

Introduction

Writing is a complex perceptual, motor and cognitive skill. Pre-writing skills are all the activities children take part in to prepare them for writing instruction. A good wrist position makes it easier to develop hand skills. The best position for most activities is straight or slightly back. In this position the fingers can move more freely and the muscles in the hand are able to develop. This allows the child to do more complex activities such as dressing, drawing and writing.

Activities

- Experiment with different colours of chalk, markers, crayons, pens, pencils and paints.
- Try drawing on sandpaper, patterned wallpaper, in sand or mud.
- Draw with whole hand as well as index finger in lotions, pudding, whipped cream, icing sugar, chocolate spread and shaving foam.
- Draw on cakes with coloured icing tubes or draw with cheese spread on bread or crackers.
- Make feely name or shape by writing/drawing shapes on card board and then gluing rice sand or sprinkles on the glue. When dry the child can trace over the shapes with their fingers
- Cornflower and food colouring.
- Make shapes with noodles or spaghetti.
- Draw large shapes in paint on an easel or paper pinned to the wall.
- Stencils.
- Use of mazes to encourage development of pencil control
- Start with getting the child to walk on large shapes/lines on the floor (masking tape or chalk) and drive toy cars through mazes, over crossing lines and diagonals. Then encourage drawing between a horizontal or vertical path. Gradually increase the complexity of the maze with curves, circles and dead ends. Gradually decrease the width of the maze to encourage increased control. These can be done with finger paints, crayons, pencils or paints on a table, at an easel or on paper on the floor or pinned to the wall
- Colour pictures of a child's favourite character for motivation. Encourage the child to grade from large to small movements with practice.
- Use streamers or ribbons to make shapes in the air
- Draw on the child's back and get them to guess the shape/letter
- Draw on a pavement with a wet brush or with chalks
- Draw with a wet brush on a chalk board
- Practice dot to dots. Encourage the child to stop on each dot. Use arrows to indicate the next dot to improve forward planning and directionality
- Make shapes and lines out of rolled up play dough. When working on pre-writing skills encourage the child to experience a wide range of different mark-makers and surfaces on which to make their patterns. Materials used to stimulate the senses, are excellent to reinforce learning and will help keep the child's interest.
- Encourage large movements when doing the activities as this encourages use of the muscles of the whole arm and shoulder against gravity and helps to reinforce the "mental picture" of the pattern. Gradually reduce the size to smaller, refined movements.
- Vegetable stamps

Using two hands where the hands are doing different actions.

- Threading – vary the size and shape of the beads and using threading cards.
- Stabilising Activities – rubbings, stencils, drawing.
- Clothes fastening.
- Using knife and fork.
- Pegging out toy clothes.
- Stirring mixture in a bowl.
- Peeling off stickers and sticking them on a sheet.

Main Points to remember

- Always encourage a 'thumbs up' position with both hands when cutting.
- Practice using tongs, pipettes and clothes pegs.
- Complete activities, which require the arms to be elevated from the body e.g. stirring, drawing at an easel.
- Complete a variety of activities, which require use of two hands together each hand doing different activities.
- Use a staged approach giving time for the child to perfect the skill before moving on increasing the level of skill required

Frequency of activities

Engage the child with activities from this programme for up to 15 minutes for 3 focused sessions a week. Simply adjusting your current activities and encouraging the child's participation in activities they would not usually choose will support development.

Complete activities from this sheet for 3 months

Improving our service

We continue to review our service to make sure that it meets the needs of those who are using it. We would appreciate any suggestions on how we may improve and also comments on what was good about the service.

If you have any compliments, suggestions or complaints, please write to or contact any member of staff in the first instance, or to the Occupational Therapy Service Lead if necessary.

Contact details: see part 1 of pack



BUSY HANDS USING SCISSORS

Early Years Activity Sheet

**PAEDIATRIC OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY SERVICES**