

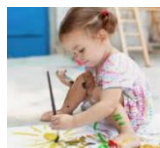
During the beginning of the Autumn Term we have a big focus on activities that promote fine motor and hand strength development. Every child's development is different and they will progress at different rates across the year. These sorts of activities are used as both direct 'adult led' tasks as well as independent activities for the children to freely access when they choose to.

Mark Making and Pre Writing

Pre writing or mark making skills are the fundamental skills children need to develop before they are able to write. They are the improvised marks that children make and can take the form of lines, dots, shapes or patterns. Mark making begins from a very early age and these skills contribute to the child's ability to draw, write and colour.

Activities to promote mark making can include –

- Chalks outside on the ground.
- Water and paint brushes to make marks on the ground / walls outside.
- Using natural objects like sticks to make marks in sand or soil.
- Large paper or the back of wall paper rolls and felt tips / wax crayons to make large marks and movements.
- Flour / sand / glitter in a tray and use fingers or brushes to make marks.



Finger Strength

Activities to strengthen children's fingers are important as this will support the development of their fine motor control when they begin to use tools for writing and mark making. Finger and hand strength is important if children are to eventually develop a fluid handwriting style.

Activities that help to build children's finger strength include –

- Playing with playdough, manipulating the dough into different shapes.
- Using pegs to pick up and transfer objects such as pom-poms or pegging on and off a string.
- Squeezing a soft ball or balled up socks.
- Wringing water out of flannel in the bath or water tray.



Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor skills are the small precise movements we make with our hands and fingers. They involve the coordination of your muscles, joints and nerves. The ability to control your fine motor skills enables you to produce small exact movements such as forming letters when writing.

Activities to support the development of fine motor control include –

- Threading and lacing. Threading pasta pieces on a string or lace.
- Peeling stickers off a sheet and placing them in designated places on paper.
- Fastening and unfastening buttons on clothing or activity mats.
- Placing objects such as buttons along straight, wavy and zigzag lines.



Pencil Grip

Every child's development is different and the time they take to develop the skills to hold a pencil in the 'tripod grip' will be different to their peers. There are 5 developmental stages that children usually go through before they can successfully use a tripod grip.

- **Stage 1** – Palmer-supinate grasp. Holding the pencil in the fist / whole hand.
- **Stage 2** – Palmar or digital pronate grasp. Hold the pencil with the palm of the hand facing down towards the table.
- **Stage 3** – Four finger and thumb grip. Holding the pencil between the thumb and four fingers with the pencil in a nearly vertical upright position.
- **Stage 4** – Static tripod grip. Holding the pencil in almost the correct position.
- **Stage 5** – Mature / dynamic tripod grip. Holding the pencil between thumb and index finger with the pencil supported on the middle finger.

