

## Birth to Fives Resources

Writing Belt and Early Scribble Boxes, Curious Fox Company  
MJH Educational



I delighted in finding a resource that engaged the children and provided them with opportunities to develop their mark-making – practitioner

**T**he Writing Belt and Early Scribble Role Play Boxes have been designed to encourage very young children to use mark-making and writing during their play, both in early years settings and at home.

The Curious Fox Company developed the products to provide children with purpose and encouragement to make their mark and become confident writers. Since play is the key way in which children learn to develop mark-making and early writing skills as a means of communication, the company is convinced that encouraging positive attitudes as early as possible helps children understand why learning to write is important.

Many of the resources available to support role play focus on dressing up and on the specific items needed for cooking, gardening, shopping or acting the part of a postman, policeman or pirate. The belts and boxes function as an additional resource to these, that specifically encourage mark-making in an imaginative way.

The belts are based on the idea of a

workman's tool belt and are intended to ensure children have the tools for writing close to hand while exploring and investigating as part of role-play activities. They come in four colours – khaki and desert, camouflage, forest green and spotty – and are made of tough and washable material to be used in the outdoors.

A pen on a spiral spring, a notepad on a recycled circuit board and a toy mobile phone with buttons to press are all fixed onto the belts for children to use whenever they wish.

Each belt comes with a leaflet to support adults, which emphasises the importance of writing for a purpose and embedding written communication in play. The leaflet also explains the importance of signs, lists and other types of writing, including number formation. It provides suggestions for use, opportunities for carrying out mark-making and writing within role play, and ideas for further activities.

The role play boxes are A5 size and are based on six different themes or characters, including a café, a gardener and a pirate.

Each one contains a small selection of items designed to pique children's interest, from pens, pencils and notebooks to more specific items that encourage a purpose for writing, such as pirate gold for counting, bottles to put messages in, seeds that need labelling, signs to be written and order pads for noting requests. Maps mark the children's journey, and magnifying glasses can be used to spot minibests.

The boxes also include fun-shaped memo pads and pens that light up to act as an exciting incentive to encourage children to make their mark.

### FINALIST

**Kidunk Playsuits**, Kidunk

### CRITERION

Open to early years resources and equipment that support children's learning, development and enjoyment in the Early Years Foundation Stage or equivalent