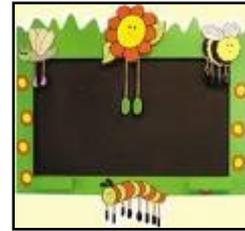


The following activities will help your child develop the fine motor skills needed for writing.

Things to remember:

Upright working surfaces promote fine motor skills. Examples of these are: vertical chalkboards; easels for painting; flannel boards; lite bright; magnet boards (or fridge); windows and mirrors; white boards, etc. Children can also make sticker pictures; do rubber ink-stamping; use re-useable stickers to make pictures; complete puzzles with thick knobs; use magna-doodle and etch-a-sketch as well. The benefits of these include: having the child's wrist positioned to develop good thumb movements; they help develop good fine motor muscles; the child is using the arm and shoulder muscles.



Fine Motor Activities

Moulding and rolling play dough into balls - using the palms of the hands facing each other and with fingers curled slightly towards the palm.

Rolling play dough into tiny balls (peas) using only the finger tips.

Using pegs or toothpicks to make designs in play dough.

Cutting play dough with a plastic knife or with a pizza wheel by holding the implement in a diagonal volar grasp. (pencil grip)

Tearing newspaper into strips and then crumpling them into balls. Use to stuff scarecrow or other art creation.

Scrunching up 1 sheet of newspaper in one hand. This is a super strength builder.

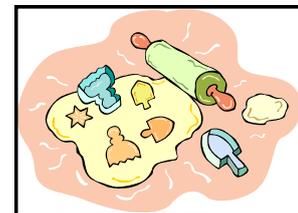
Using a plant sprayer to spray plants, (indoors, outdoors) to spray snow (mix food colouring with water so that the snow can be painted), or melt "monsters". (Draw monster pictures with markers and the colours will run when sprayed.)

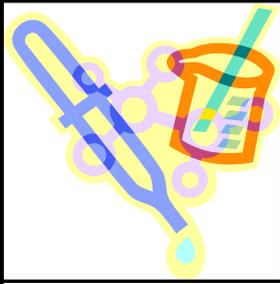
Picking up objects using large tweezers such as those found in the "Bedbugs" game. This can be adapted by picking up Cheerios, small cubes, small marshmallows, pennies, etc., in counting games.

Shaking dice by cupping the hands together, forming an empty air space between the palms.

Using small-sized screwdrivers like those found in a mechano set.

Lacing and sewing activities such as stringing beads, Cheerios, macaroni, etc.





Using eye droppers to "pick up" coloured water for colour mixing or to make artistic designs on paper.

Rolling small balls out of tissue paper, then gluing the balls onto construction paper to form pictures or designs.

Turning over cards, coins, checkers, or buttons, without bringing them to the edge of the table.

Making pictures using stickers or self-sticking paper reinforcements.

Playing games with the "puppet fingers" -the thumb, index, and middle fingers.

Place a variety of forms (eg. blocks, felt, paper, string, yarn, cereal, cotton) on outlines

Match shapes, colour, or pictures to a page and paste them within the outlines

Self-Care Skills

Dressing

Buttoning

Lacing

Tying

Fastening Snaps

Zippering

Carrying

Using a screwdriver

Locking and unlocking a door

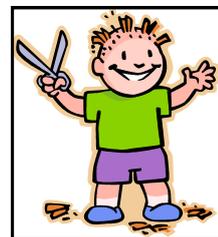
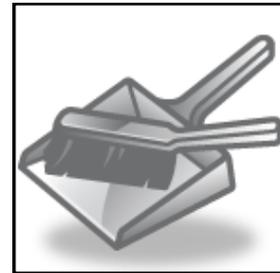
Winding a clock

Opening and closing jars

Rolling out dough or other simple cooking activities

Washing plastic dishes

Sweeping the floor



Scissor Activities

When scissors are held correctly, and when they fit a child's hand well, cutting activities will exercise the very same muscles which are needed to manipulate a pencil in a mature tripod grasp. The correct scissor position is with the thumb and middle finger in the handles of the scissors, the index finger on the outside of the handle to stabilize, with fingers four and five curled into the palm.

Cutting junk mail, particularly the kind of paper used in magazine subscription cards.

Making fringe on the edge of a piece of construction paper.

Cutting play dough or clay with scissors.

Cutting straws or shredded paper.

Use a thick black line to guide cutting the following:

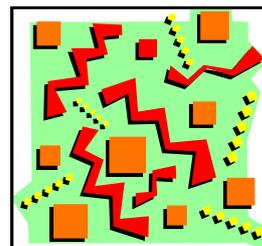
A fringe from a piece of paper

Cut off corners of a piece of paper

Cut along curved lines

Cut lines with a variety of angles

Cut figures with curves and angles



Sensory Activities

The following activities ought to be done frequently to increase postural muscle strength and endurance. These activities also strengthen the child's awareness of his/her hands.

Wheelbarrow walking, crab walking.

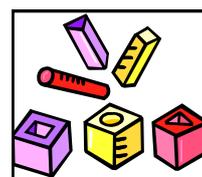
Clapping games (loud/quiet, on knees together, etc.)

Catching (clapping) bubbles between hands.

Pulling and pinching pieces of dough off a dough ball.

Drawing in a tactile medium such as wet sand, salt, rice, or "goop". Make "goop" by adding water to cornflour until you have a mixture similar in consistency to toothpaste. The "drag" of this mixture provides feedback to the muscle and joint receptors, thus facilitating visual motor control.

Picking out small objects like pegs, beads, coins, etc., from a tray of salt, sand, rice, or putty. Try it with eyes closed too. This helps develop sensory awareness in the hands.



Midline Crossing

Establishment of hand dominance is still developing at this point.

The following activities will facilitate midline crossing:

Encourage reaching across the body for materials with each hand. It may be necessary to engage the other hand in an activity to prevent switching hands at midline.

Refrain specifically from discouraging a child from using the left hand for any activity. Allow for the natural development of hand dominance by presenting activities at midline, and allowing the child to choose freely.

Start making the child aware of the left and right sides of his body through spontaneous comments like, "kick the ball with your right leg." Play imitation posture games like "Simon Says" with across the body movements.

When painting at easel, encourage the child to paint a continuous line across the entire paper- also from diagonal to diagonal.

Activities To Develop Handwriting Skills

There are significant prerequisites for printing skills that begin in infancy and continue to emerge through the preschool years. The following activities support and promote fine motor and visual motor development:

Body Stability

The joints of the body need to be stable before the hands can be free to focus on specific skilled fine motor tasks.

Wheelbarrow walking, crab walking, and wall push-ups.

Toys: Orbiter, silly putty, and monkey bars in playgrounds.

Ocular Motor Control

This refers to the ability of the eyes to work together to follow and hold an object in the line of vision as needed.

Use a flashlight against the ceiling. Have the child lie on his/her back or tummy and visually follow the moving light from left to right, to bottom, and diagonally.

Find hidden pictures in books. (There are special books for this.)

Maze activities.

Fine Motor Skills

When a certain amount of body stability has developed, the hands and fingers begin to work on movements of dexterity and isolation as well as different kinds of grasps. Children will develop fine motor skills best when they work on a VERTICAL or near vertical surface as much as possible. In particular, the wrist must be in extension. (Bent back in the direction of the hand)

Attach a large piece of drawing paper to the wall. Have the child use a large marker and try the following exercises to develop visual motor skills: Make an outline of a one at a time. Have the child trace over your line from left to right, or from top to bottom. Trace each figure at least 10 times. Then have the child draw the figure next to your model several times.

Play connect the dots. Again make sure the child's strokes connect dots from left to right, and from top to bottom.

Trace around stencils - the non-dominant hand should hold the stencil flat and stable against the paper, while the dominant hand pushes the pencil firmly against the edge of the stencil. The stencil must be held firmly.

Attach a large piece of felt to the wall, or use a felt board. The child can use felt shapes to make pictures. Magnetic boards can be used the same way.

Have the child work on a chalkboard, using chalk instead of a marker. Do the same kinds of tracing and modelling activities as suggested above.

Paint at an easel. Some of the modelling activities as suggested above can be done at the easel.

Magna Doodle- turn it upside down so that the erasing lever is on the top.

Experiment making vertical, horizontal, and parallel lines.

Eye-hand Coordination

This involves accuracy in placement, direction, and spatial awareness.

Throw bean bags/kooshi balls into a hula hoop placed flat on the floor.

Gradually increase the distance.

Play throw and catch with a ball . Start with a large ball and work toward a smaller ball. (Kooshi balls are easier to catch than a tennis ball.)

Practice hitting bowling pins with a ball. (You can purchase these games or make your own with pop bottles and a small ball.)

Play "Hit the Balloon" with a medium-sized balloon.

