

Play is the key way children learn about themselves, others and the world they live in. It is essential to their learning, development, health, and physical, mental and social well-being – and it's FUN! Play provides the building blocks to be ready for school.



Mark Making

Making marks with crayons, chalk or other materials is the beginning of written communication. It is a first step in developing hand skills to enable this to occur. As your baby grows they will love working out that the colourful chunky crayon leaves a mark on paper.

Did you know?

Babies often first realise they can make a mark with food! This first step is as important a milestone as walking.

Add language

Copying your child's actions and sounds when they make a mark can become a fun turn-taking game. Taking turns is the start of having conversations! It also shows your baby that what they are doing is important.

Label your own simple 'marks' e.g. 'Dot, dot, line, line', 'Look – a circle', 'It's a face'. This helps your baby start to make early connections between spoken language and written symbols.

Other development

As your baby figures out what crayons can do they learn about cause and effect.

Using chunky chalk or crayons rather than fine pencils is important in helping your baby's early grasp.



At first your baby will just hold and explore the crayon and perhaps put it in their mouth so make sure it is non-toxic! The first mark may be accidental. By showing an interest in the mark and what the crayon can do will encourage your baby to repeat this action.

Variations

Using fingers to draw in bath foam, bubbles or perhaps mist on the bathroom mirror can all be fun ways to try out making a mark!

Safety

Use non-toxic materials and supervise your baby so mark making stays where you want it to!

- Playgroup WA has a treasure trove of play activities for babies, toddlers and 3-5 year olds, for home and playgroup. These play activities cover a balanced diet of play across sensory, movement, language and thinking skill areas.

You can find them at www.playgroupwa.com.au/playideas or visit www.facebook.com/playgroupwa

