

Don't forget that one of the funky fingers activities is dough gym! This is where you have a large ball of dough and manipulate this using lots of different movements whilst listening to some music. It's great fun! You will find lots of videos and tips on www.youtube.com!

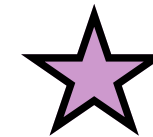


Keep those fingers funky!



Funky Fingers!

There are so many things you can do to support your child in early writing skills, many of which need to be done before your child even picks up a pencil!



Upper Body Strength

When children first begin to mark make they are doing it because they can! How children use their body to aid their early mark making and then writing is by using a sequence of muscle movements. Which muscle they use depends on their stage of development. Most children follow the same sequence of development so here are some ideas linked to support these early skills.

Shoulder pivot - fairly stiff wrist and a straight elbow with most movement coming from the shoulder. Marks made are likely to be long and straight or large and circular.

Activities to try...

- Washing walls with soaps and brushes
- Painting with mops
- Playing swing ball with a pair of tights
- Lolly stick race tracks
- Swing painting (tights and teabags)
- Painting trees with shaving foam
- Foam bike tracks
- Big digging in sand and soil



Freezer bag maze

You will need a zip lock freezer bag, duct tape, a marble and liquid soap or washing up liquid.

What to do

1. Cut the duct tape into different lengths.
2. Fold it back on itself to form tubes of tape with the sticky side out.
3. Stick these tubes inside the freezer bag starting at the bottom.
4. Leave some gaps in between.
5. Squeeze the soap into the bag.
6. Add a marble.

Activity

By manipulating the contents of the bag, children try to push the marble through the soapy maze using their fingers.



Moving water

You will need water, two containers, food colouring (optional) and a drinking straw.

What to do

- 1. Fill one container with water and place at one side of the table.*
- 2. Place the empty container at the other side.*

Activity

A child stands in between the two containers. First of all they take a straw and dip it into the container with the water in. Once the end of the straw is under the water they have to block the other end of the straw with their thumb. When they lift the straw out there will some water trapped in it. Next they reach across and put the straw into the empty pot and remove their thumb. At this point the water will come out. How much water can they move in the time that they have got?



Elbow pivot - elbow is now beginning to bend but the shoulder is still the 'main power' in moving the arm backwards and forwards (a bit like a sawing motion). When more developed in this, children will then use their muscles in their upper and lower arm to swing their arm, in and out from their body in a semi-circular action.

Activities to try...

- Using large rollers or brushes on ground (sweeping motion)
- Drawing circles on to large sheets of paper
- Pulling their bodies up on ropes/climbing walls
- Climbing trees
- Ribbon/scarf twirling
- Throwing and catching using elbows to push the hand forwards
- Making patterns in sand with lollipop sticks
- Sticking and pulling plungers on vertical and horizontal surfaces
- Mixing ingredients in a bowl



Wrist Pivot - elbow tucks in to the side of the body and shoulder movement is now minimal. Activities now need to be on a smaller scale to really focus on development.

Activities to try...

- Use thin and short strips of paper to paint horizontally or vertically
- Threading
- Sewing
- Dabbing with a sponge or brush
- Popping pictures
- Fishing games
- Splatter painting



Threading skewers

You will need dough, wooden skewers (straws or dried spaghetti strips would be fine), penne pasta, beads and scissors.

What to do

1. Make a ball of dough and make into three balls.
2. Insert a skewer into each of the balls of dough.
3. Cut up the straw into 1cm pieces.
4. Put the straw pieces, beads and pasta into a bowl.

Activity

Standing up, the children sort the contents of the bowl onto separate skewers. If they are quick they can take them all off again.



Pipe cleaners in a jar

You will need pipe cleaners, scissors, plastic storage jar and magnets.

What to do

1. Cut the pipe cleaners into 2cms lengths.
2. Put them into the storage jar.
3. Replace the lid.

Activity

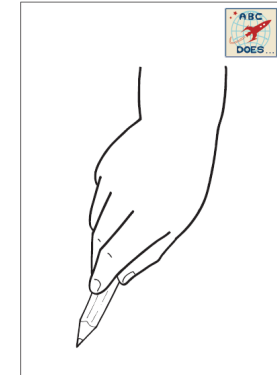
Use the magnets to catch and lift the pipe cleaners, make patterns or race each other.



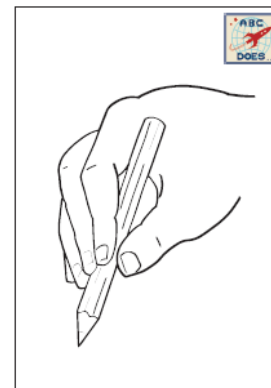
There are four specific developmental stages that children will progress through until they obtain a secure pencil hold suitable for writing. This is the technical bit!



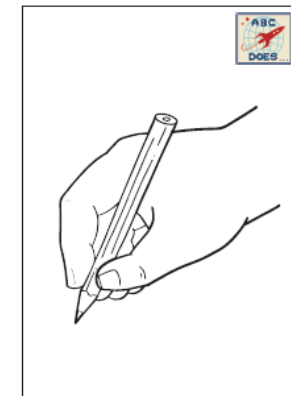
Palmer Supinate Grip



Digital Pronate Grip



Tripod Grip - 5 fingers



Tripod grip - 3 fingers

There are so many different 'funky fingers' activities that you can do that don't need lots of resources! Here are a few of them...

Painting with elastic bands

You will need elastic bands, pencil, paint and paper.

What to do

- 1. Wrap an elastic band several times around the end of a pencil until it is tight.*
- 2. Take five or six other elastic bands and attach them to the end of the pencil by lifting the tight band and slipping the end of the loose band underneath to make a type of paintbrush.*

Activity

Dip the 'loose' elastic bands into paint and make a pattern by twirling the pencil between your fingers.



Milk carton catcher

You will need a plastic milk carton, scissors and pompoms or small balls.

What to do

- 1. Cut out a section of the milk carton leaving the handle intact. Tape any sharp edges.*
- 2. Use large cartons for an easier challenge.*

Activity

Children either have one pom pom ball attached to their 'carton catcher' which they throw up and then catch on their own or another adult/child throws them pompoms or balls for them to catch.

