

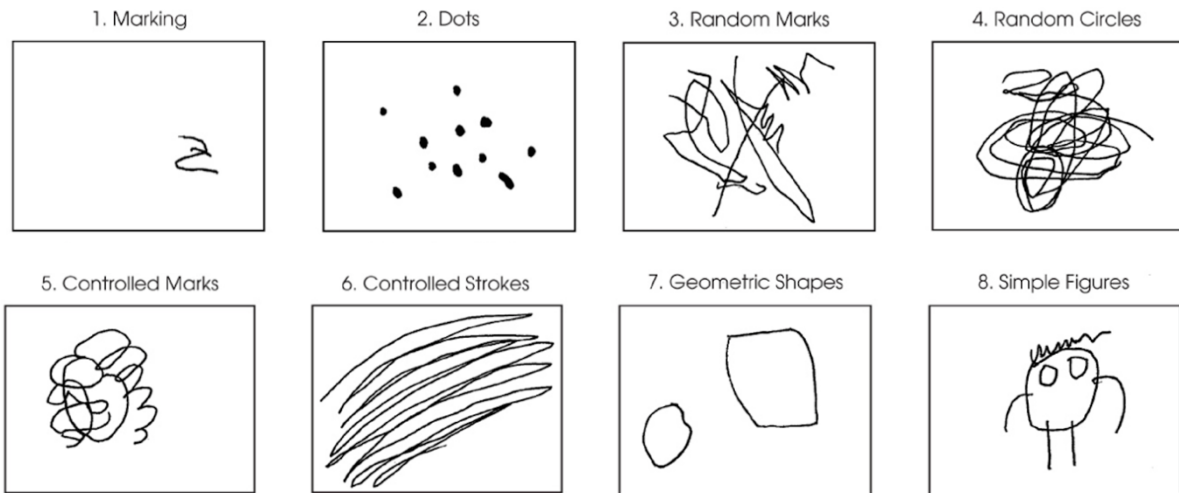
Mark Making

Why is mark making important?

Mark Making is the first step towards writing. It also supports physical development, self-expression and language development, creative skills and imagination, and provides opportunities to stimulate the child's thought processes and problem-solving.

Stages of development

There are different stages a child will move through in developing their mark making, and they will need lots of opportunities to experience and practice each stage.



(Ref: Dunst and Gorman, 2009)

Supporting a child's mark making

- In the early stages, mark making is a physical activity and children need the opportunity to engage in mark making using large movements
- Opportunities to lie on their tummy, stand and draw on vertical surfaces, etc. can give more stability and build fine motor and core strength, as well as coordination
- Identify what the child is interested in and motivated by, and build mark making opportunities around these activities/objects/materials
- Rather than providing support hand over hand, offer hand under hand support which enables the child to be more in control of the activity
- Provide visual and verbal supports
- Engage in collaborative mark making with the child, which will include modelling how to make marks, and encouraging peers to join in
- Be alert and notice any mark making the child produces. Provide positive feedback and offer the opportunity to repeat the activity again

- Draw the child's attention to the results of their mark making- talking with the child about their work can help ascribe meaning to the marks made
- Display their work where the child can see it, take a print, a photograph, etc. as a record and for sharing

Some practical suggestions

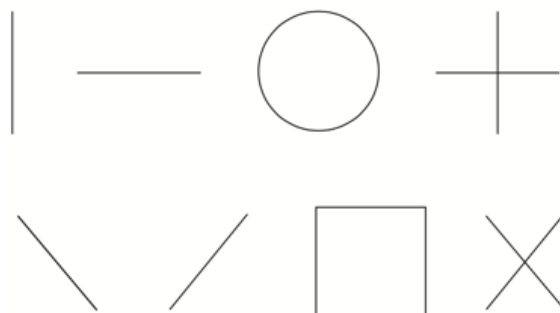
- Painting activities that involve hand/foot painting, and a range of tools that can be used to make different marks (e.g. a dishmop, sponges, potato masher, different brushes, cotton reels, etc.)
- Gather toys/items that move, to dip in the paint (e.g. wind up toys, balls, cars, trains)
- Making marks with water- using a watering can and spin around in a large circle as the can is poured out; using large decorator's brushes to paint on the playground or sugar paper; squirt water out of a squeeze bottle
- Wet and dry sand
- Rolling out playdough and pushing stamps into it
- Sensory salt (e.g. salt, lavender and glitter) to trace figures in
- Cornflour (thick and thin)
- Hair gel/paint in a ziplock bag or a tacky back pouch for the child to manipulate with their finger, a glue spreader, or other blunt instruments
- Instant mash potato/water/food colouring
- Finger painting on a table top (then use a sheet of sugar paper to take a print)
- Window crayons
- Spreading glue on a sheet of paper and then sprinkling items such as lentils, dried peas, glitter etc. on
- Use of iPad apps such as:
 - Doodoo Lite- drawing pad
 - Kaleidoscope drawing pad

Take screen shots of the child's work and then print out

- Write Dance provides lots of examples of large movement mark making activities. Look at their site www.writedancetraining.com for ideas and resources
- It is important to recognise some children do not enjoy messy play, and activities may need to be adapted. For example, using dry materials that do not stick to the child's hands, putting wellies on to stand in paint and then walk across rolled out paper

The next steps

Once a child is confident in making a range of marks it is important to spend time establishing the 8 shapes needed for a child to be able to form all letters/numerals correctly. These are:



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