**SUPPORTING AND DEVELOPING PRE-WRITING SKILLS**

**Information for Parents**

***Working Together to Achieve More***

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As Early Years practitioners we can often be asked, particularly by parents, when children will be able to write or why they are not yet doing so. It’s useful for us to be able to share the many other complex skills that a child must be able to engage in before they can begin to put a pencil to paper. The information below illustrates some of those skills along with ways in which we can support the development of them in our settings.

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| **Pre-Writing Skill** | **How to Support** |
| Hand and finger strength – to allow necessary muscle power to control a pencil  | Scrunching paper, using tweezers, pegs and playdough |
| Crossing the mid line – ability to reach across the middle of the body with arms and legs allows the dominant hand practice in developing fine motor skills. | Removing puppets from one hand using the opposite hand, making circles with streamers, playing drums. |
| Pencil Grasp – the efficiency of how the pencil is held. | Offer a range of writing materials including pens and pencils of different sizes as well as sticks outside. |
| Hand eye co-ordination – receiving information from the eyes to control, guide and direct the hands. | Playing, throwing and catching games, small construction, jigsaws and interactive games on the smartboard. |
| Bilateral integration – using two hands together with one hand leading. | Opening jars, cutting out with scissors and threading beads. |
| Upper body strength – strength and stability provided by the shoulder to allow controlled hand movement. | Climbing, basketball, large scale drawing, pouring water from large buckets, transporting large objects. |
| Object manipulations – ability to skilfully manipulate tools. | Using scissors, toothbrushes, paintbrushes, spoons for mixing. |
| Visual perception – the brain’s ability to interpret and make sense of visual images such as letters and numbers. | Playing literacy and numeracy based games, shape sorting, and puzzles. |
| Hand dominance – consistent use of one hand to allow refined skill development.  | Hammering and sawing at the woodwork bench, pouring and feeding the baby. |
| Hand division – using just the thumb, index finger and middle finger for manipulation. | Sorting marbles, loose parts and transporting small objects.  |

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