

Fine Motor & Handwriting Presentation

Wednesday 28th April 2021
4.30 – 5.00





Why is handwriting important?



- Despite advances in technology, there are still many situations where the written word is either necessary or more appropriate.
- A good handwriting style makes writing easier to read.
- A fluent handwriting style makes writing quicker and less tiring.
- Legible writing that can be produced comfortably, at speed and with little conscious effort allows a child to attend to the higher-level aspects of writing composition and content.
- Cursive handwriting can help with spelling.

‘Handwriting is a very complex skill to master, one which involves linguistic, cognitive, perceptual and motor components, all of which have to be coordinated into an integrated fashion.’

National Handwriting Association



Handwriting is a very complex task involving:

- Understanding and planning each letter
- Motor planning to translate the thought (picture or letter) onto the page
- Execution of the planned motor sequence using muscle contraction, joint movements and finger isolation

Occupational Therapy Plus

Development of Motor Skills

- Children develop motor skills in a head to toe direction.



- Children achieve control of joints closest to the body first



- Control and stability of joints closest to the body is essential to allow controlled hand movements.



To be ready to write children need to develop:

- General body strength in order to be able to sit still and balanced at a table.



- Shoulder stability to support and control the arm.



- Wrist stability to support the hand.

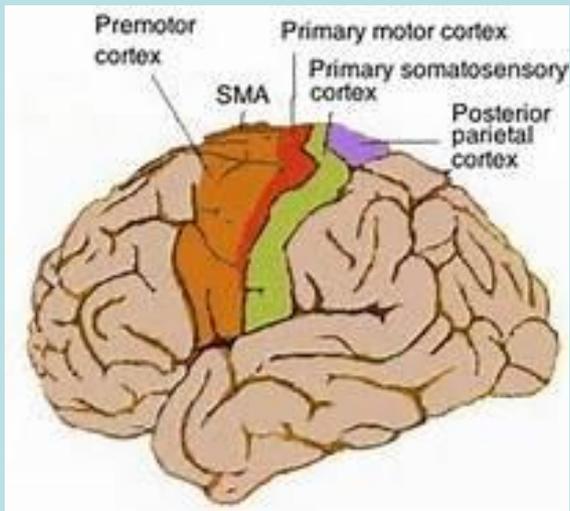


- Fine motor skills to develop an effective pencil grip and manipulate the pencil to produce smaller and more consistently sized letters.



‘About a quarter of the motor cortex in the human brain (the part of the brain which controls all movement in the body) is devoted to the muscles of the hands.’

Occupational Therapy Plus



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- When first grasping objects children will use the whole hand, all fingers are doing the same thing at the same time.



- With practice children will develop the ability to use the thumb separately and in opposition to the fingers.



- Further development produces individual finger movements for more refined, precise grasping.

Fine Motor Skills in the Classroom

Many of the regular routine classroom tasks help to develop fine motor skills such as doing up buttons and zips, peeling oranges at snack time, using cutlery at lunchtime and turning the taps on and off.

Opportunities to develop fine motor skills are also incorporated into many of the activities available in the classroom every week. For example: construction kits, playdough, using tweezers to pick up small objects, cutting and sticking.....



Ideas for practising fine motor skills at home.



Tying knots in string

Picking up small objects such as rice or sequins with fingers, tweezers or chopsticks



Spinning tops. These can be bought or made using cardboard and a pencil



Making paper clip chains – and then undoing them!



Cutting with scissors



Fill a balloon with water or flour to make a squeeze ball.



Creating models with pipe cleaners



Lacing and threading activities

Loom bands



Feeding a tennis ball character. (Old ball with slit cut in it and decorated.)



Rolling, squeezing and squashing playdough



Using pipettes to fill duplo brick circles



Using clothes pegs



weaving



Using spray bottles filled with water



Fixing nuts and bolts together



Fastening and unfastening buttons, poppers and zips

Also important for writing & mark making are:

- Hand eye coordination



- Ability to cross the midline to develop hand dominance and directionality



Pencil Grip

Why does Pencil Grip Matter?

- Influences amount of finger movement available
- Determines amount of tension generated in the hand
- Fatigue of the hand
- Pain and Discomfort
- Speed and legibility of handwriting



Developmental Stages of Pencil Grips

Fisted grasp



Palmar grasp



Five fingered grasp



Tripod grasp



Common problems with pencil grip



Correcting a poor pencil grip

- Fine motor activities to develop the muscles needed to hold the pencil correctly
- Give your child something to hold with their ring finger and little finger.
- Use a chunky pencil and / or a commercial pencil grip



Multi-sensory activities help children to remember letter formation patterns. VAC – visual, auditory & kinaesthetic.

- See www.doorwayonline.org.uk/letterformation & http://www.ictgames.com/sky_writing.html for demonstrations of letter formation.
- Try to avoid teaching children to write in capitals except for the initial letter of their names as this can again become a habit that is hard to break.

Groups of letters have similar formation and can therefore be taught together to reinforce the pattern.

My Alphabet Writing Mat

i	l	t	j	u	y	Long Ladders 	
c	o	a	d	g	q	e	Curly Caterpillars 
h	n	m	r	b	p	k	One-armed Robots 
v	w	x	z	f	s	Zigzag Monsters  Curly Caterpillars 	

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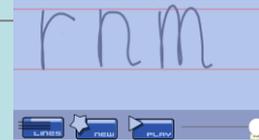
Ideas for practising letter formation at home

Use a tray of rice or sand to form letters in.



Writing Repeater

<https://www.ictgames.com/mobilePage/writingRepeater/index.html>



Use a water bottle or water pistol to squirt the letter shapes on the patio or paint them with brushes and water.

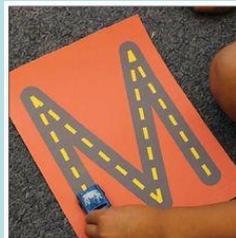


Purple Mash

- Go to mini mash
- Click the abc book
- Scroll across to Alphabet Paint Project



Make the letters into roads and drive a car along them.



Make the letter shape in playdough and roll marble around it.



Form a letter on your child's back. Can they guess the letter and write it down?

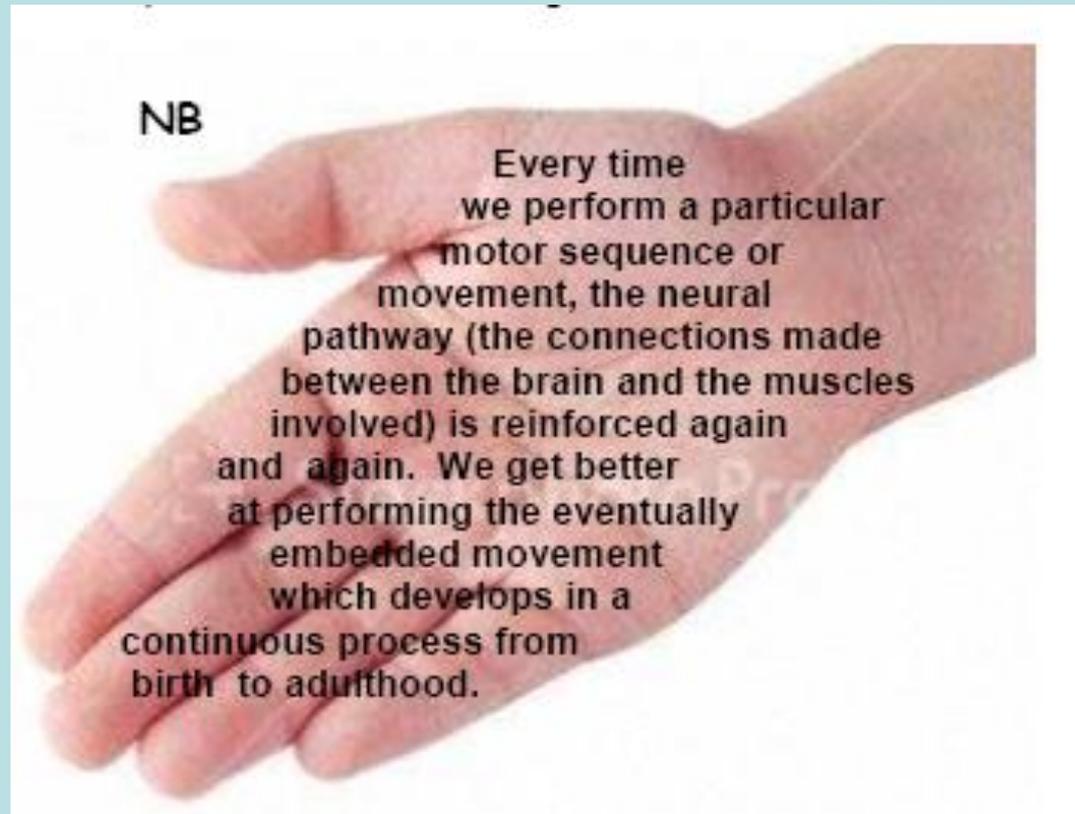
Sky Writer

<https://www.ictgames.com/mobilePage/skyWriter/index.html>



Write the letters in the correct formation on a whiteboard or chalkboard and then rub it out by going over the letter carefully with a cotton bud.

Practise makes perfect!



Quote taken from
Ready, Steady, Write Buckingham Healthcare Trust

Any Questions?

