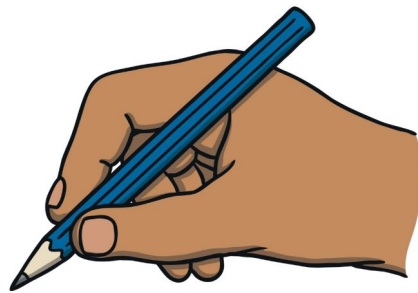




Arundel Court Primary Academy School

# Developing Handwriting



This booklet will provide you with ideas which will help your child improve their handwriting overtime.

Children must develop fine motor coordination in order to learn to perform basic everyday tasks, such as dressing, tying shoe laces, preparing food, as well as writing letters and sentences.

This booklet will provide you with some ideas and activities which you can use to strengthen your child's hands and support their development of writing skills.

## **FINE MOTOR SKILLS**

In school we aim to support your child in developing big movements, known as gross motor skills, through indoor and outdoor physical and play activities. We also aim to support your child's small movements, known as fine motor skills through a number of fine motor, scissor and pre-handwriting activities. Fine motor skills are the building blocks required to carry out activities that require controlled and precise movements. Activities that use fine motor skills are self-care tasks such as doing up buttons and using a knife and fork and school tasks such as writing and cutting with scissors. Activities that improve fine motor skills are ones that allow a child to develop specific aspects of the underlying skills. It is through play that children learn to explore and to develop new skills.

# How can you help your child?

## BOX OF TOYS

You may find it useful to have toys and activities handy in a plastic box. They are then ready to be taken out where there is an opportunity to play. Some of the smaller items can be stored in small plastic jars, containers or pencil cases - you could use this as a chance to practice screwing lids, opening containers and doing zips.

Here is a list of suggested items for your box:

- Building blocks, eg Duplo/Lego
- Large and small threading beads
- Animal fun pegs or any pegs
- Tennis ball
- Tweezers or small tongs
- Plastic straws (cut in half)
- Counters or coins
- Wind-up toys
- Games with small pieces or a dice, e.g. travel games
- Card games, eg snap, matching pairs
- Various craft items; coloured paper, card, tissue paper, stickers, ink stampers and ink pad
- Small squeezable paint and glue bottles
- Cotton buds



## STRENGTHENING ACTIVITIES

Strengthening activities are ones where the muscles in the hands and fingers have to work against resistance or some weight.

### Squashing and Squeezing

Whole Hand: Popping bubble wrap, play-dough, paint and glue in squeezable bottles, stress balls.

Pincer/Tripod: Bubble wrap - one pop at a time, small spray bottles/water gun, picking up items with tongs/tweezers



### Pushing and Pulling

Whole Hand: Tug-of-war, hole punchers, kneading & rolling play-dough, balloon pump, hammering, large interlocking toys, e.g. Duplo

Pincer/Tripod: Tearing strips of paper, finding small items hidden in playdough, small interlocking toys, e.g. Lego, Stickle-Bricks



### Freeze Position (Balance)

Whole Hand: Cup your hands and stretch them out in front of you, get someone to put items in to your hands and see how long you can hold them for.

Pincer/Tripod: Fill a small container with water/rice, hold upright in the tips of fingers - try not to spill!



## SKILL BUILDER ACTIVITIES

In each hand, there are 34 muscles that move the thumb and fingers. The brain has to learn to tell them to move in a certain order and pattern to carry out different tasks.

### Rotating/Turning

Nuts and Bolts: Threading the nuts on/off bolts

Screwing Lids: On and off containers/jars; these could have surprises or toys inside them

Twisting Toys: Spinning tops, wind-up toys



### Hand-Eye Co-Ordination

Threading and Lacing: Try sewing, lacing cards and making necklaces. Start with big holes, then try smaller ones

Arts and Crafts: Peeling and placing stickers, ink stampers (or make your own out of potatoes)



### Precision and Control

Finger Puppets: Either one finger or multiple fingers

Off the Shelf: Games that have small pieces, cards or dice, such as Connect 4, Snap, Snakes and Ladders

Ball Walk: Use your fingers to walk it around a table-top obstacle course



## SPEED ACTIVITIES

Speed activities help skills to become automatic as you get lots of practice and as you get faster you have less and less time to think in advance. A lot of "normal" activities can be turned into fun games by adding a speed challenge.

### Money box

- See how quickly you can put a stack of coins into a money box.
- To make it harder, have the child hold some coins in their hand and move them up to their fingers tips before they post them.



## ROUND THE HOME

Sometimes it can be hard to dedicate a specific time to play. However, there are plenty of activities around the home that can be made in to a fun way to develop fine motor skills.

**Kitchen:** Cooking can provide a great opportunity to work on strengthening skills, such as stirring mixture, kneading dough or squeezing oranges.



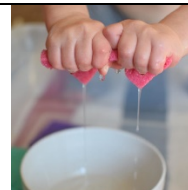
**Housework:** Pegging the washing allows children to work on their tripod grasp when squeezing the pegs open. Pegs could also be used to pick up items off the floor, like crumpled paper or socks.



**Gardening:** Use spray bottles filled with water. Make sure that a small sized bottle is used and has an easy to operate trigger. Spray the flowers, seeds, spray or onto a wall/paving slabs to make fun shapes. Let your child play with compost and help plant bulbs and seeds, the smaller the item the more control it will require.



**Bath-time:** Squeezing out sponges and facecloths, popping bubbles or toys that squirt water/need winding up are a great way of making the bath fun as well as working on fine motor skills.



Make marks in lots of different ways. You can use paint, flour, shaving foam etc.



Using trains to make marks

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### How often should we carry out activities?

The key is little and often. It will depend on your schedule, but 20 minutes, 5 times a week would be ideal. It does not have to be activities from this booklet, any activity that gets the fingers moving will do!

### How long should I keep going for?

Keep going! Children's skills constantly develop so supporting their development is an ongoing process. Try to make it part of your day-to-day routine rather than seeing it as a separate activity programme.

### How many activities should we complete?

Aim for quality not quantity. It is better to do 2 activities well rather than rushing through 10. Also, it is best to end before boredom kicks in to leave your child wanting to play again another day.

### Is there anything else I can do?

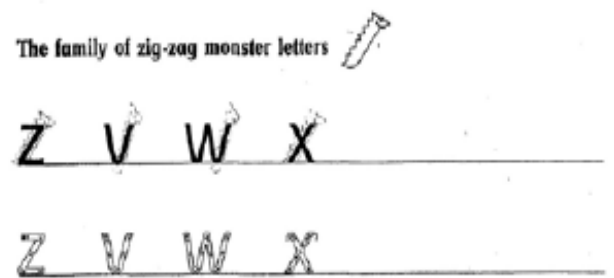
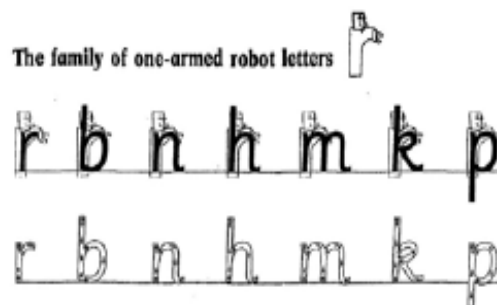
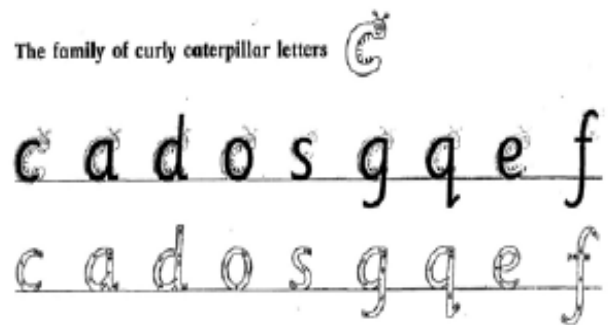
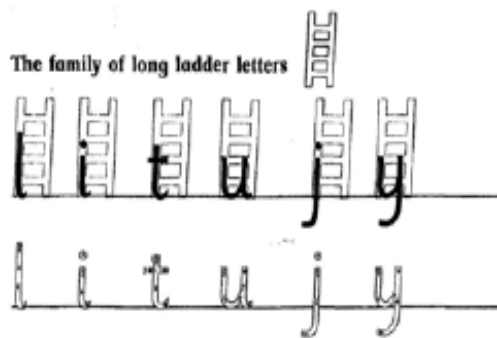
Make sure that you carry out activities that build up your child's overall strength and stamina i.e. going to the play park, ball games, swimming, etc.

## How do we write our letters at Arundel Court?

At our school we teach a new letter every day. Children will be taught to use their whole bodies to write this letter in the air and on the palm of their hand.

Your child will be given lots of fun ways to learn how to write each letter. They might write it in paint or in chalk.

They will use a pencil to write letters in words and sentences and will be supported to write their letters using the correct formation.



Help your child practise writing their name.

Always start with a capital letter and then lower case.

**A**my