



A Parent Information Pack on Writing Development



ESF INTERNATIONAL KINDERGARTENS HONG KONG

“Scribble is to drawing as
crawling is to walking....”



INSIDE:

Literacy Mission Statement	2
Reading & Writing Photographs	3
Writing Stages	4 - 6
Summary	7
Help Your children Write!	8—9
How Can You Help?	10 - 11
Letter Formation	12

LITERACY MISSION STATEMENT

ESF INTERNATIONAL KINDERGARTENS

HONG KONG

Literacy teaching and learning in ESF International Kindergartens are built on best practice and current/updated research findings. Our goal is to continually advance each child's learning and development in literacy awareness.

This is achieved through the provision of meaningful, challenging and fun literacy activities, within a print rich environment.

At all times, we hope to build on our knowledge that young children learn best through being actively engaged in activities, and by being exposed to first-hand literacy experiences. In addition, we hope our children will become independent and self-motivated, with a positive self-image and a life-long love of reading and writing.





Reading and writing for different
meaningful purposes.



SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD IN

All children develop at different rates. Learning how to write is no exception. At kindergarten we acknowledge and celebrate these differences.

When children begin to write, they simply enjoy making marks, lines, shapes and/or scribbles on paper. They may be able to tell you that they are writing. Often the pen or pencil is held in a whole hand fist-like grasp at this early stage.

Example:

Stage 1

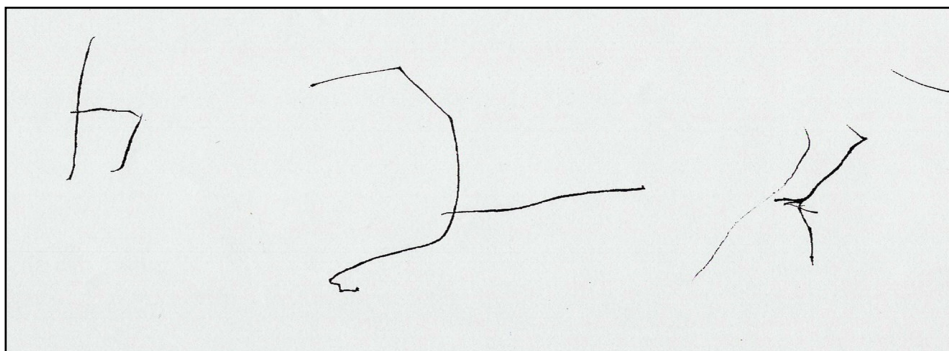


Even at this stage the children are practising strokes that are required later in 'real' writing e.g. circle shapes, upward and downward strokes.

Then they move onto marks with more recognisable letters emerging.

Example:

Stage 2

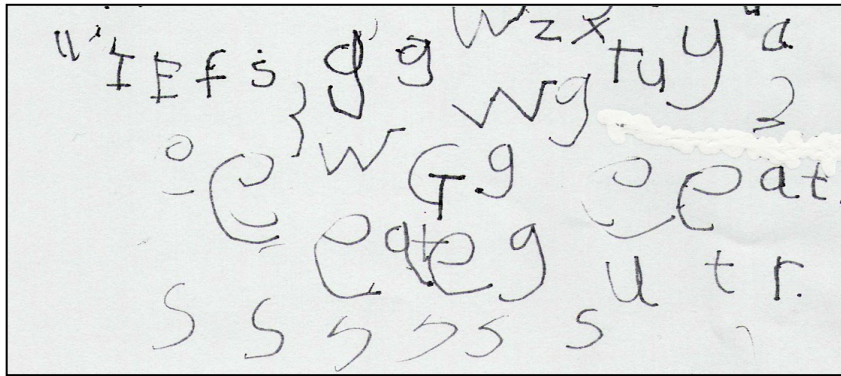


Usually these first attempts are letters from their own name.

After a period of time, when their awareness about print and its purpose has been raised and modelled, they may start to write recognisable, random letters of the alphabet. At this point, there is often no meaning to others, about this collections of letters. But to the writer themselves, their intention and purposes is deliberate and clear- to 'write'.

Example:

Stage 3

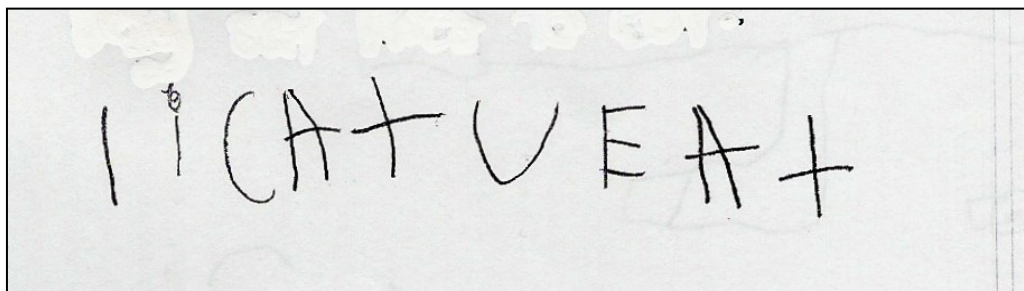


This is an important concept that has been understood - 'squiggles on paper have meaning, and convey a message.'

Next, these random letters may be grouped together in word forms although they still may or may not be recognisable words. Sometimes the first letter(s) of a word may represent the whole word at this stage. Children often display their awareness that print is read from left to right and top to bottom during this stage of learning the English language. A mix of random capital letters and lower case ones can often appear together. (as per example below)

Example:

Stage 4

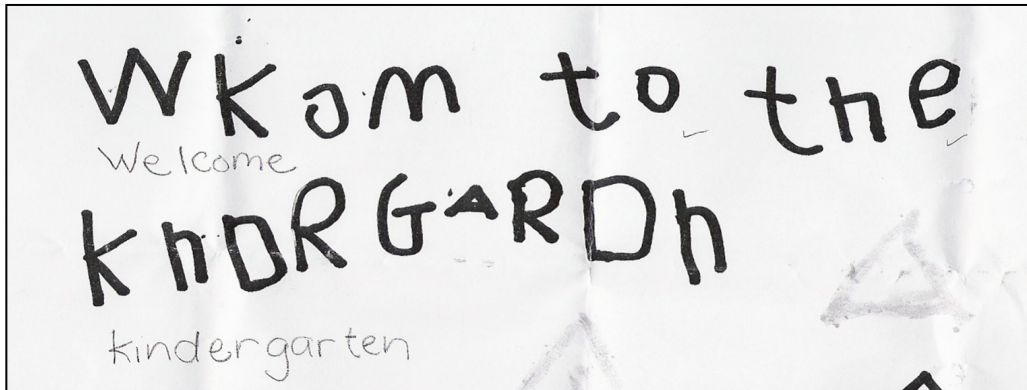


Another important step in learning - a realisation that clusters of letters appear as words in 'real' writing.

Later, the words will become spaced and more letters will appear in the words. Invented spelling is normal at this stage. This is when children use their growing knowledge of letter sounds (phonics) to 'have-a-go' at spelling and writing a word. (e.g. 'wkom' = 'welcome' below)

Example:

Stage 5

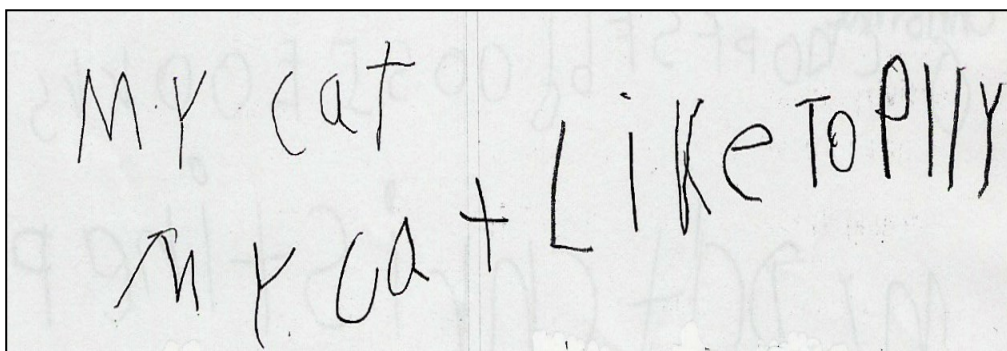


Now we are really seeing true progress! This 'emergent writing' as it is called, shows logical sense in how children 'hear' words and use their phonics to assemble words. In short, they are beginning to show an understanding of how words are constructed.

As children develop their writing skills, they also increase their vocabulary knowledge and gain a bank of words which they know by heart. However, they may still use their phonic knowledge to spell. (e.g. 'ply' = 'play' in the sentence below)

Example:

Stage 6

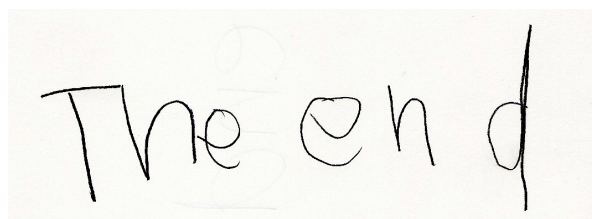


*It is really really important that these efforts receive lots of praise and encouragement. However it's ok to say "what a great try, let me show you how a grown up would spell 'play'", and model it for the child. (only choose **one** word at a time to correct otherwise disillusion can set in!)*

Hopefully, all the above examples will provide you with some insight into how writing emerges and develops. Please do not compare your child with another class-mates or siblings, as each one develops at their own pace! Too much emphasis on writing and spelling 'correctly' may just take away all the enjoyment and motivation in learning to write. Lots of praise, and encouragement, and interest from you is vital. "Tell me about your writing and what it says?" is a good parenting strategy.

Children also need to see you writing, so please let your child watch **you** write notes in the communication book, shopping lists, birthday cards etc.

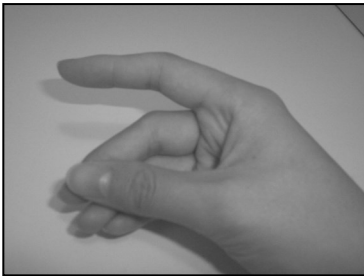
Most of all, have fun with your child, and read lots and lots of stories together.....reading and writing go hand in hand!



HELPING YOUR CHILDREN TO WRITE!

When writing at the literacy table or office area, we encourage all children at the kindergarten to follow the same techniques. These are very important!

For instance, the children need to hold their pencil in the same correct way. It is important to ensure children use this grip when they are writing. Please follow the steps below to guide them, **once he or she is beginning to show lots of interest, and is spending lots of chosen time 'writing'.**



First, lay the pad of the thumb on the side of the middle finger.



Then put the pen in the cleft between them.



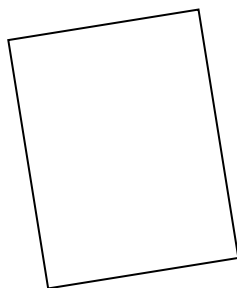
Finally, lay the index finger on top of the pen.

Similarly, once children are demonstrating a real interest in forming letters, then **that** is the time to demonstrate the correct formation of each letter. Even then, it must not be a chore, and nor should **every** letter be practised at once...just show how to form one at a time. Once that has been mastered, then focus on another! Don't bombard your child with everything at once, just as mentioned earlier, when moving children toward 'correct' spelling. (Please see front border and attached sheet for correct letter formations)

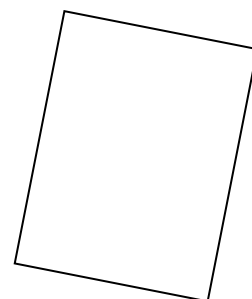
While your child is writing you need to ensure that they are using the correct posture. Developing a good posture is as important as developing a good pencil grip. Over the years children spend a great deal of time writing, and sitting in an awkward position can cause headaches, fatigue and pain in the shoulder, arm or hand. It can also slow down a child's writing. Children will be able to sustain writing for longer if they become used to sitting comfortably.



- ☺ The child needs to be sitting comfortably with their feet flat on the floor
- ☺ Their legs should be free and not come into direct contact with the underside of the desk top
- ☺ Children should use their non-writing hand to steady the paper
- ☺ The paper should be slightly tilted (see picture below)



paper position for right-hander



paper position for left-hander

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

The best support you can give is to be interested, understanding and appreciative; sharing and talking about writing experiences with your child. Encouragement, without pressure or inappropriate correction, enables them to become confident young writers without fear of getting it wrong.

- ☺ Encourage your child to draw and then you scribe what they tell you about the drawing.
- ☺ Be seen writing for **real** purposes yourself! In the day of the computer this modelling by you is all too often getting lost. Remember children learn by imitation, it's a wonderful means of learning.
- ☺ Provide books, words and letters as models for their writing.
- ☺ Encourage your child to use a variety of paper for writing
- ☺ Encourage your children to use pencils and pens for writing. Keep your crayons, felt pen and chalk for drawing purposes.
- ☺ Use capital letters appropriately; only use a capital letter to start a name or a sentence and continue with lower case letters for the rest. e.g. Mary NOT MARY. Remember also that sentences have a full stop at the end.
- ☺ Encourage children to:
 - Think it!
 - Say it!
 - Write it!
 - Read it!



SUCCESS FOR CHILDREN in learning to write depends upon:

- ☺ a generous supply of pencils, pen and paper (unlined paper allows for bigger hand & arm movement initially)
- ☺ Wanting to do it
- ☺ Feeling confident
- ☺ Many chances to join in and talk about it
- ☺ Understanding how writing works
- ☺ Understanding what writing is for



WHY DO WE WRITE?

- ☺ Communication at a distance
- ☺ Remembering e.g. a shopping list
- ☺ Recording
- ☺ Thinking - writing helps organise and clarify our thoughts and ideas.
- ☺ Signs

OTHER HELPFUL HINTS

- ☺ Involve children in list making i.e. the shopping list
- ☺ Involve children in invitation writing, birthday cards, party invitations - any opportunity at all!
- ☺ Adults need to be seen as readers and writers themselves
- ☺ Use small case letters mostly - capitals where appropriate
- ☺ Praise all early attempts at reading and writing and value what a child produces or says
- ☺ Talk about a child's work and encourage the children to share their art work at home
- ☺ Provide paper and mark making implements

Wishing you lots of 'together-time' with your child!

CORRECT LETTER FORMATION

At ESF International Kindergartens we encourage the children to use the Sassoon Infant Font, start on the bold dot and follow the arrows.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p

q r s t u v w x y z

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O

P Q R S T U V W X Y Z



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