



Meaningful Mark Making, Drawing and Interactive Writing: Bringing Evidence-Informed Practice to Life

How do we give children meaningful, motivating reasons to make their mark?

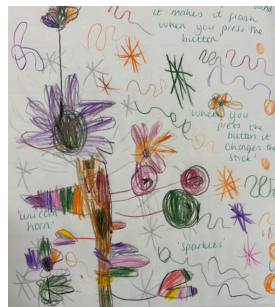
How can we close the persistent attainment gaps in early writing, while keeping play and creativity at the centre?

As a Stronger Practice Hub, we wanted to create a professional development opportunity that connects practitioners with evidence-informed approaches to early writing; helping every child build the confidence and skills they need to become enthusiastic, capable communicators and mark makers

Connecting Research and Practice

Research consistently shows the deep connection between early writing, communication and language, and physical development. Supporting children's writing is not just about pencil control; it's about nurturing the foundations that make writing meaningful. Self-regulation, listening, and attention skills all play a vital part in this process.

The EEF Early Years Evidence Store highlights approaches that strengthen these early skills and promote high-quality teaching for all learners. As Early Years educators, reflecting on our own practice is key.



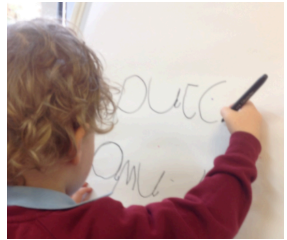
Victoria Day – Assistant Head Teacher and Lead Practitioner for the Thrive Together Stronger Practice Hub.

Victoria is passionate about supporting practitioners to embed evidence-informed practice that bridges the gap between research and real-world application in Early Years classrooms.



As leaders, we might ask our teams to consider:

- *How do our attitudes and setting culture influence children's motivation to write?*
- *Are we providing engaging, authentic opportunities for children to make their mark?*
- *How effectively are we modelling and scaffolding drawing and writing every day?*
- *Do we explicitly teach letter formation through playful, purposeful contexts?*



From Theory to Practice

Children learn that marks carry meaning by seeing adults write and draw with intention. When we label objects or model writing for real reasons, such as adding a child's name to their artwork, or writing a shopping list together, we demonstrate that writing has purpose.

Key practices to try.....

Thinking aloud; say out loud what you are thinking, to model composition, including purpose, audience, and content. *"I'm going to write a birthday card for my mom...what shall I write on the front..."*

Rehearsing; find opportunities to write in play, such as number plate for the bikes, shop sign for the snack area, note for home or shopping list for a cooking activity. Rehearse what you intend to write. As you decide what to write, repeat it a couple of times.

Co-writing; The educator starts off 'holding the pen', gradually passing responsibility to the child. A child might start by adding the letters they are confident with or using their marks to finish the sentence.

Building Professional Knowledge and Confidence

WATCH our Stronger Practice Hub webinar, which provides an overview of the evidence-informed approaches that form the foundations of early literacy. The webinar helps participants reflect on their setting's environment, adult interactions, and how to make early writing truly meaningful for every child.



EXPLORE the recommended Early Literacy approaches through the EEF Evidence Store. <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/early-years/evidence-store/early-literacy>.