



MOTOR ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE HANDWRITING SKILLS

Utilize gross motor activities to support handwriting development that improve postural control and strength in the proximal muscles:

- *Hanging activities-Practice monkey bars, chin ups, pull ups, or swing from tree limbs to increase strength in the shoulder girdle muscles.
- *Climbing activities-Climb ladders and ropes on the playground.
- *Pushing and pulling activities-Pull a heavy wagon or push a child on a swing. These pushing and pulling motions help the shoulder learn to coactivate to produce the right amount of force and stability.

Support motor planning skills through gross motor activities:

- *Sky writing-Have children “air write” the letters using their entire arm, describing each step as they go.
- *Obstacle courses-Include activities from the list above. For example, have children crawl to a scooter board, lay on their tummy, pull themselves along a line, and wheelbarrow walk to the finish line.
- *Body letter formation-Practice making their bodies into letters to improve the imprint on the brain of how the letter is formed



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Coordination activities-

- * Jumping jacks, jumping rope, hand clapping games, etc. all require extensive motor planning and coordination skills.
- * Ball skills are great for developing the eye-hand coordination needed for handwriting.
- * Throwing, catching, and shooting balls all teach the brain to practice guiding the hands toward the proper direction and location.

Bilateral hand skills-

- * Draw on loose paper held on the wall by the non-dominant hand
- * Lace beads or threading buttons, pasta, cut up straws
- * Play with play dough roll snakes/balls, cut out shapes
- * Tear or scrunch paper
- * Pull apart cotton balls, paper strips, tissue paper
- * Play with Lego, Duplo, Bristle Blocks (construction pieces that stick together)
- * Help with cooking (e.g., hold bowl with one hand and stir with the other)
- * Wrist stability and extension
- * Work and play at a vertical surface (e.g., window, mirror, wall, fence, etc.)
- * Writing on sloped surfaces (e.g., slanted desks)
- * Drum with sticks or hands, emphasis on bending wrists up (extension) and down (flexion)



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Hand strength-

- * Play with weighted balls hold, carry in obstacle course, pass, carefully roll/throw/catch Use squeeze/stress balls
- * Squeeze water out of a big sponge (e.g., car washing sponge)
- * Pull, squeeze, and mold Theraputty or play dough (play dough mats are great for this!)
- * Do elastic band push-ups (put elastics around fingers, move fingertips apart/together)
- * Play tug-of-war
- * Use snap beads/connectors
- * Play with clothespins
- * Development of the palmar arches
- * Cup both hands together and shake dice inside
- * Pull resistive putty (Theraputty, silly putty, gak) apart with fingertips
- * Place toothpicks, coins, golf tees, beads, googly eyes into play dough or putty
- * Play with a tennis ball head (aka "Mr. Mouth" or "Munchy Ball") and feed it small items such as beads, bugs, coins, pieces of putty or play dough, etc.