# Reception Writing Workshop for Parents 2026





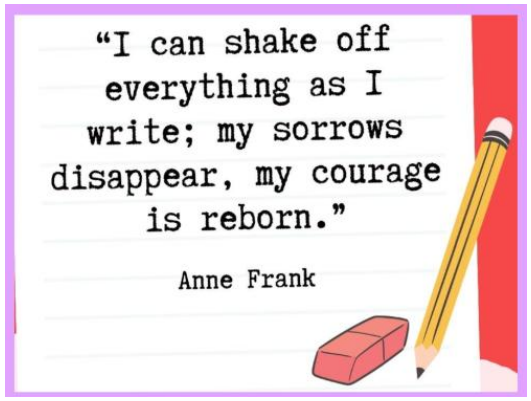
# Aims

- How we teach writing in Reception.
- How to help your child at home.





# Writing




"If you want to change the world, pick up your pen and write."

Martin Luther

"The best way to become acquainted with a subject is to write about it."

Benjamin Disraeli

"You can make anything by writing."

C.S. Lewis

Why writing still has a vital role in our lives.

# Writing

**Why writing is essential to success.**

- It is a fundamental skill for success in school, life and employment.
- It is an engine for accessing subjects across the curriculum.
- It is a predictor for future academic achievement and earnings.
- Strong writing skills are vital for processing information and embedding learning into long-term memory.
- It supports well-being and self-expression.
- Writing enhances reading comprehension.
- Strong writing skills promote social mobility.

# Writing - ELG

This is what we are aiming for at the end of the Reception year.

## Fine Motor Skills

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases.

## Writing

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters.
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

# Components of Writing

The reason why writing is such a complex skill is because it involves multiple elements.

Transcription: spelling and handwriting.

Pupils are taught to write fluently and legibly so that transcription becomes automatic, freeing up mental capacity for creative tasks.

Composition

This focuses on articulating and structuring ideas into speech and writing. It requires pupils to develop a wide knowledge of **vocabulary** and **grammar**, alongside an awareness of **audience, purpose, and context**.

# Writing

Beyond the two main components of transcription and composition are:

**Writing process skills**

Pupils must be taught the essential stages of producing a text: **planning**, **drafting**, **evaluating**, and **editing** their work.

**Spoken Language**

Oral composition is viewed as a vital precursor to written work, especially in the early years. Pupils are encouraged to "say out loud" what they intend to write before putting pen to paper.

**Sentence Mastery**

A key component of the curriculum is the explicit teaching of **sentence construction**, which helps pupils control their writing and convey meaning effectively.

# Transcription

**Lacking fine motor skills is not "fine" in schools!**

*'A survey conducted in the UK (by YouGov for art-K) found that **more than three-quarters of primary teachers** reported a deterioration in pupils' basic fine motor skills over the past five years.'*

*https://www.nsead.org/news/newsroom/declining-fine-motor-skills 13th May 2025*

We need to get the process sped up for those not ready as they come to us already behind!

# Transcription

- Fine motor skills need to be developed to provide the foundations for holding a pencil for drawing, mark-making and writing when children are developmentally ready.

- Children need to develop their ‘funky fingers!’



# Transcription

## What do the children need to write?

- ✓ Sense of balance and proprioception - *(is the sense that lets us perceive the location, movement, and action of parts of the body. It encompasses a complex of sensations, including perception of joint position and movement, muscle force, and effort.)*
- ✓ Low load control (simply) is your shoulders ability to support your arm and hand as you write.
- ✓ Hand/eye coordination

# Transcription

## Pivot and Grip!

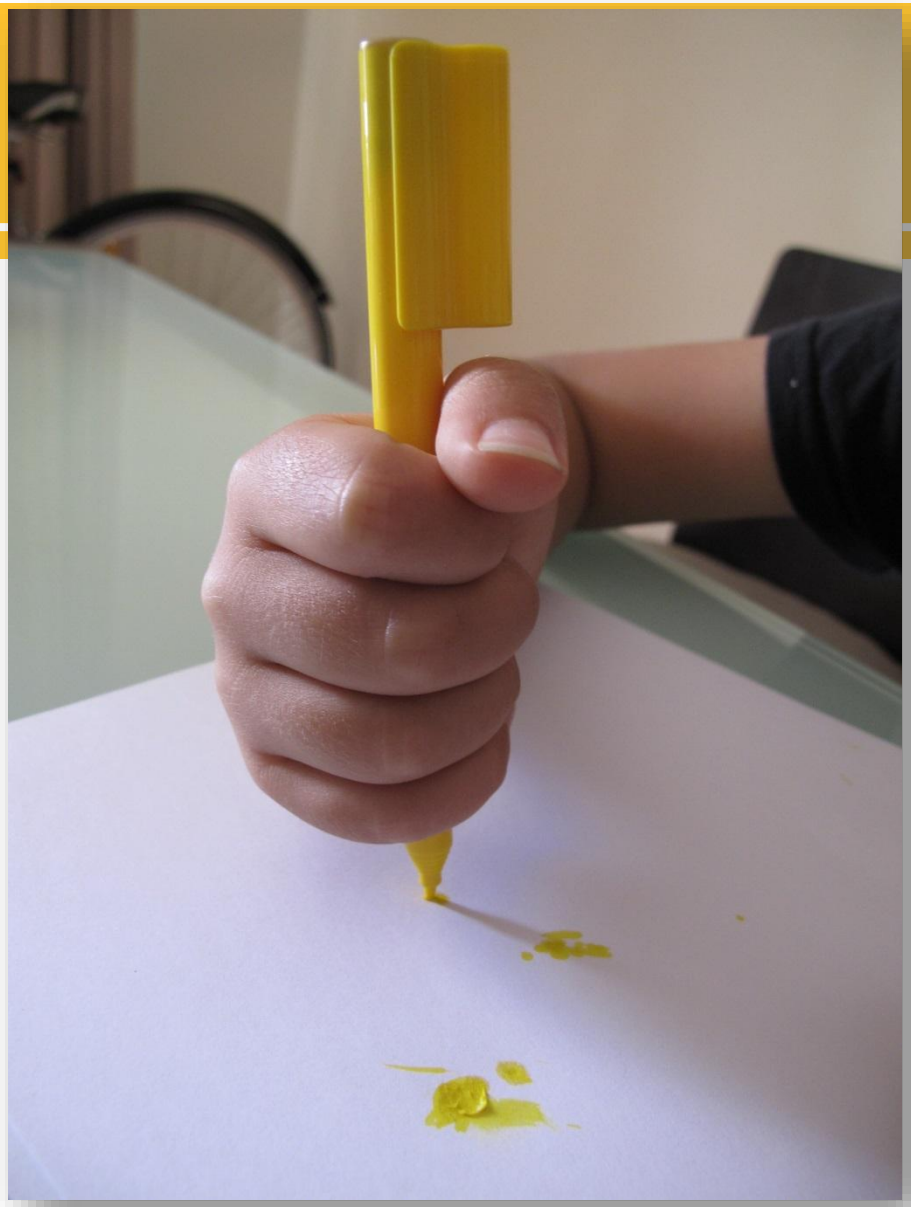
**'Work their bendy bits biggest to smallest!'**

- Shoulder Pivot
- Elbow Pivot
- Wrist Pivot

# Transcription



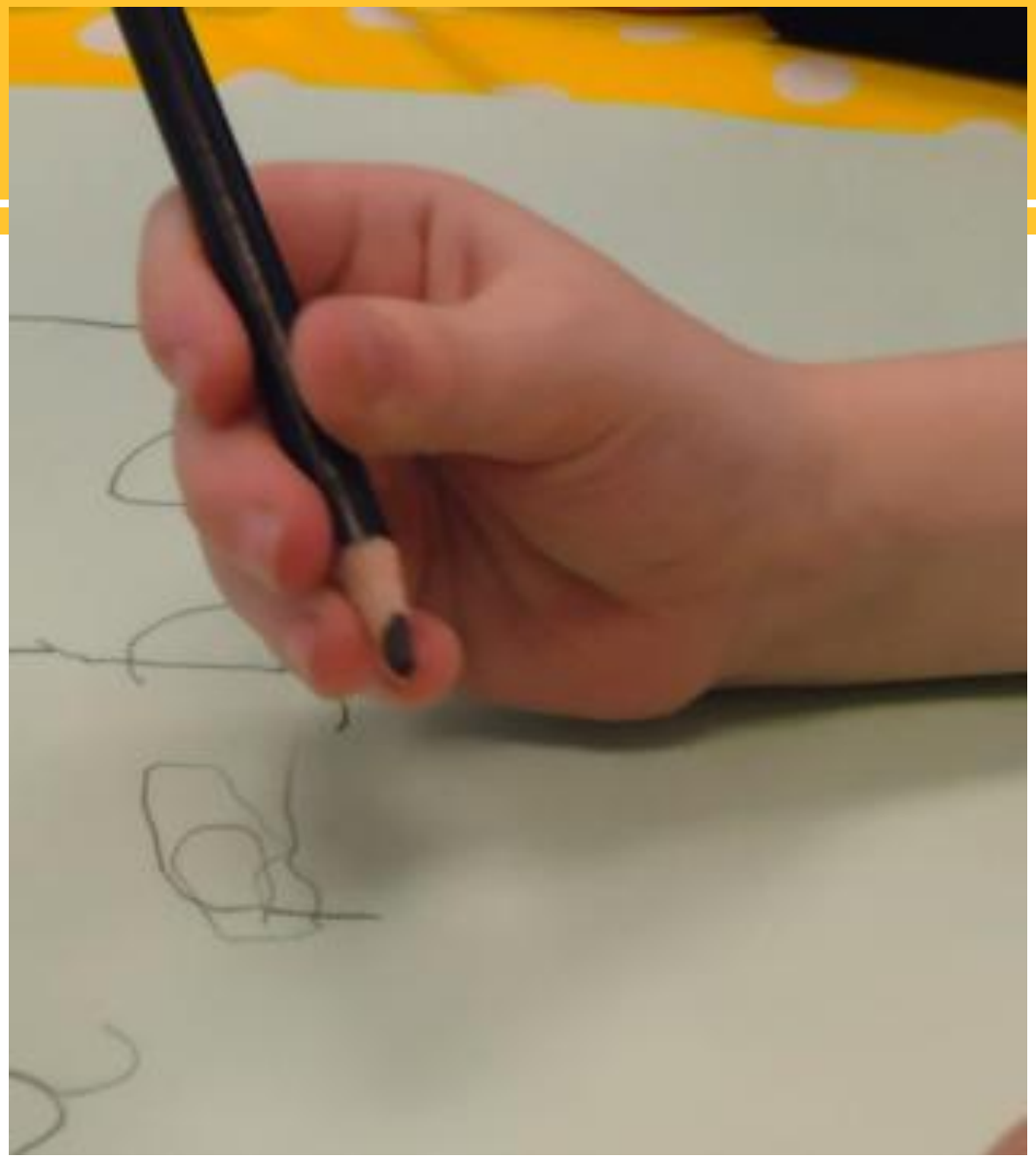

As you write your hand should be gliding (swan like!). It is your shoulder and upper arm that are supporting you in achieving this.



Palmer Supinate Grip (Palm or palmer)



Digital Pronate Grasp



Static Tripod Grip
or Expanded Tripod






Inverted Tripod Grips




Triangulation Grip or Tripod.

# Funky Fingers

- Gross motor and fine motor skills are pre-requisites for writing.
- Children need strength in their core, shoulder, arm and wrist muscles.
- They need strength in their hands and fingers.
- In Reception, all children have a daily Funky Fingers session where we practise these skills.



# Oracy

## Oral Composition

Oracy – the ability to communicate effectively through spoken language- is the essential bedrock of writing development.

Pupils must be able to express ideas through speech before they can effectively translate them into written form.

By discussing ideas, vocabulary, and sentence structures aloud, pupils reduce the mental "load" when they eventually sit down to write.

Pupils say their intended sentences out loud before committing them to paper. This helps them test ideas, experiment with language, and refine sentence structure in real-time.

Oracy allows pupils to acquire and practice the specific vocabulary and grammatical structures required for different subjects, which then informs the complexity of their written work.

# Oracy – what we are aiming for.

## Communication and Language

### Listening, Attention and Understanding

- Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions.
- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding.
- Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

### Speaking

- Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary.
- Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate.
- Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

# Oracy – how we teach it.

If children cannot say it, then they will not be able to write it.

Opportunities for speaking and listening are woven into all areas of our curriculum. Play and collaborative learning is one of the best places for this.

Adults modelling high quality language structures and vocabulary.

Sentence stems – this means that we give children the beginning of a sentence that they need to complete eg. I think that..

Exposure to and modelling of vocabulary.

Signs and visuals to support oral rehearsal eg. Awesome Authors and Colourful Semantics.

# Handwriting

To ensure handwriting fluency later on, it is vital that children form their letters correctly. This means that they need to start the letter in the correct place and they need to move their pencil in the right direction.

Handwriting is taught in addition to phonics and practised daily – usually during our morning soft starts before the register.

Each child will practise a letter 1:1 with an adult each week.

Curly letter family: c,a,d,g,o,q,e,s,f

Long letter family: l, i, t, j, u, y

Bouncy letter family: m, n, r, b, p, h

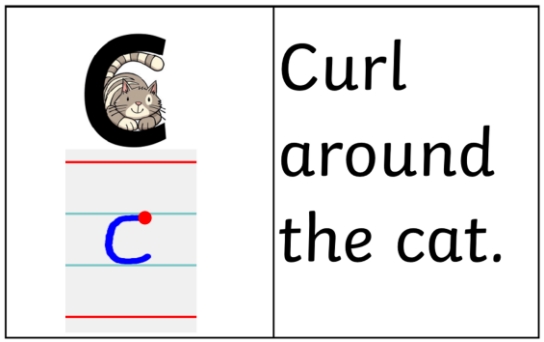
Zig-zag letter family: v, w, x, z, k

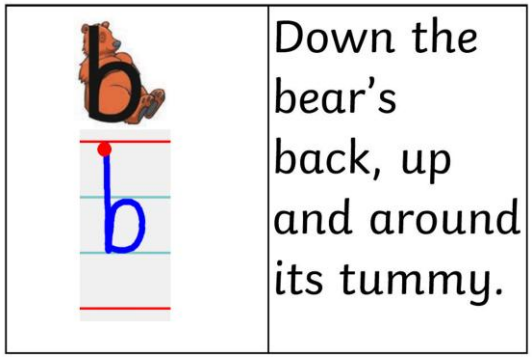
Little Wandle Handwriting

Cannon Lane Primary School

# Handwriting

Mnemonics for each letter, support children to remember the correct formation.




It is vital that children practise the correct formation of the letter whilst saying the mnemonic aloud.

Handwriting can be practised with a variety of tools and on different surfaces not just pencils. Writing on a vertical surface or lying on their tummies to write is very beneficial for developing their gross motor skills.

# Spelling

- Learning to spell tricky words will support children in writing more fluently. More brain space will be freed up to concentrate on other areas of writing such as vocabulary choices.

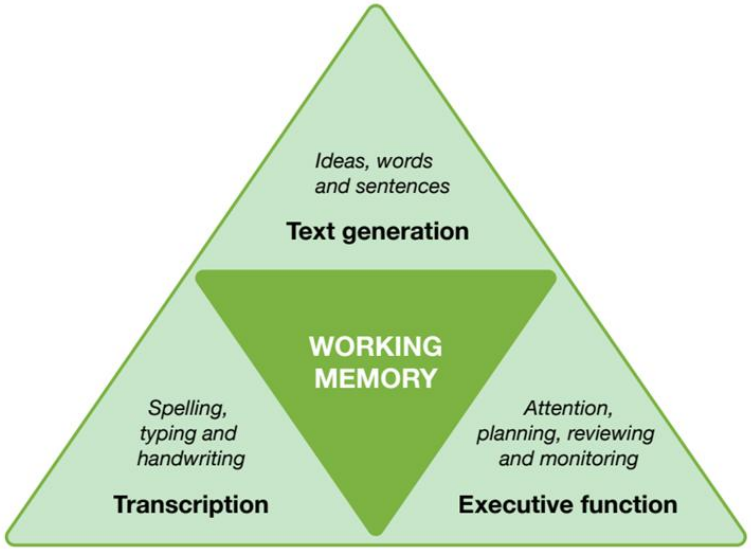
- We teach children to ‘sound out’ new words. We are looking for them to apply the phonics that they have learned.

- When you look at your child’s books, you will notice that we do not correct all spellings. Our priority is the words and spelling rules that children have learned so far and whether they have spelled phonetically, using the graphemes that they have been taught.

# Sentence Mastery

- Mastery of sentence structures will enable children to have a better understanding of where to use finger spaces and punctuation.
- Enabling them to become more fluent in the generation of ideas, words and sentences, will free-up working memory for executive function (attention, planning, reviewing and monitoring).

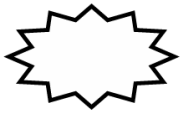
**Figure 6: Based on 'The Simple View of Writing' developed by Berninger et al.[40]**



# Colourful Semantics

**Colourful Semantics**

**The colours and symbols below are used flexibly to support the teaching of writing from Reception to Year 6.**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Who? (subject)** |  | What **like? (adjective)** |  |
| **(What) Doing? (verb)** |  | **When? (time adverbials)** |  |
| To **What? (object)** |  | **Whose? (possessive pronouns)** |  |
| **Where?** |  | **How? (adverb)** |  |
| Who **to?** |  | **Why? (cause and effect) eg. Because** |  |
| **Co-ordinating conjunctions eg. and** |  | **Auxiliary Verbs eg. She is walking.** |  |

# Writing

Oral Composition






hens
chickens
Penny
Peanut
she
they




sitting
resting
laying

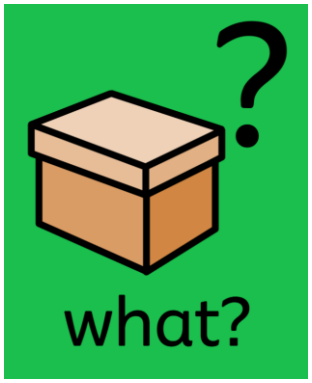
# Writing

Oral Composition
Step 1: vocabulary gathering





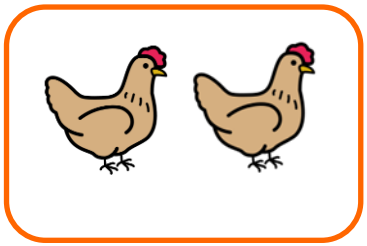


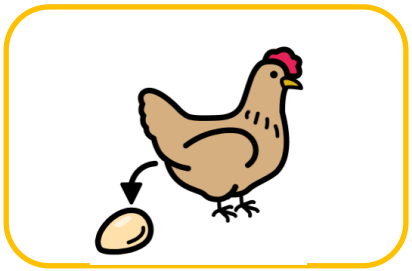


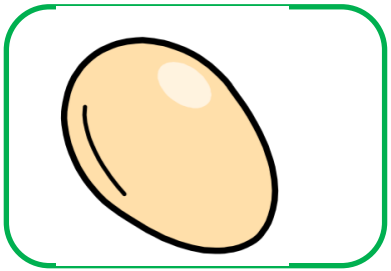

The hens

are laying

an egg







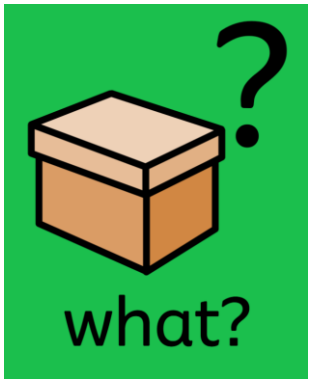
# Writing

Oral Composition
Step 2: oral sentence composition





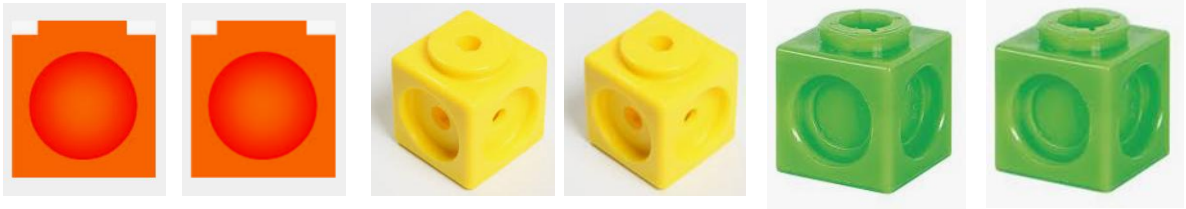





The hens

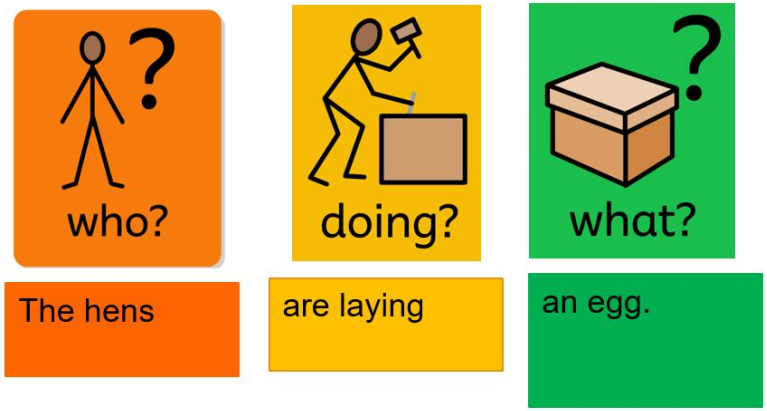
are laying

an egg.

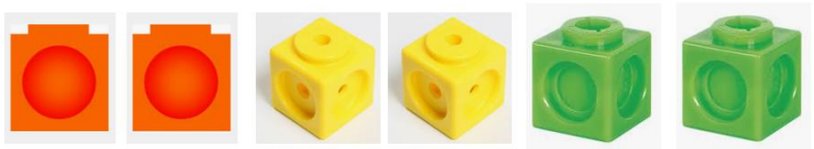


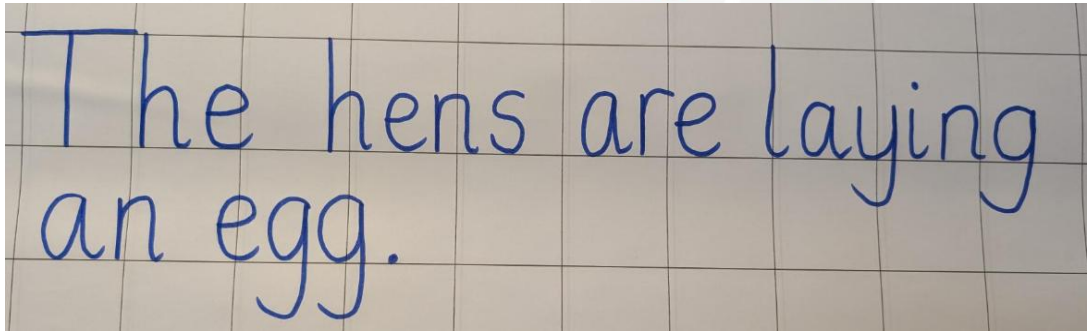
# Writing

Oral Composition
Step 2: oral sentence composition
Step 3: sentence transcription




One cube for each word





# Writing

## Writing Guide for Parents

1. Talk to my adult about the topic I want to write about.
2. Use visuals/pictures to generate a sentence.
3. Say the sentence I want to write MYSELF. Count how many words are in the sentence- add a cube for each word. Try to hold this sentence in my head.
4. I need to sit, hold my paper and have the correct pencil grip.
5. When writing, I have to say each word out loud so I can hear the sounds I need to write.
6. If I don't know the sound I want to write - use the Little Wandle Grapheme Mat to find the sound MYSELF.
7. I need to form my letters correctly.
8. Read each word from the beginning of the sentence every time I write another word MYSELF. Check it makes sense and for any missing words.
9. Remember a finger space for each word - the cubes will help with this.
10. Read back the sentence to my adult.

# How to write with your child!



# Let's Try!





# How to help at home

- Talking!
- Modelling
- READING
- Children want to spend time with us!





