

Literacy

At Ditton Nursery we support children in developing their early reading and writing skills. We build phonics activities onto our routine focusing on the variety of skills children need to be able to read and write for example developing listening and attention skills; learning how to discriminate between different sorts of sounds; matching (pictures, shapes, then letters), rhyming etc

Children enjoy cuddling up, looking at books and listening to stories. We have cosy inviting book areas in each discrete space, but also encourage children to be aware of print in a variety of ways via having:

- a range of reading materials throughout the Nursery, including outside
- magazines and cookery books in the role play areas
- meaningful labels with words and pictures displayed throughout
- props and puppets from familiar stories in the role play and reading areas area so children can act out their favourite stories
- a range of visual cues and props that can support children to understand words

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, Literacy is broken down into two aspects:

- **Reading**
- **Writing**

Adults engage children in many ways – using their voices, gestures and facial expressions. We support children to think about creating their own stories, asking them to predict what's going to happen next and helping them to make up their own endings to familiar stories. This encourages them to think more critically and become more creative.

Learning to write is closely linked to a child's physical development. Before children can control the muscles in their hands, they need to develop their gross motor skills (those that need large or whole body movements). At Ditton Nursery we offer children lots of different opportunities to develop these skills for example via:

- ribbons and scarves sticks to make large circular and zig zag movements in the air
- swinging and hanging from climbing frames
- lifting and moving heavy objects eg large blocks, tyres etc
- painting with large rollers and brushes on easels and outside with water
- marching and dancing to music
- activities that encourage children to stretch their arms above their heads

Hand eye coordination is a key part of supporting writing development. We provide lots of opportunities to grasp, squeeze, pat and poke. By handling objects, children are strengthening their hands and fingers, so that they can grip a pencil. Some of the Fine motor skills and hand strength activity ideas we use include:

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- using basters, tongs, small droppers to drop water
- use a spray bottle to fire water on to a target
- squeeze sponges to move water from one container to another
- pushing pipe cleaners through the holes of a colander
- prodding, poking, squeezing and rolling play dough
- sorting small objects

Before children are able to form letters, they need to learn how to make marks. At Ditton Nursery we give children lots of opportunities to experiment with mark making in different ways – with their fingers or sticks in paint, sand, mud; or in pictures they've drawn or painted. They're working out how writing works, how to hold their pencil, what pressure to put on the paper and how to control the marks they make. We give children space to explore making marks both on a small and large scale e.g. making large scale marks on the floor where they can stretch out. Adults work alongside children chatting to them. It is through supportive interactions that children will learn that these marks have meaning and can convey thoughts and feelings.

Rhyming helps children to break words down and to hear the sounds that make up words in preparation for reading and writing. So we sing songs and rhymes every day. A rhyme of the week is focused on and sent home so that parents can share this with their children. Using rhymes with actions and props supports multi-sensory learning.