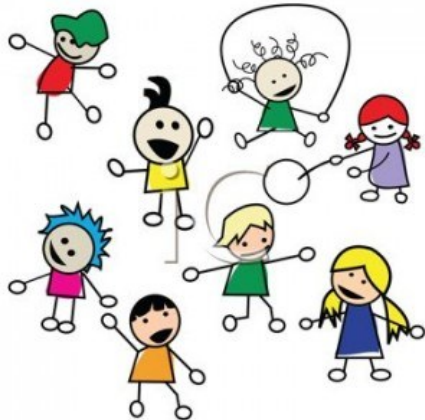


What can I do to help my child make marks (pre writing skills)?



Get out and get busy!
Have fun, play, scribble,
balance, pull, push,
climb, crawl, dance, sing.



Writing starts with good, strong muscle control...it isn't about more writing tasks. Little fingers need to be flexible, wrists, arms, shoulders, neck and back muscles too. Sit down and write, think about the muscles you are using. From your core that keeps you sitting up straight and balanced to the way your hand glides across the page smoothly. If your child is showing signs of being left handed, let them be. It is not a choice you can change, their entire brain is programmed to be left handed, forcing a child to change hands will make it much harder for your child physically and emotionally.

What are the building blocks necessary to develop writing readiness (pre-writing)?

- **Hand and finger strength:** An ability to exert force against resistance using the hands and fingers that allows the necessary muscle power for controlled movement of the pencil.
- **Crossing the mid-line:** The ability to cross the imaginary line running from a person's nose to pelvis that divides the body into left and right sides.
- **Pencil grasp:** The efficiency of how the pencil is held, allowing age appropriate pencil movement generation.
- **Hand eye coordination:** The ability to process information received from the eyes to control, guide and direct the hands in the performance of a task such as handwriting.
- **Bilateral integration:** Using two hands together with one hand leading (e.g. holding and moving the pencil with the dominant hand while the other hand helps by holding the writing paper).
- **Upper body strength:** The strength and stability provided by the shoulder to allow controlled hand movement for good pencil control.
- **Object manipulation:** The ability to skilfully manipulate tools (including holding and moving pencils and scissors) and controlled use of everyday tools (such as a toothbrush, hairbrush, cutlery).
- **Visual perception:** The brain's ability to interpret and make sense of visual images seen by the eyes, such as letters and numbers.
- **Hand dominance:** The consistent use of one (usually the same) hand for task performance, which allows refined skills to develop.
- **Hand division:** Using just the thumb, index and middle finger for manipulation, leaving the fourth and little finger tucked into the palm stabilizing the other fingers but not participating.

What can be done to improve writing readiness (pre-writing) skills?

- **Hand dominance:** Determine and reinforce the dominant hand use in precision task performance.
- **Experience:** Encourage participation in activities that involve grasping and manipulating small objects such as drawing, puzzles, opening containers, threading or other related tasks.
- **Poking and pointing:** Practice tasks that use just one or two fingers (not all at once) e.g. poking games.
- **Praise and encouragement** when your child engages in fine motor activities, especially if they are persistent when finding an activity difficult.
- **Hand and finger strength** (e.g. scrunching, paper, using tweezers, play dough, pegs).
- **Sensory play** activities (e.g. rice play, finger painting) to assist the development of tactile awareness.
- **Hand-eye coordination:** Practice activities that involve hand-eye coordination (e.g. throwing and catching) and crossing the mid-line (e.g. reaching across the body to pick up items).
- **Upper limb strength:** Encourage play activities that develop upper limb strength (e.g. climbing ladders, wheelbarrow walking).

This is a really useful website and where I got the above information from:

<https://childdevelopment.com.au/areas-of-concern/writing/writing-readiness-pre-writing-skills/>