



Reception

Funky Fingers Workshop 2023

Helping our children to become writers



Overview for the afternoon

Short presentation about the importance of developing fine and gross motor skills in the Early Years.

Exploration of fine motor skill activities with your child.



What are motor skills?

Gross Motor Skill Activities (Big Movements using large muscles)	Fine Motor Skill Activities (Small Movements using smaller muscles)
Running	Fastening buttons/ zips
Climbing	Cutting
Throwing and catching a ball	Drawing
Scooting	Writing
Pushing dolls prams/wheelbarrows	Threading
Pouring sand and water	Using cutlery
Mixing cake ingredients	Playdough
Large chawks outside	Washing line & pegs
Sweeping	Finger painting
Hopscotch	Sewing kits
Obstacle course/ going to the park	Small construction – Lego, Meccano, K-Nex
Swimming	Weaving



Why is the development of motor skills so important?

If we want children to grow up to be **enabled and successful writers**, we need to understand the stages of physical development in a child's body and how these link to mark making.

If our children do not master these skills in The Early Years, they will not have the stamina or dexterity to form letters and begin to write.



Motor Skills

For motor skills to develop children must have opportunities to be physically active and be able to move and explore their environment.

If there are no opportunities given to move and be active then the co-ordination of motor skills cannot be developed.

WHERE LEARNING TO WRITE BEGINS



Cari Ebert
SEMINARS

TUMMY TIME & CRAWLING

Cari Ebert
SEMINARS



**SHOULDER STABILITY IS NECESSARY
FOR LEARNING TO WRITE**

WALKING ON UNEVEN SURFACES

Cari Ebert
SEMINARS



**POSTURAL CONTROL IS NECESSARY
FOR LEARNING TO WRITE**



Shoulder Pivot

During the early stages of development, when children are learning to support their head, reach, grasp and walk they are using a group of muscles in their pelvis, back, shoulders, arms and neck.

It is these upper body muscle groups that they use in the very emergent stages of mark making.



Activities used to support Shoulder Pivot strength

- Painting with big brushes (fences, walls, floors)
- Trains in paint or shaving foam
- Sweeping
- Pushing buggies or wheelbarrows
- Pouring water or sand
- Scooter play
- Mixing mud kitchen ingredients



PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

Cari Ebert
SEMINARS



**FACILITATES SHOULDER STABILITY,
POSTURAL CONTROL, AND USING
BOTH SIDES OF THE BODY TOGETHER**

Elbow Pivot

Once the muscles in the back, upper arms and shoulders begin to strengthen, there usually starts to be more movement further down the arm at the next point of pivot: the elbow.



Activities used to support Elbow Pivot strength

- Chalking on the floor
- Water and sand play
- Hammering nails
- Making patterns in the sand
- Climbing and pulling bodies up on ropes and climbing frames
- Scarf and ribbon twirling
- Stick/wand writing in the air
- Construction materials like large wooden blocks



TOY PLAY

Cari Ebert
SEMINARS



**VISUAL PERCEPTION AND IN-HAND
MANIPULATION ARE NECESSARY
SKILLS FOR LEARNING TO WRITE**

Wrist Pivot

As the arm muscles and sense of balance develop further then the pivot changes again, this time to allow an even smaller range of movement.

The pivot moves to their wrist.



Activities used to support Wrist Pivot strength

- Nuts and bolts
- Threading beads
- Sewing
- Lacing pictures
- Water and sand play
- Finger football
- Construction toys like Lego



Fine Motor Strength

Once the pivots have worked their way down to the wrist, the journey doesn't stop there! Although for many children it can become a lot trickier. The hand is quite a complex piece of machinery and is made up of lots of different joints and muscle groups that interconnect and work together to provide maximum dexterity.





A 7 year old and an EYFS child's hand.

The hand is physically underdeveloped.

Visual motor integration skills are also
immature at this age.

Activities used to support Fine Motor strength

- Washing lines and pegs
- Dressing and undressing toys
- Using cutlery
- Dressing up clothes with a range of fastenings
- Peg boards
- Malleable materials (dough, clay, jelly, wet sand)
- Tweezers to pick up small objects
- Cutting with scissors
- Construction materials



WATER PLAY

Cari Ebert
SEMINARS



**SUPPORTS HAND-EYE COORDINATION
AND DEVELOPS SMALL MUSCLES IN
THE HAND**

LACING, SNIPPING, BUTTONING, USING TOOLS

Cari Ebert
SEMINARS



**IMPROVES DEXTERITY, Pincer GRASP,
AND HAND-EYE COORDINATION**

SANDBOX AND DIRT PLAY

Cari Ebert
SEMINARS



**STRENGTHENS FINGER AND HAND
MUSCLES AND IMPROVES BODY
AWARENESS**

MESSY PLAY

Cari Ebert
SEMINARS




**PROPRIOCEPTION AND FINGER/HAND
CONTROL ARE NECESSARY FOR
LEARNING TO WRITE**

READING BOOKS

Cari Ebert
SEMINARS



**VISUAL PERCEPTION IS NECESSARY
FOR LEARNING TO WRITE**

A decorative border of colorful handprints surrounds the text. The handprints are in various colors including green, blue, orange, brown, pink, red, yellow, purple, and teal, arranged in a circular pattern around the central text.

It may not always be obvious at first glance that the activities and resources available to support children's play and development are so important to their journey.

For each child, the journey to mark maker is different; some choose to mark make during their time at pre-school, others make this move during their Reception year.

Funky Fingers in School

- Each week we have a different fine motor activity on our Funky Fingers Table in the classroom.
- We complete daily Funky Fingers activities each morning.
- The children participate in 'Dough Disco' and 'Pen Disco' to develop their fine motor movements.



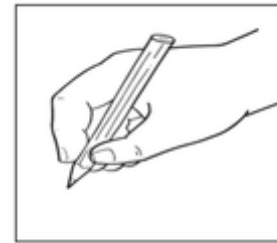



Fine and Gross Motor Support

For those children who find fine and gross motor skills a challenge, we carry out weekly interventions such as Smart Moves and a fine motor group to support their development further.

Pencil Grip Development


According to their stage of development children progress through the stages of pencil grips. They will only be ready to grip a pencil in the most efficient grip (image 4) once they have developed the fine motor strength to do so.





How you can help at home

- Teach your children to use a knife and fork.
- Encourage your children to dress themselves.
- Get creative with your mark making – use paint, chalk, sticks in mud/sand, paint with water, bath crayons.
- Allow your child to be as independent as possible with all tasks and allow them to take risks
- Less screen time, more time being physical!

A decorative border of colorful handprints surrounds the text. The handprints are in various colors including green, blue, orange, brown, pink, red, yellow, purple, and teal, arranged in a circular pattern around the central text.

Thank you, please feel free to
ask any questions

Enjoy exploring the activities with your child