

Why start your own Children's Mathematics Network Group?

Children's mathematical graphics are related to their earliest drawings and to other symbolic languages such as writing and arise from the meanings children make in their play. This 'family' of early marks and visual representations is highly significant for children's development, yet often goes unrecognized by adults. [John Matthews](#) argues that:

'... developmentally these beginnings are of the most profound importance. They form the child's introduction to semiotic systems without which her life in the symbol rich society of humans will be dangerous if not impossible...Children's earliest drawing is generated spontaneously and is interrelated with many other modes of expression and representation. Although self-initiated and driven along by the child, it requires adult companions who are able to identify the operant modes of representation employed by the child. Such adults are therefore in a better position to supply intellectual and emotional support for their development', (Matthews in the Forward, Carruthers and Worthington, 2006, pp xv – xvi).

By developing your professional knowledge and understanding within *your own* CMN Group, as 'adult companions' **you will be providing the best of support for young children's developing understanding of early 'written' mathematics.**

Setting up your Network Group

Suggestions for starting:

- ✚ **Contact other teachers, early years practitioners and parents** you think would be interested (small groups of between three to eight people seem to work well, but it could be more if there are several in one setting or school). Members of your group might work in the same Early Years setting or school; be individuals across several settings and schools in your area or be a group of interested teachers
- ✚ Many people find that an **effective starting point for a group** is to look at examples of children's drawings, emergent writing or their own mathematical marks and use some of these for discussion. Your focus might also begin with members' interest in maths, play, emergent writing, schemas, children's thinking, communication or multi-modality (i.e. children's play and the meanings they make)
- ✚ **Who's 'in charge'?** Because we emphasize that the **Children's Mathematics Network** is a *grassroots network* 'with children and their teachers / practitioners at its heart', we feel strongly that groups should be democratic with everyone equally involved, and no-one officially 'in charge'. The idea is to share and learn *together*, rather than to be led or told what to do. This sort of collaborative, 'co-construction' of understanding is a way of experiencing the sort of practice you will want to model with the children in your setting or school.
- ✚ **Where will you meet as a group?** Some groups arrange to meet in each others' homes, whilst others take it in turn to meet in their setting or school

- ✚ **What will it cost?** There are no costs to set up and run a CMN group (beyond provision of coffee and biscuits!). We encourage group members to join the **Children's Mathematics Network** - and membership is currently free
- ✚ **Please register with us** – this helps us to see where local groups are established. Over time we expect that a network of CMN groups will grow across countries and continents!

REGISTRATION

After your first meeting, *please provide:*

- **Details of your group's location**, (town, county/state, country)
- **Two contact names** for your group, with email, phone numbers and postal addresses so that we can keep in touch with you (on rare occasions!)
- **Occasional updates** (annually is fine) - about what your group is involved in, or what you've been doing
- We also encourage CM Network *group* members to join the **Children's Mathematics Network** (there is no charge for this)

We will provide:

- A **Welcome Pack** for your group from the Children's Mathematics Network
- Copies of our book, *Children's Mathematics: Making Marks, Making Meaning* at a discounted price
- Email support for your group
- A dedicated page on the website for you group's use
- Opportunities for you to have some of the children's mathematical graphics from your group's settings and classes included on the website

We look forward to hearing from you!

Maulfry and Elizabeth