Writing

Talking|Singing|Reading|Writing|Playing

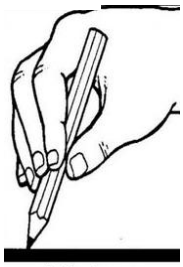
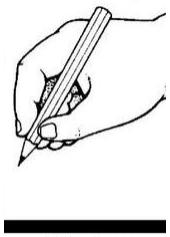
Early Literacy Specialists of Eastern Ontario

Writing Workshop Plan

Workshop Description

Writing is an important communication skill that children can start developing from birth. Research shows that handwriting is a foundational skill that can influence student's reading, writing, language use, and critical thinking. Before a child can write, they need to build many physical, cognitive and communication skills. This workshop will help you understand the various stages of writing and drawing and give you helpful hints and tips to encourage and support fine motor development in children. You will learn to create a print rich environment and integrate writing into a variety of play centres with activities focusing on different pre-writing skills for children to explore. Be ready to discover and play!

Developmental Stages of Pencil Grasp

1—1 1/2 years	**Fisted grasp/Cylindrical grasp**	• Grabs writing tool with whole hand • Uses shoulder to move writing tool • Start to scribble
2—3 years	**Palmer Grasp/Digital Grasp**	• Uses all fingers to hold writing tool but wrist is turned. • Movement comes mostly from elbow • Start to draw horizontal, vertical and circular lines.
 3 1/2—4 years	**"Immature" 5-Finger Grasp/Modified Tripod Grasp**	• Uses all 5 fingers to hold the pencil • Uses wrist to guide, hand and fingers move as one unit. • Start to draw zigzags, draw from one point to the next, crossed lines, and simple humans.
	"Mature" 3-Finger Grasp/Tripod Grasp	• Uses 3 fingers hold the writing tool • Uses full wrist to guide • Start to draw diagonal lines, shapes and more detailed humans
 4 1/2—7 years	**Tripod Grasp**	• Uses 3 fingers to hold pencil and wrist to guide movements • Children master this grip by 6 or 7years of age.

Pushing "proper" pencil grasp

When a child is encouraged to use a "proper" pencil grasp before the shoulder and arm muscles are ready to support it, you will often find fine motor problems emerging, such as holding the pencil in "weird" ways, messy work and even avoidance of drawing and coloring tasks. These incorrect habits are difficult to correct over time.

Red Flags

Fine Motor

Fine motor skills involve the coordination of small muscle movements in the fingers and the hands that enable a child to complete tasks such as grasping and manipulating small objects, dressing, feeding oneself, cutting and writing. Many activities depend on the coordination of gross and fine motor skills and vision.

Healthy child development…if a child is missing one or more of these expected age outcomes, consider this a red flag:

By 2 months - 3 months

- Holds an object momentarily if placed in hand
- Opens and shuts hands

By 4 months

- Holds breast or bottle with 1 or both hands
- Brings hands or toy to mouth
- Brings hands to the middle of the body while lying on the back
- Puts hands on knees

By 6 months

- Eats from a spoon (e.g. infant cereal)
- Reaches for a toy when lying on the back
- Uses hands to reach and grasp toys
- Holds a bottle to mouth by self

By 9 months

- Picks up small items using the thumb and first finger
- Passes an object from one hand to the other
- Releases objects intentionally
- Waves bye-bye

By 12 months

- Holds, bites and chews foods (e.g. crackers)
- Takes things out of a container
- Points with index finger
- Plays games like peek-a-boo
- Holds a cup to drink using two hands
- Picks up and eats finger foods

By 18 months

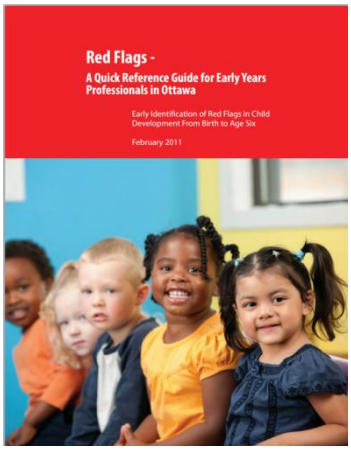
- Helps with dressing by pulling out arms and legs
- Stacks three or more blocks
- Scribbles with crayons
- Eats foods without coughing or choking
- Puts items into a container
- Can match shape-sorters
- Uses one hand more often than the other
- When wrist is flexed, the arm moves as a unit, fisted hand (Palmar supinate power grasp)

By 2 years

- Takes off own shoes, socks or hat
- Stacks five or more blocks
- Eats with a spoon with little spilling

By 3 years

- Turns the pages of a book
- Dresses or undresses with help
- Unscrews a jar lid
- Holds a crayon with fingers
- Draws vertical and horizontal lines in imitation
- Copies a circle already drawn
- Child able to perform "immature digital pronated grasp" – wrist out, thumb down, tool held with fingers, no web space, arm moves as a unit
- Does finger plays while singing little songs



Fine Motor

By 4 years

- Holds a crayon correctly
- Undoes buttons or zippers
- Cuts with scissors
- Dresses and undresses with minimal help

By 5 years

- Draws diagonal lines and simple shapes
- Uses scissors to cut along a thick line drawn on paper
- Dresses and undresses without help except for small buttons, zippers, snaps
- Draws a 3-part person (head, legs and arms or head, trunk and legs or stick person)

By 6 years

- Draws person with head, facial parts, arms, legs, trunk, hands and feet

Problem signs…if a child is experiencing any of the following, consider this a red flag:

- Infants who are unable to hold or grasp an adult finger or a toy/object for a short period of time
- Unable to play appropriately with a variety of toys, or avoids crafts and manipulatives
- Consistently ignores or has difficulty using one side of body, or uses one hand exclusively

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

If there are concerns, advise the parent/caregiver to contact:

- Their family physician or paediatrician
- Parent may be referred to Community Care Access Centre for assessment by an occupational therapist, or to a private occupational therapist

Sources: Adapted from York Region Red Flags (2009) and revised by Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre and CommuniCare Therapy with reference to Beery™ VMI Stepping Stones Parent Checklist

Helpful Tips

For Developing Fine Motor Skills

For children experiencing difficulties

* Tips in purple are for children who are experiencing difficulties with fine motor development

Toddlers

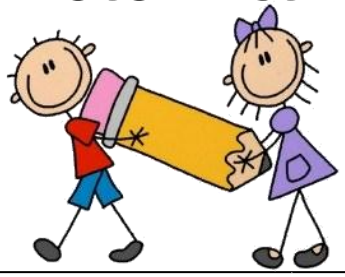
- Build on the 6 basic skills with FUN activities that don't involve a pencil
- Practice scribbling and painting on a vertical surface
  - * Use a binder with an elastic as an easy home-made easel
- Use a mixture of 'chubby' and regular sized writing tools
- Encourage them to try to dress themselves, open containers, eat with a spoon, cut their own food (e.g., banana with a plastic knife)
- **Do not** try to rush a child into holding a writing tool with the proper grasp
- Model writing and drawing for children (write/draw beside them, add text to their drawings)
- Make sure the first "tools" a child uses makes a bold mark. It is exciting for toddlers and they begin to discover cause and effect relationships
- Talk to your doctor if you have concerns

Preschoolers

- Build on the 6 basic skills with FUN activities that don't involve a pencil
- Use golf pencils or broken crayons
- Model and encourage children to put their ideas on paper
- Write on a vertical surface
- Use a mixture of 'chubby' and regular sized writing tools
- Use pencil grips (try a variety of types)
- Use golf pencils or broken crayons
- Find appropriate scissors (ones with springs, holes for all fingers etc)
- Talk to your doctor if you have concerns
- Visit an Occupational Therapist (OT)

Created by Early Literacy Specialists of Eastern Ontario
www.parentresource.ca

Fine Motor Activities



Activity:

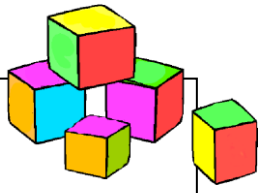
Skill(s) being developed:

Appropriate for ages:

Adaptations:
(Children who are experiencing challenges/advanced)

How would you share this information with your families?

Fine Motor Activities



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