



## HAND TO EYE CO-ORDINATION

Writing requires the eyes to guide the hand to form the correct letters' shape, to stay on the lines and within the page. It is also vital for reading.

Gross Motor activities for eye/hand co-ordination are:

Playing catch with a ball or beanbag  
Playing bat and ball

Fine Motor activities for eye/hand co-ordination are:

Building towers with bricks  
Putting pegs on a board  
Threading  
Cutting food, play dough, clay

## CHILDREN NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT MARKS HOLD MEANING

Sharing stories with children from an early age reinforces the notion that books and print are an important part of our society. They also begin to understand that marks made by someone else hold meaning through the marks that they make.

Pointing out writing in the environment, for example on cereal boxes, drinks cartons, newspapers, posters, advertising signs and road signs etc, all help to reinforce that marks have meaning.

Letters and words are basically a series of shapes and symbols: circles, part circles, vertical and horizontal lines and curves. To help children master these movements we use the following activities:

Gloop and paint and shaving foam on the tables  
Big pieces of paper to draw and paint on  
Chalking outside on the paved area.

Whilst involved in these activities we encourage the children to make vertical and horizontal marks, diagonal and circular marks.



*'Mark Making' in  
preparation for  
writing at Chirton Pips  
Pre-School*



*We hope that you find this leaflet informative and that it gives you ideas to do at home with your children. Please do not hesitate to ask questions or share ideas/views with us.*

Chirton Pips Pre-School  
May 2019  
'The Road to Writing' Sue Cowley.  
2012  
Mark Making Matters, DCSF 2008  
EYFS, 2012

*'When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things.' EYFS, 2012*

## INTRODUCTION

This booklet aims to give parents an understanding of the importance of early mark making; the pre-writing stage. To show that the activities and the opportunities we give to the children in a rich environment all contribute to the development of writing skills. These are some examples that Chirton Pips Pre-school does with the children. Parents/carers could also do them at home.

Before children can write they need to build up their whole body, hand and finger strength through a variety of activities. They need to build up the control of their muscular movements, and learn to co-ordinate their hand to eye connections within the brain that are required for writing.

Many of the gross motor (big movements) and fine motor activities that we do with the children, may appear not to have anything to do with 'Mark Making', but they all contribute to the development of the children and help them to develop writing skills in the future.



## BUILDING BODY STRENGTH

Body strength is required for a child to sit and support themselves when writing. This requires strong tummy, neck and shoulder muscles. We do this by encouraging the children to balance on logs, milk crates and beams, ride bikes and scooters,



build dens, crawl through tunnels, climb trees, swing off branches and participate in obstacle courses. These activities also help to develop co-ordination and concentration skills.

## BILATERAL INTEGRATION - crossing the mid line

Writing requires us to co-ordinate both sides of our body even though one side is usually dominant. Games that we play to encourage bilateral integration are:

Simon says - encouraging children to cross the midline (eg moving their right hand to their left shoulder).

Tapping heads and patting stomachs at the same time.

Obstacle courses that include tunnels.

Kicking a football using both feet.

## BUILDING HAND AND FINGER STRENGTH

Encouraging children to become independent naturally helps to develop their hand and finger strength. Activities that we do in pre-school to help develop hand and finger strength are:

- Vertical painting helps to increase wrist strength
- Using tongs to catch balls in water
- Putting pegs onto a box or washing line
- Preparing food - chopping fruit and vegetables, opening milk bottles and pouring their own drinks
- Water play - moving water from one container to another
- Playing with play dough and clay - squeezing it in their hands

## DEVELOPING DEXTERITY

At pre-school we encourage children to develop fine motor skills that involve the use of their fingers. This will help the children to be able to form letters when they start to write. These skills also help to increase concentration and focus. The following activities increase the children's dexterity:

Using scissors

Threading beads

Using tweezers to pick up small items

Doing up buttons and zips

Putting on shoes on their own

Using a hole punch

Playing with windup toys

Using tape to make pictures, to wrap or to join things together.



## MOVING INDIVIDUAL FINGERS

Encouraging children to move individual fingers helps them to develop the 'pinch' movement. Activities include:

- Singing songs where fingers are moved individually
- Using finger puppets and hand puppets
- Using different media to write in - gloop, sand, paint.