

Nov 2012

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An Info-letter For Parents And Teachers

From The Editor's Desk

Dear reader,

Hope the issue on Writing was interesting. Very often we find that we rush into writing and start with writing within the required space, before we attend to the more basic skills required for writing. In order for young children to be successful with handwriting they must be introduced to the skills in the proper order first. Every child progresses through these skills at a different rate based on their fine motor skills.

What are fine motor skills? They are the neuromuscular control and coordination of the smaller muscles of the body- specifically the hands and fingers. These help the child do all the fine work such as- grasping/ picking small objects; manipulating with the fingers; opening packages/ bottles/ jars; eating by self; buttoning/unbuttoning; lacing; zipping; and of course handwriting.

The small muscles need dexterity to handle objects and strength to manipulate them. And these are developed only through appropriate amount of practice. In the Preschool years, it needs to be a part of the daily curriculum, in order to help the child develop the 2 main skills – **Self-Help** (all skills of daily living like eating, dressing, and manipulating small objects) and **Handwriting** (pencil grasp and pencil control)

In this issue, we have outlined some of the common activities helpful for developing Fine Motor skills. *If your child is not writing, or not writing well, you may find it more worthwhile to spend the child's and your time and effort on these activities than forcing the child to do drill work on rigid handwriting exercises- whether at home or in the classroom.*

Regards,

Gayatri Kiran

Editor



In This Issue

Fine motor skills

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Activities in preschool

Any and every one of these activities can be integrated into your daily classroom teaching with a little thought and advanced planning. These are just a few samples.

- Use a plant sprayer to spray water on plants, walls, floor.
- Buttoning, lacing, zipping opportunities (can use either real garments or frames)
- Picking and transferring small beads/ balls with the help of tongs from one container to other.
- Introduce slates before pencil-notebook.
- Putting clothespins on the edge of a bowl.
- Provide small child-sized paper punches that make different shapes.
- Making mala of beads, puffed rice or pop-corn.
- Provide small tops (bugri) to spin.
- Spread cards, coins, or buttons on the floor and encourage students to turn them over.
- Provide an eggbeater and a bowl of water- add few drops of hand soap for extra fun.
- Mix food coloring and water and use eyedroppers to decorate tissue papers or janata/ cyclostyling paper.
- Play dough.
- Play with finger puppets.
- Encourage hand actions for rhymes- eg. Twinkle twinkle, machhli jal ki rani hai....
- Provide small pieces of chalk or broken crayons for children to write or draw with.
- Provide old paper and child-safe paper to cut.
- Drawing on sand with fingers.
- Drawing, colouring, collage, art and craft activities. Finger painting.

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Things to do at home

Do not worry if your preschooler has not started writing yet in the range below 4 years of age. As mentioned above, tripod grasp is one of the important aspects of a child's writing, as is hand dominance. The latter typically develops by 2-3 years, but there are a significant number of children who develop it slowly or use both hands (ambidextrous). Forcing you child to write is not going help him write, infact may do more harm- the only thing actually that helps handwriting are fine-motor skills. Given below are some activities you can do with a 3-4 year old at home without much effort, and a little perseverance.

- Playing with, mixing and rolling out chapathi dough.
- Folding small clothes like hanky, socks etc
- Separating channa and rajma etc.
- Playing in sand
- Rangoli
- Playing with water.
- Cutting paper with scissors (use child-safe scissors- to be supervised)
- Cutting soft vegetables with a butter knife.
- **Eating own food by hand.**
- Drawing - slate, chalk, paper , wax crayons, pencils.
- All art and craft activities.
- Paper folding.
- Paper tearing and crumpling.
- Grating vegetables.
- Do simple dot to dot and mazes from activity books.
- **Encourage your child to dress her/himself, especially with buttons, zips, laces etc as much as possible.**

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Pencil Grasp



The manner in which a child holds a pencil is called a pencil grasp.

Pictured above is a child using the correct tripod grasp. This grasp requires the thumb, index, and middle fingers to work together and is also referred to as the pincer grasp. When using a tripod grasp the child should move his fingers with the writing utensil and not use his entire arm. The tripod grasp is considered to be the most efficient because it allows the greatest amount of finger movement and thus control over the writing tool; it is the least fatiguing method for the muscles in the arm and hand.

From www.pre-kpages.com

Question of the issue

Do we need 4-line (for languages) and square line (for number work) note books to teach children writing in preschool?

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