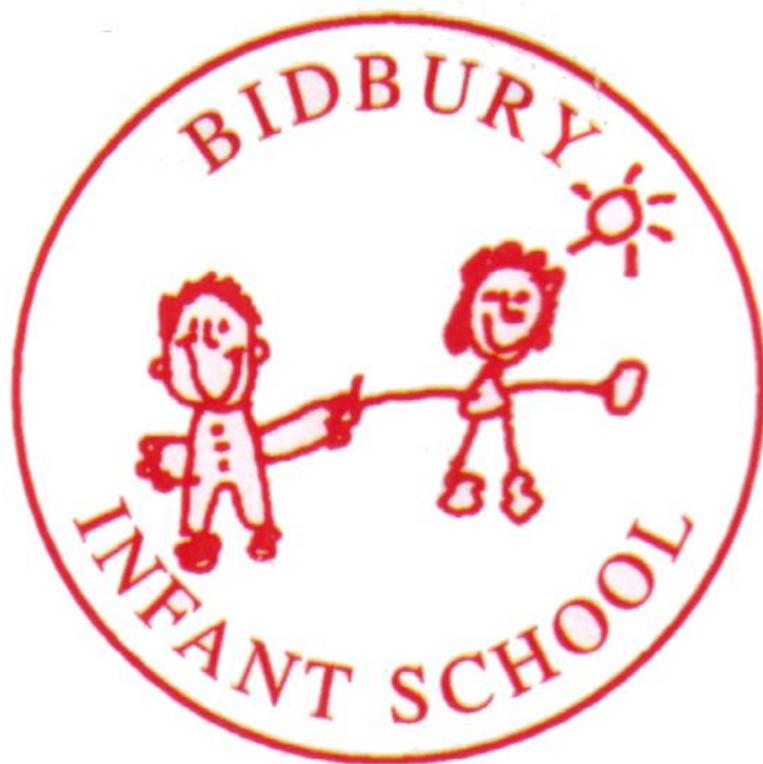


Pre-Writing and Fine Motor Skills

Getting off to a flying start



What are they and why is it so important?

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Developing Pre-Writing Skills

If a child is going to be successful in holding a pencil correctly and forming clear letter shapes using the correct sequence of movements they first need to develop gross and fine motor skills.

What are Gross Motor Skills?

Gross motor skills are larger movements made with arms, legs, feet or your entire body - for example crawling, running and jumping.



What are Fine Motor Skills?



Fine motor skills are smaller movements, those that need us to co-ordinate small muscles when making movements. These are usually being made with the forearms, hands and fingers such as buttoning, holding a pencil, pinching pegs and cutting with scissors.

Areas to Develop

- crossing midline
- core body strength and shoulder muscles
- fine motor skills
- isolating fingers
- correct pencil grip

Crossing Midline

Crossing the midline means both sides of the brain are working together in a task. It is first developed in **gross motor** activities. Activities such as:

- raking leaves
- sweeping
- wiping the table
- reaching across the body to pass or get an object
- exercises such as touching right shoulder with left arm, crossing arms to put hands on knees



Develop Core Body Strength and Shoulder Muscles

Developing core body strength and shoulder muscles is essential to your child's development as a future writer. These tasks support good posture which enables a child to sit or lay and be able to use their hands effectively without becoming sore and uncomfortable.



Core Strength activities include:

- throwing and catching in a kneeling position
- challenge children to kneel and watch TV or do a similarly distracting task for as long as possible
- frog jumps - crouch down, arms stretched in front, hop forward

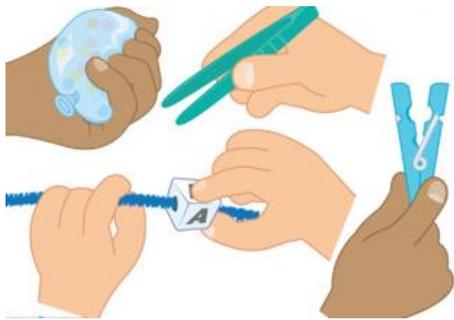
Shoulder muscle activities include:

- draw large shapes and pictures on chalk boards
- Tug of War
- crawling on all fours - forwards, backwards and sideways
- wheelbarrow walking
- swinging on monkey bars
- any play where they are laying on their tummy, e.g. with bricks, cars



Developing Fine Motor Skills

If you are using your hands and fingers you are using your fine motor skills. The key to good fine motor is to develop strength in the muscles in your hands and fingers, as well as ensuring correct positions when holding and manipulating objects such as knives, forks, pencils, crayons etc. Fun things to help with this strengthening of muscles are:



- threading beads or pasta to make necklaces and bracelets
- use tweezers or tongs to pick up objects and move them from one place to another, e.g. sweets from one jar to another, picking up 5 strawberries to put on their ice cream, sort beads into colours - use a timer to see if they can beat their times when moving objects, kids love a challenge
- using spray bottles and water pistols outside, in the bath -anything with a trigger mechanism

- playing with playdough - encourage them to push, pull, squeeze, roll with their hands or a rolling pin and use cutters
- making rips in paper using their thumb and fore finger, then use the paper to create pictures and collages
- dressing and undressing dolls
- building with any type of construction, e.g. lego, duplo, k'nex
- completing simple puzzles
- any activity that involve manipulating small objects to fit them together



More Fine Motor Activities

Activities to Warm Up Hand Muscles



- clenching fist and opening hands
- spreading and closing fingers
- wiggling fingers, drumming them on the table
- bending and straightening fingers one at a time
- clapping and rubbing hands together
- playing finger games, e.g. Itsy Bitsy Spider

Activities to Support Fine Motor Development

- craft jobs: cutting, scrunching, gluing and bending pipe cleaners.
- toy tools such as sawing, drilling, hammering, screws and bolts.
- games involving flicking small objects e.g. flicking balls of paper of a table into a 'goal'.
- walking fingers e.g. along tape placed on the table. ring and little finger curled out of the way.
- place a firm elastic band around tips of fingers and thumb. open and close it 10 times with each hand (mind for flying bands though!).
- holding a handful of items in hand and posting them into a jar / money box one by one (buttons, coins)
- picking up sequins off a table or stickers off a sticker sheet
- attempting to get themselves dressed - putting on shoes
- water painting on outdoor walls with paintbrush.
- colouring in activities, staying inside the lines.
- write with chalk, crayons, finger paints, pencils, pens etc
- pop bubble wrap
- turn keys in padlocks
- interlocking construction
- tracing and stencil activities
- dot to dots
- copying over letter shapes
- pulling zips up and down
- do up buckles and Velcro
- using stampers to create pictures:



Isolating Fingers

Finger isolation is being able to move each finger one at a time independent of the others. This skill helps children with their fine motor skills, and later their writing, by ensuring they can set an appropriate pencil grip. Activities such as:

- pick up items like glitter by dabbing finger on top
- playing football with paper and flicking and rolling it
- activities for warming up hand muscles
- typing on a keyboard or using an i-pad
- playing a musical instrument
- count on fingers one at a time
- finger painting
- playing with finger puppets



Correct Pencil Grip

Finally it is **vitaly important** to your child's development as a writer that they hold a writing or drawing implement correctly. If they do this incorrectly writing can become difficult and uncomfortable for them.

Children should be using the tripod grip which means pinching the writing or drawing implement between your thumb and forefinger while resting on the index finger.



Useful Websites

Twinkl - although there is a membership cost involved for many resources
<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/>

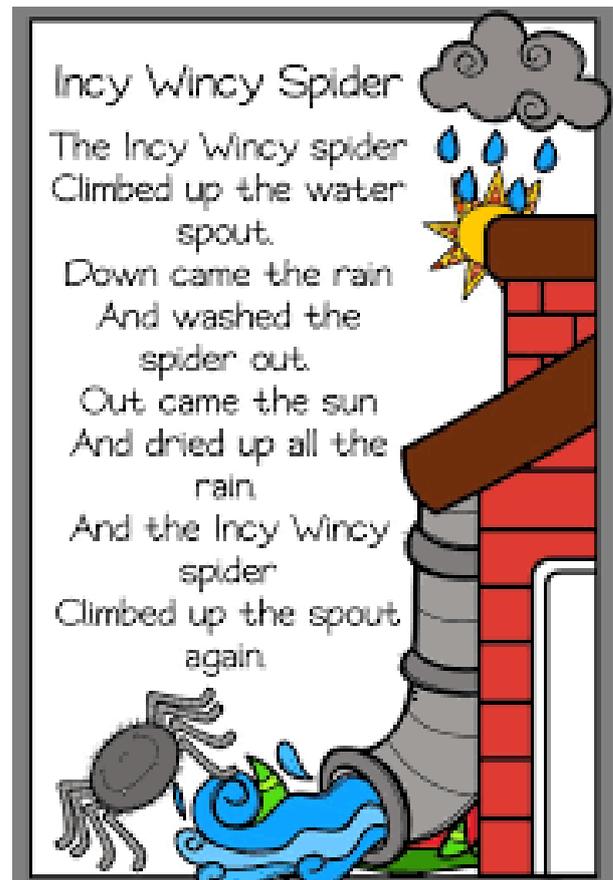
Fine Motor Activities

<https://handsonaswegrow.com/fine-motor-skills-activities/>

<https://www.learning4kids.net/list-of-fine-motor-play-activities/>

Some Finger Action Rhymes

Google the above for more rhymes and videos



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