

Fine Motor Control: A Prerequisite for Writing

Fine motor skills are the ability to control the small precise movements with the fingers, wrists and hands. Before a child can reproduce letters and numbers that are legible, this development must take place.

Here are some ideas to encourage the development of fine motor skills:

Activities to develop pencil grip:

- Play dough: pinching, squeezing with thumb and forefinger. Example activity: making various animals from play dough
- Threading: beads, pasta, straws. Example activity: jewellery making
- Picking up small objects: use tweezers and pipettes/eye droppers. Example activity: a race to see how many peas your child can put in a pot
- Finger rhymes and poems: stretching and curling fingers
- Water play: using spray toys, and spray bottles. Suggested activity watering the garden
- Craft activities: glue sticks and paint brushes. Make a collage with lots of fine papers and decorate it with sequins
- Icing cakes: using a plastic dispenser to push and squeeze out the icing
- Strengthening activities: swinging from the climbing frame or grasping to climb and crawl.
- Build with construction toys, for example lego
- Colouring books

What can you do at home to help and encourage your child to write?

- Encourage independent mark making and writing at home provide a wide range of different pens, pencils, felt tips, crayons and chalks.
- Be a role model - write notes, shopping list and memos with your child and give them their own paper or post it notes to use.
- Encourage painting, drawing and colouring.
- Make temporary marks with shaving foam, in trays of salt or brushes and water outside on a sunny day.
- Help your child to write his/her name, forming the letter correctly, using a capital letter to start their name followed by lower case letters.

How we teach writing at school

We encourage children to mark make in all our areas in the classroom and outside and provide a variety of writing implements and a variety of things to write on. For example, white boards, shopping lists, books, envelopes, various writing frames, chalk, paint, pens, crayons etc

During our phonics lessons, children are taught letter formation, how to soundtalk words, how to write simple CVC (consonant vowel consonant eg dog) and then how to construct a sentence. We also have handwriting lessons, which focus initially on letter formation and then move onto writing key words.

We celebrate all children's writing by allowing them to share their work with the class and present their work on the wall. We also welcome and celebrate any writing or work done at home.