

April 20

Further Ideas to support your Nursery child's learning:

Focusing on Physical Development

If your child isn't able to hold a pencil in a pincer grip, like this:



then they might benefit from fun manipulation activities to strengthen their finger grip. This pencil hold is the end goal and your child's pencil grip may go through several stages of progression before this is achieved. The activities below will benefit

your child's development in many ways, including maths and imagination.

- ❖ Remember- your child may not be interested in making marks with crayons or pencils yet, but the activities below will support their physical development in readiness for when their interest develops.

Manipulation Ideas:

- Set up two lines of plastic bottles with about 5 bottles in each. Race with your child to undo a lid, place something inside the bottle, e.g. a penny and replace the lid on the bottle before moving to the next bottle.
- Collect sticks, maybe paint them, then let your child poke them through the holes in a kitchen colander. This could be a race to fill each hole with a stick in 2 minutes or it could become a temporary craft activity, e.g. by winding wool around the sticks or adding other objects to make a bug/monster.
- Use a boot lace for threading. Collect leaves and pierce a small hole in each so your child can thread them. Your child could thread them biggest to smallest or make a simple colour pattern, e.g. light green/ dark green/ light green. Have you made a caterpillar? A snake?
- If you have a spare area of soil outside, let your children add water and make a muddy volcano. This could be decorated with stones or flowers.

Alternatively, when you cut the grass, let your child make a bird's nest from the cuttings, sticks and leaves.

- Give your child kitchen tongs to pick up small objects, e.g. cotton wool balls/ corks and place one in each section of an empty egg box.
- If your child has child-sized scissors, remind them of correct scissor hold and safe use. Then draw a face on a kitchen roll/ toilet roll and fix paper around the top that has already been cut into strips. Your child can give them a haircut.

Paper Haircuts

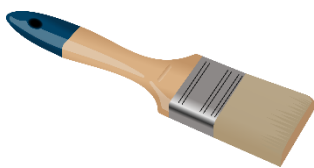


- Let your child bath soft toys and squeeze a soapy flannel or sponge to improve strength.
- Clothes pegs are great to improve your child's finger manipulation. Help your child make a den indoors or outside using pegs to join sheets.

If your child is keen to draw, but isn't holding the pencil correctly, just praise all efforts and demonstrate how to hold the pencil correctly. Your child's hold will improve over time with gentle reminders.

Most children also need to build their core strength in their tummies and muscles in their shoulders and arms before they can master the fine-motor control needed to use a pencil effectively. Large-scale movements encourage this.

Large-Scale Movements Ideas:



satisfying!

- Something simple that most children love is to paint the fence and outdoor walls with water. Chalking the wall then washing it away is very

- Draw a chalk target board on the wall, throw balled up socks, balls or even water balloons at it. Add a number to each section to keep a score.
- Use a spare sheet to waft it up and down. Add soft balls or soft toys onto it and see if you and your child(ren) can shake them off.
- Set up an outdoor obstacle course, e.g. crawl on your tummy under a sheet, walk along a skipping rope, jump in and out of a hula hoop, balance on one leg when you reach the back door then hop over to the wall.
- Outside give your child use a broom to brush soapy water around the floor. Great for developing core muscles in the tummy.
- Sellotape a felt-tip onto the back of a toy car and then tape some sheets of newspaper or plain paper together onto the floor. This is probably best done outside. Your child can 'drive' their car all over the paper, making loops, zig-zags, circles...

So your child is keen to draw and write...



If your child is interested in writing for themselves, you can help them by talking about the meaning of print around them and demonstrate writing for a purpose.

As great as technology is, young children need to see writing happening to understand it is useful in so many ways.



Ideas to encourage your child to make marks that begin to resemble letters:

- Write a shopping list with them and draw a basic picture of the item next to the word and encourage your child to have a go.
- Cut out a piece of paper to make a label for a food can. Look together at the original label and help/ demonstrate how to draw the food, write the

words, draw the bar code, etc. Replace the original label with your child's fabulous design.

- Design party invitations to give to other members of the family or favourite toys with a day and time to attend a tea party.
- Bake together and start a scrap cook book, listing the ingredients and method. Decorate the front cover and draw a picture of your baking.
- Write a 'wish list' of activities you would like to do following lockdown.
- Send a drawing and letter to a family member, visiting the post box when you next go on a walk.

Teaching your child to write their name:

Write your child's name first so that something to copy. Show your child each letter individually and only use a at the beginning. Ensure you show



they have how to write capital letter them how to

form each letter correctly, e.g. using anti-clockwise movements when needed. Talk to them about the pencil 'sticking' to the paper, so your child doesn't write a letter with several strokes. Watch letter formation videos online together. Then find somewhere interesting to write it! E.g. use an old lipstick to write it on a mirror, write it in bubbles in the bath. Correct formation takes lots of practise, so don't worry, just praise all efforts.

When your child begins to write their name, expect their letters to be large and placed randomly. If using paper, you can support your child by drawing a line for them to write the letters on, with some letters 'hanging' below the line, such as 'g' and 'y'. Talk about writing the first letter on the left hand side of the paper.

You may have books at home which encourage your child to draw over the top of a letter or follow dotted lines. Please be aware that children need support to ensure that they are starting at the right place when

forming letters and writing in the correct direction, otherwise bad habits are formed.

What next?

Once your child can write their first name with correct formation, move onto their surname. Then other words that are important to your child, such as the names of brothers and sisters and 'mummy', 'daddy', etc. If your child has a particular interest, such as dinosaurs, show them how to write the name to accompany their drawing.

I hope you find this useful.

*Kind Regards,
Miss Sapsed.*

Next week: How to support your child's development in mathematics.