Let children decorate themselves, each other or you(!) with facepaints or bath crayons.

MESS-FREE MARK-MAKING

- Try magnetic drawing boards and water drawing mats.
- If you have a tablet, there are lots of free children's art apps available such as PaintSparkles or Pixie Dust.

TOP
TIPS



GREAT ARTISTS NEED TO EXPERIMENT

Try to gather different kinds of art materials, and allow your children to explore them and see what happens. Ask them to tell you about the picture afterwards.

GREAT ART NEEDS TO BE SEEN

Let your children know you value their efforts. The best way is with a gallery on the wall or fridge. Or why not make their creations into cards, or take photos.

STARTING TO WRITE



PENCIL CONTROL

As children get closer to school age, you'll probably notice their mark-making becoming more purposeful. Now's the time to encourage a three-fingered 'tripod' pencil grip and introduce activities to help them learn pencil control – so try dot-to-dots, tracing and colouring-in.

- Let your children see you writing
- Give them opportunities to try their own pretend writing, perhaps by adding some scribbles to the bottom of your shopping list.

TOP
TIPS



LITTLE HANDS

Little hands need strength and dexterity to control a pencil. Help them develop this through everyday tasks such as cooking, gardening, moulding play dough, using scissors, picking up objects with toy tweezers and even popping bubble-wrap.

NAME THAT MARK

The first writing mark that most children recognise is the initial letter of their name. Help them spot it in books and on signs and posters when you're out and about.

PACEY IS THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDCARE AND EARLY YEARS

We promote best practice and support childcare professionals to deliver high standards of care and learning. We have around 35,000 members – childminders, nannies and nursery workers – working around England and Wales. Every day they demonstrate their commitment to the highest standards of care and help children get the best start in life.