

Early Mark Making and Writing Development Project Autumn 2022



Where it started

Mark making is an integral part of children's learning and development. However, we have acknowledged that for some of our children mark making is not always an interest in which they engage with. We noticed the mark making area was less popular than other areas within the nursery and this was evident when looking at the data and it was especially true for boys. In order to foster children's willingness and desire to make marks a writing wall was introduced inside and also outside. By providing the children this new resource and the opportunity to stand on a raised platform we saw an instant interest in using the area and more boys became engaged in making marks, writing and drawing. Outdoors ladders were introduced to allow children to work at a height where they could develop their strength and co-ordination, as it is recognised that core strength and the development of children's shoulders, elbows and wrists are necessary before children develop their fingers to be able to write letters.

This project also includes other areas children were interested in using to make marks and write including making marks in other ways such as on a larger scale outdoors and also documents activities such as 'dough disco' that assists with the development of fine motor skills and finger dexterity.

Links to the EYFS

Physical Development- Fine Motor Skills

Develop manipulation and control.

Explore different materials and tools.

Use one-handed tools and equipment, for example, making snips in paper with scissors.

Use a comfortable grip with good control when holding pens and pencils.

Show a preference for a dominant hand.

Develop their small motor skills so that they can use a range of tools competently, safely and confidently.

Suggested tools: pencils for drawing and writing, paintbrushes, scissors, knives, forks and spoons.

Develop the foundations of a handwriting style which is fast, accurate and efficient.

Literacy- Writing

Notice some print, such as the first letter of their name, a bus or door number, or a familiar logo.

Enjoy drawing freely.

Add some marks to their drawings, which they give meaning to.

For example: "That says mummy."

Make marks on their picture to stand for their name.

Use some of their print and letter knowledge in their early writing.

For example: writing a pretend shopping list that starts at the top of the page; write 'm' for mummy.

Write some or all of their name.

Write some letters accurately.

Form lower-case and capital letters correctly.

Expressive Arts and Design- Creating with Materials

Express ideas and feelings through making marks, and sometimes give a meaning to the marks they make

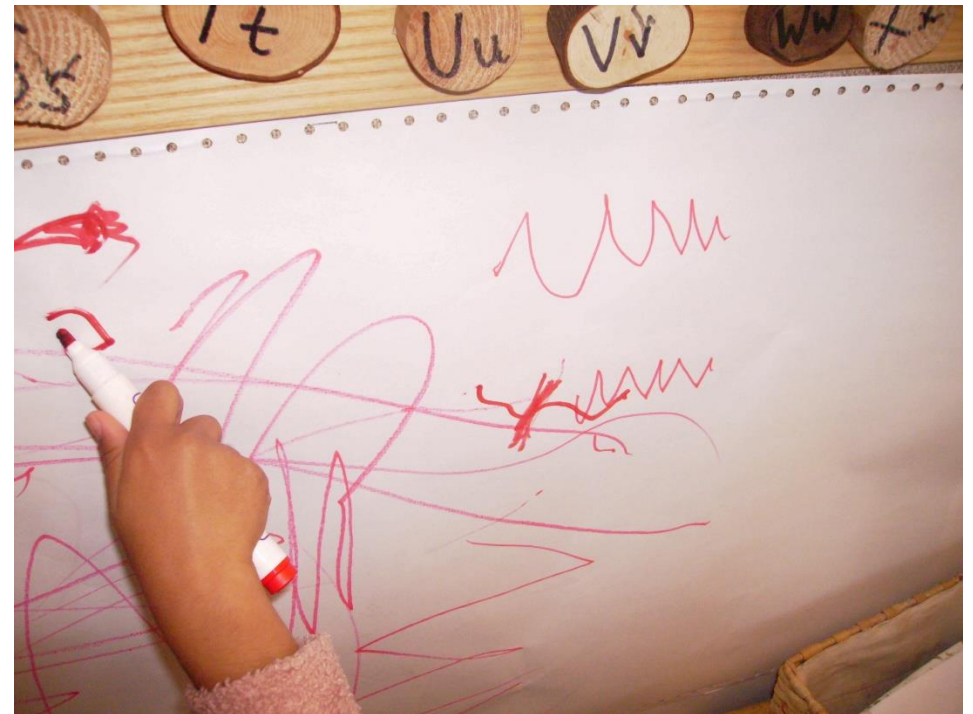
Draw with increasing complexity and detail, such as representing a face with a circle and including details.



Our new writing walls indoors and out.

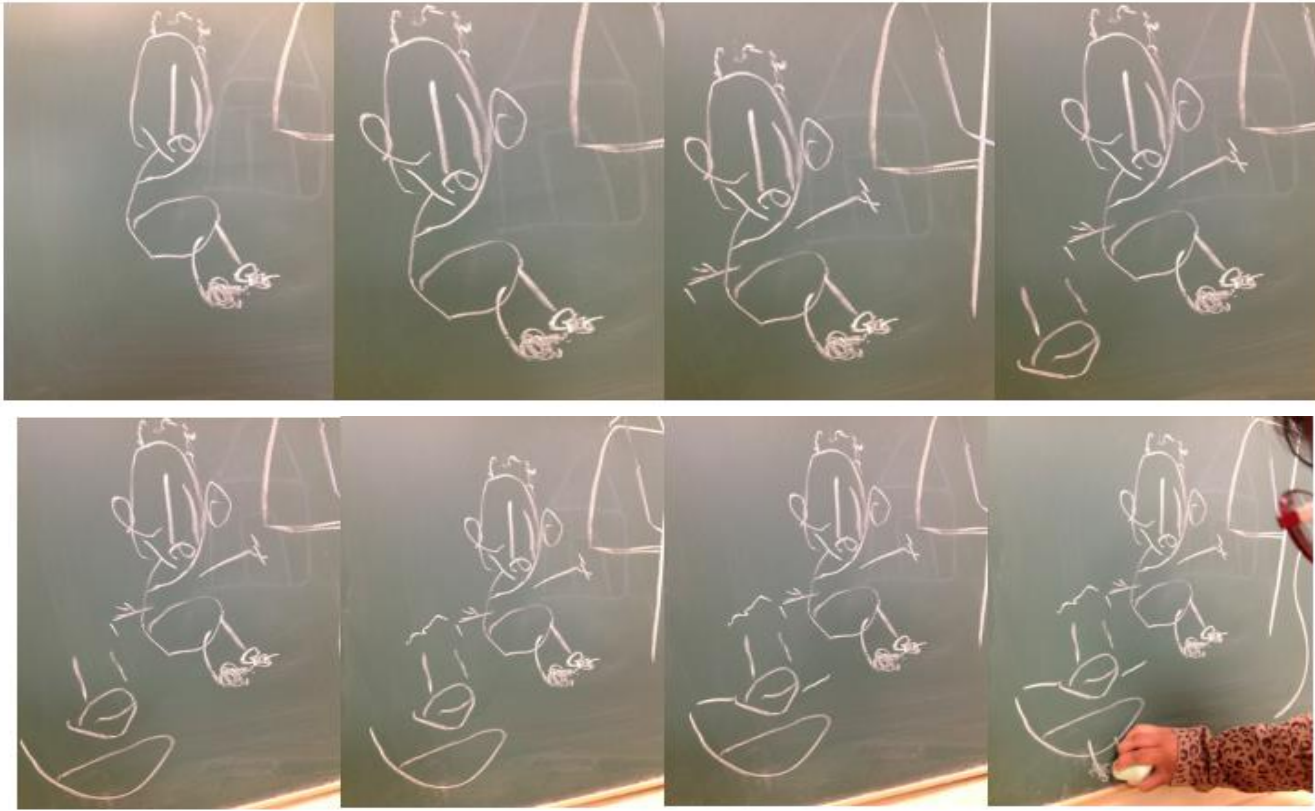


K holds a pen in her right hand, in a whole hand grasp. As she forms zig zag lines she gives her marks meaning commenting **“This says my short day”**.





R drew some lines and circles at the top of the paper and commented “I can’t see my name” as she points to the alphabet at the top.

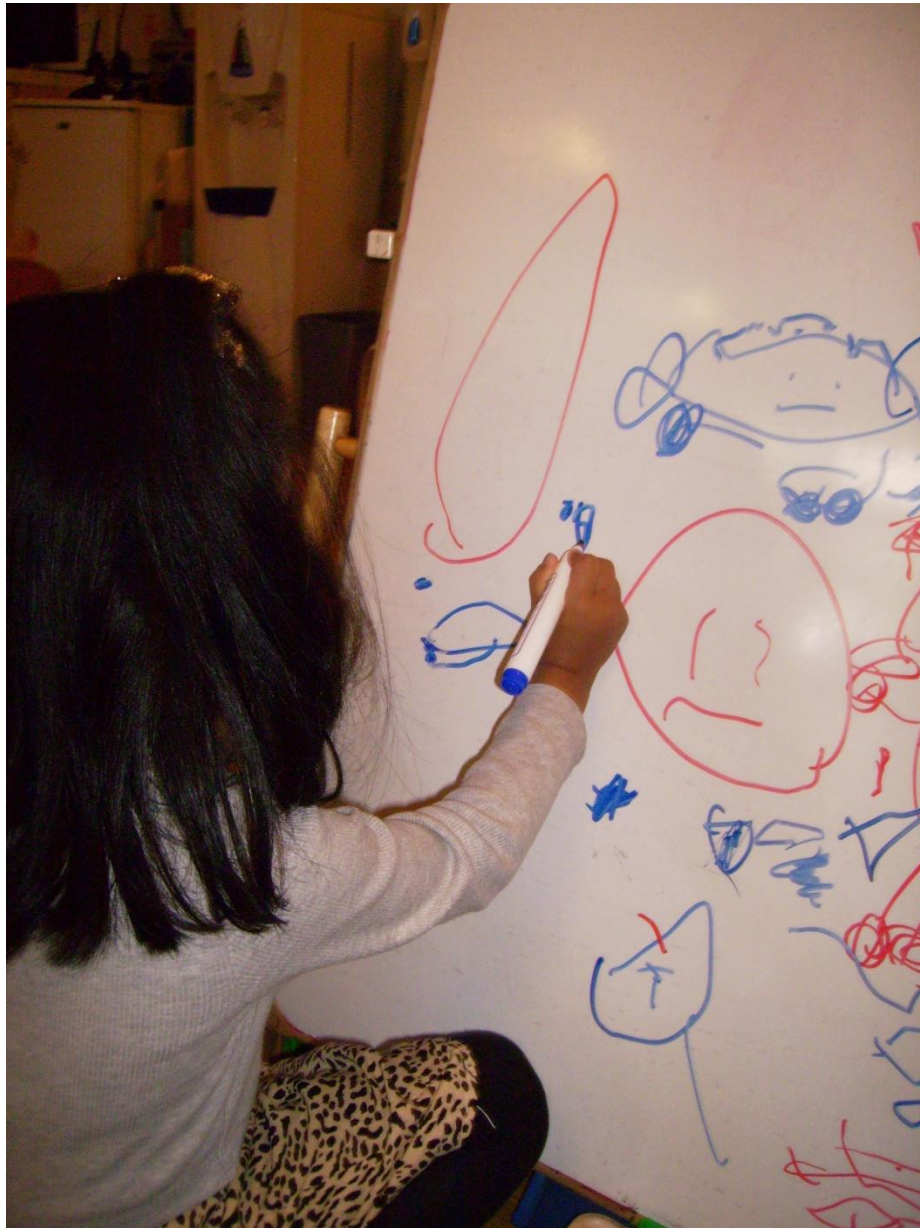


Lou our artist in residence worked alongside A at the chalk board. She had a drawing conversation that involved Lou suggesting things she might like to add to her drawing. Lou asked her if it was okay for her to photograph each time she added something and this became very much part of the conversation as she excitedly clenched and unclenched her hands as she waited for Lou to take a picture and then show it to her. In the first photograph Lou suggested “feet, any hair, ears, any arms? Lou commented in her blog that she always hoped that if she didn’t want to draw them she would feel able to not do so and express that. Hands? Often a stumbling block as we all know hands are notoriously difficult to draw whatever stage of art making you are at!

Then as can be seen on the far right she started to draw without prompts and Lou commented “It was a joy and a privilege to have been part of and nothing I could have planned for”.



The following week A was observed revisiting drawing figures spending a long period of time covering the whole of the white board with people. She also explored wiggly lines and different sized circles until the whole of the board was covered. Sometimes she held the pen in her right hand with a tripod grip and other times she held the pen with both hands. A continued to draw people for several weeks and Lou commented about this development once again in her blog about A drawing while she used the chalk board.



A N observed A drawing lots of different figures and indicated to the adult that she would like a turn. A held the pen in her right hand with an effective tripod grip and made lots of small circles.



A used the writing boards with the small wooden pens to carefully follow the zig zag lines. He held the wooden pencil, confidently between his finger and thumb using a tripod grip.



N held the chalk in his left hand and made lots of circular movement.

As the weeks have passed and the writing wall has been available as part of the basic provision we have noticed a change in the way the children are recording on the wall. It appears that the children are now attempting to write letters from their name and are really focusing on what they want to write.





Z climbed the ladders and concentrated on making marks on the large black board.





Lots of the children wanted to write on the chalkboard, they carefully climbed up the ladders and made marks at the top of the ladder.





Several children engaged with mark making on a large scale outside.

A discovered she could use a sweeping brush to stipple the paint and continued to make the pattern across the paper.

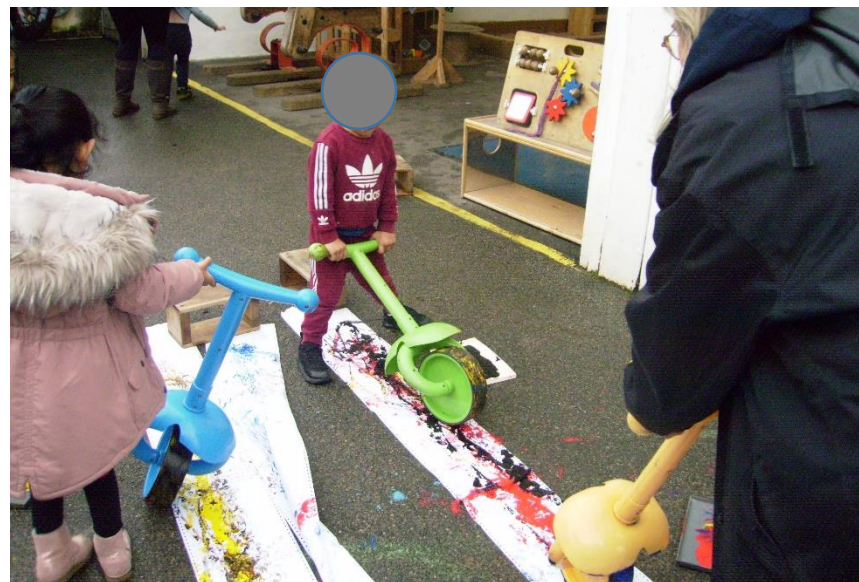


We made marks in the puddles.





Whilst painting in the rain we found objects we could use to make marks on.



We used the big wheelies and paint to make tracks outdoors.



The children have been taking part in 'dough disco' activities, where they have been manipulating play dough in time to music and performing different actions such as prodding, squeezing, flattening the dough, rolling it into a balls and sausage shapes.

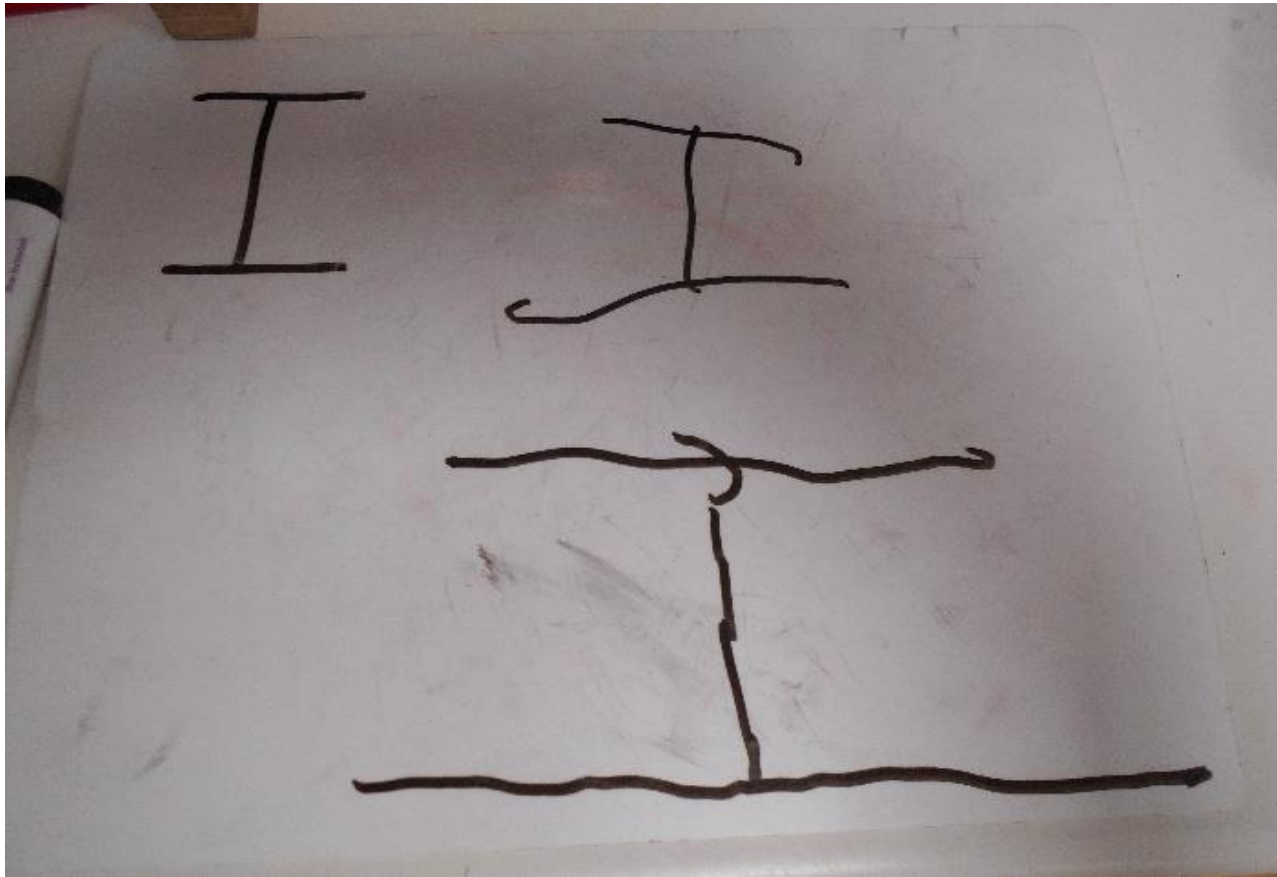




Here R is prodding the dough with her index finger in time to the music.

B and K are rolling a ball.





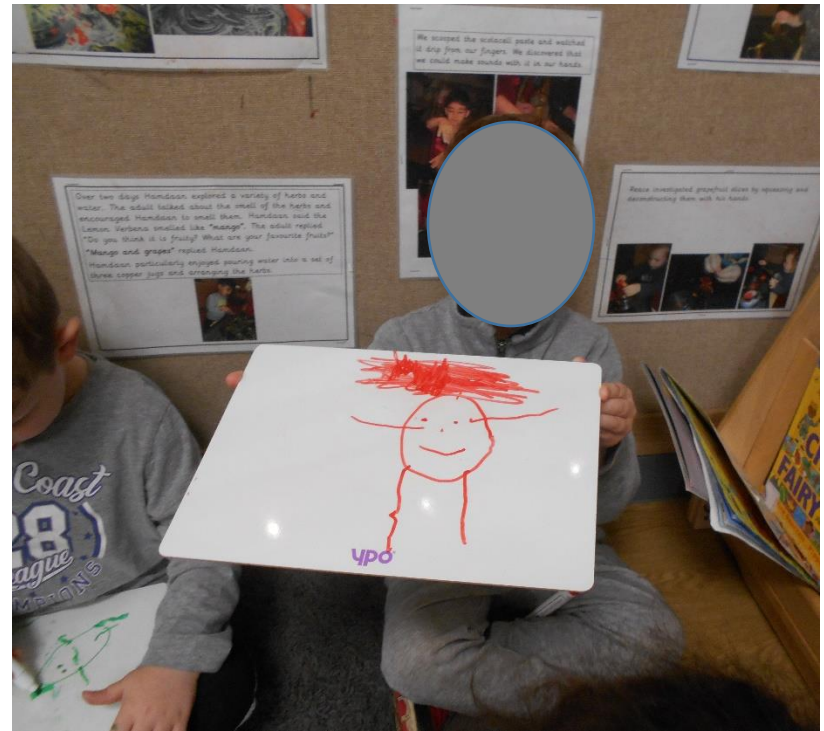
I showed interest in writing the first letter of her name. The adult modelled how to form the letter and she was then able to write it independently and say the sound.

During group time we read the story 'So Much' and talked about the characters from the story. The children were asked to think of a character and then draw it on a whiteboard.



M **“Gran and Nanny” “That’s their tummy button”.**

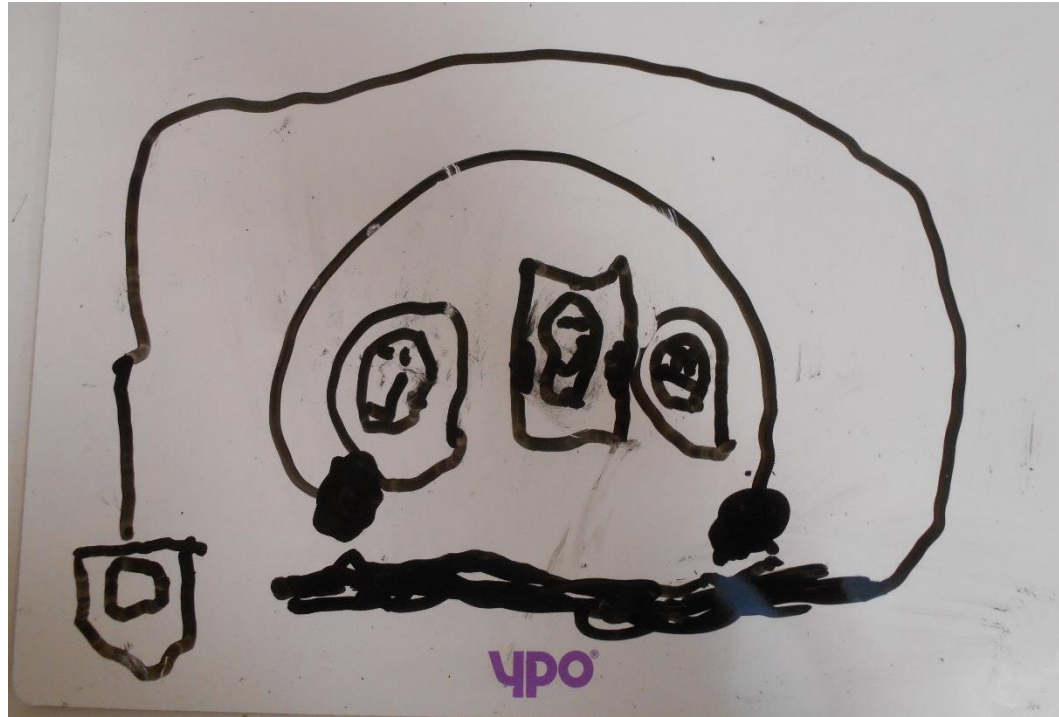
E named all the characters in the story.



Over two days Handaan explored a variety of herbs and water. The adult talked about the smell of the herbs and encouraged Handaan to smell them. Handaan said the Lebanese herb was called like "mango". The adult replied: "Do you think it is fruity? What are your favourite fruits?" "Mango and grapes" replied Handaan. Handaan particularly enjoyed pouring water into a set of three copper jugs and squeezing the herbs.

He stamped the natural paste and washed it dry from our fingers. He discovered that we could make sounds with it in our hands.

Reza investigated graphical signs by opening and demonstrating them with his hands.



H is independently drawing on the whiteboard after doing some phonics with Lauren.

"Wow H tell me about your picture?"

"That's me, Daddy and Iby in the black BMW".

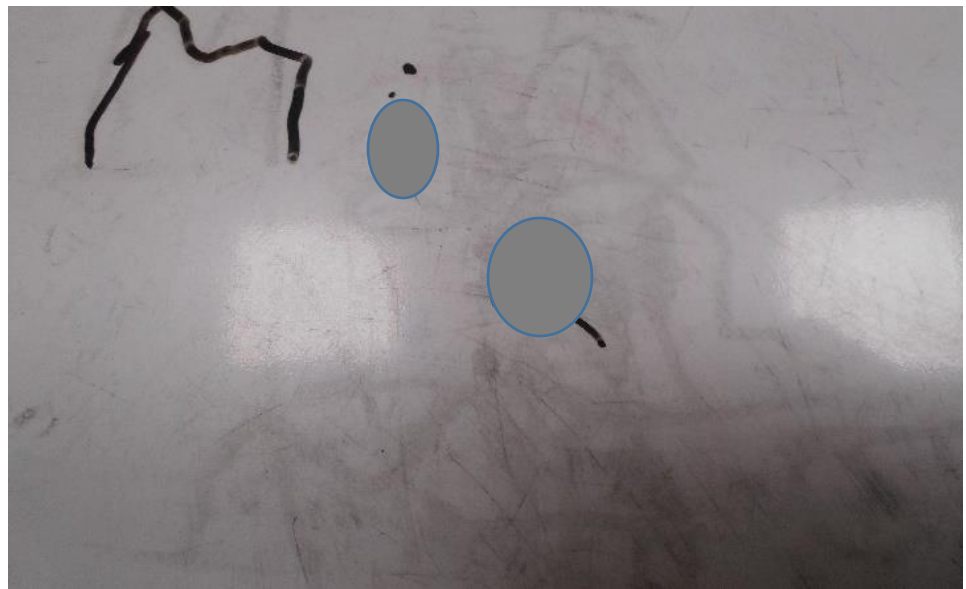
I point to the picture and ask "What are these parts here?"

"That's the house and the road driving all the way to the house".

A came to the mark making table and noticed Iliana writing the first letter of her name. They both then showed interest and asked if they could join in.

Archie used his right hand to write the letter 'A'.

M used her left hand to write the letters of her name using her picture card to support her.





B and K worked in a small group with several other children. All the children had decided to write and mark marks lying down.

B held the pen with a whole hand grip and K held the pen in a right hand with a tripod grip. The both filled their paper with lots of lines, zig zags and circles.





J held her pen in her right hand with a tripod grip and wrote lots of letters that she knew from memory.