

Practitioners used favourite books to help plan different role-play areas that stimulated children's desire to write	Practitioner behaviour that supports children in becoming writers
<p>Having noted that boys in the setting were reluctant to write, the practitioner decided to evaluate existing practice and develop strategies for engaging boys in writing in the role-play area.</p> <p>In recognition of the children's current interests, two role-play areas were set up, with resources to encourage writing. The teacher observed boys in the role-play areas, and noted their understanding of the purposes and forms of writing.</p> <p>A post office role-play area was established in response to the children's interest in Janet and Allan Ahlberg's book <i>The Jolly Postman</i>, a visit from the school postman to the class and a visit to the local post office. The post office role-play area was saturated with print forms and provided the children with models of print – for example, post office forms, posters advertising goods at the post office, signs and labels. Four boys showed a considerable interest in the post office and started to 'make marks'.</p> <p>For example, one boy wrote on a post office form while talking to another child who was taking on the role of customer. On another occasion the child showed two other boys his name, written in a diary left within the post office. Another boy also wrote his name within the post office role-play.</p> <p>The practitioner also developed a 'Caterpillar Café' as part of an interest the children had in the story of <i>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</i> by Eric Carle. She discovered that one boy, in role as the café assistant, often took orders from customers, writing up the order as a list on a notepad. He demonstrated that he understood the form, the context, the purpose and the nature of his written marks.</p>	<p>Communicating that the child's interests are important.</p> <p>Building on children's interests, making the links between reading and writing.</p> <p>Taking opportunities to draw children's attention to the different forms and conventions of print.</p> <p>Providing meaningful opportunities that encourage writing.</p> <p>Encouraging children to use writing as a way of communicating with others.</p> <p>Using books to stimulate oral language and promote dialogue around texts.</p> <p>Creating opportunities for children to apply their developing skills.</p> <p>Providing good models of writing and opportunities to create texts in the role-play area.</p>
<p>What does the practitioner do to support boys' writing, and what is the impact?</p> <p>Boys began to show a keen interest in functional forms of writing, and took a clear role within the role-play areas as writers when the inclusion of literacy props in the areas supported their interest in writing.</p>	<p>The practitioner used books to develop children's interests further – making clear links between reading and writing. Through the original stimulus of two favourite stories, she introduced the children to a range of text types that included labels, lists and orders. She encouraged the children to begin to think about writing as a way of communicating, giving them purposeful opportunities to do this.</p>