

Berkeley Primary School
SEND Newsletter March 2023
By Teresa Suddaby and Jenna King
FOCUS: Gross and Fine Motor Skills



Hello and welcome to our next SEND newsletter. Each term we produce a newsletter to help develop your knowledge of SEND. We will share information in regards to what support is available in school, locally and information about the teams that we work alongside. Alongside these newsletters we will also be planning and facilitating a range of workshops and information sessions.

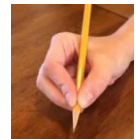
First of all we would like to say thank you to those of you who were able to attend our Gross & Fine Motor Skills workshop last half term. For those of you who were unable to attend, this newsletter will hopefully answer some of your questions. If you have any further queries after reading please don't hesitate to get in touch.

What are Gross & Fine Motor Skills?



Gross Motor Skills – are the skills which require us to use our large muscles. E.g. running, skipping, jumping and ball games.

Fine Motor Skills – are the skills which involve our small muscles and require us to use our brain to help us move our eyes, hands and fingers.



Key Message

Gross motor skill development comes first.



1st



2nd

Gross Motor Skills

It is important to remember that our Gross Motor Skills contribute too many different aspects of our lives it is not as simple as can they run, jump and skip.



Gross Motor Skills are the key to..

A good way to tell if your child's Gross Motor Skills are embedded and developed is to check each of the 7 elements named above.

Motor Planning – Can they plan and complete a task? E.g. if they were to approach a hopscotch could they plan how they were going to move and progress down the hopscotch and then complete the activity.

Body Awareness – Do they know where their body parts are in relation to other parts? E.g. their feet are underneath them at the bottom of their legs.

Position in space – Are they aware of other objects and people around them? Are they able to avoid collision, even in fast paced play.

Balance – This is split into two areas static balance and dynamic balance.

Static – balancing whilst still. E.g. on one leg.

Dynamic – balancing while moving. E.g. Hopping

Upper Body Strength – Can they sit upright and cut up food? (Key to fine motor)

Upper Limb Stability – Are the shoulder joints secure and muscles around the shoulder developed to meet the demands of the arm?

Integrating both sides of the body - Can they use both sides of their body to complete a task? E.g. to ride a bike.

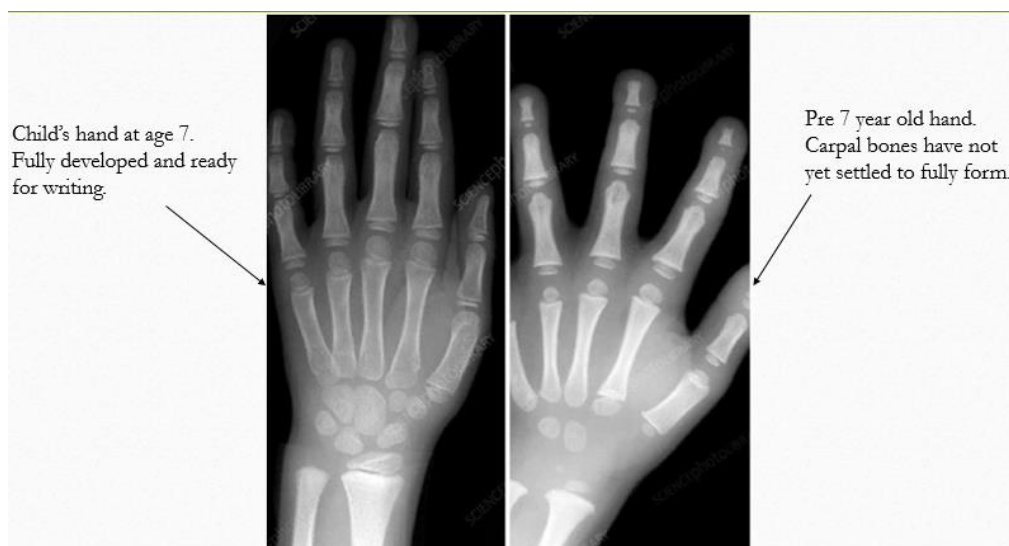
Once you are confident that your child has secure Gross motor skills you can begin looking at developing the Fine motor skills.

Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor skills are the key to good handwriting. Handwriting is assessed as a part of the national curriculum, is required for exams and everyday life. There is also evidence that it helps develop the brain.

Key Message

Although a necessary life skill, it is important that we do not worry or push handwriting before children are ready. Look at the difference in a child's hand in the Early years compared with a child age 7.



Is your child ready to write?

In order to check if your child is ready to write you should look for the following:

- Postural stability/control
- Sensory awareness of hands and fingers
- Hand, arm and finger strength and control
- Hand-eye coordination
- The ability to cross the midline
- In-hand manipulation
- Effective grasp
- Visual skills, eye-tracking
- Visual perception, spatial awareness
- Visual motor integration and directionality
- Listening skills
- An understanding of the task (cognitive ability)
- Concentration and motivation

The key to effective sitting.

So how do we develop the skills needed prior to writing?

1. Core Strength Activities – star jumps, swimming and gymnastics being just a few great activities for strengthening our core.

2. Awareness of the arms, hands and fingers – are they aware of where their arms, hands and fingers lie and can they complete simple tasks determined by the messages sent from the brain to the named body parts. Simon says and mixing with a whisk can help with this.

3. Hand, Arm and Finger Strength – children whose hands are weak will not be able to hold a pencil effectively. Start your focus at the shoulders and work down to the finger tips. Lego, playdoh and tweezers are just a few ways to help with this.

4. Hand Eye Co-ordination and Crossing the midline – matching what they see with what they can do. Check if your child can cross the midline, can they stretch their arm across to the other side of their body? Threading and cup stacking are two great ways to support this.

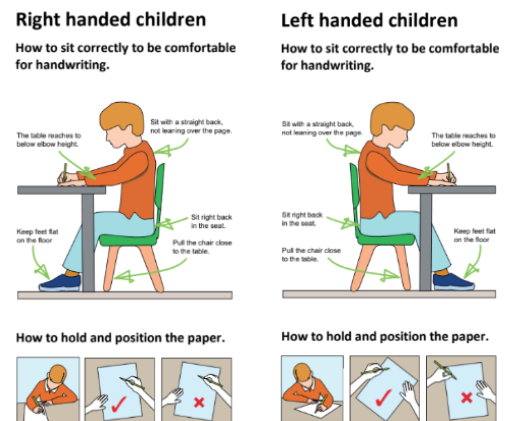
5. In hand manipulation and secure grasp – can they manipulate a pencil to ensure a tripod grip. Posting coins into a money box/ letters in a post box and scrunching up paper are just two ways this can be developed.

6. Visual skills – developing their eye tracking, visual perception and spatial awareness. Mazes, Dot to Dot and obstacle courses are a few ways to develop these skills.

7. Visual Motor Integration – combining the use of eye coordination and fine motor skills, this is the key to good handwriting. Games for diagonal awareness like noughts and crosses and mazes can support this.

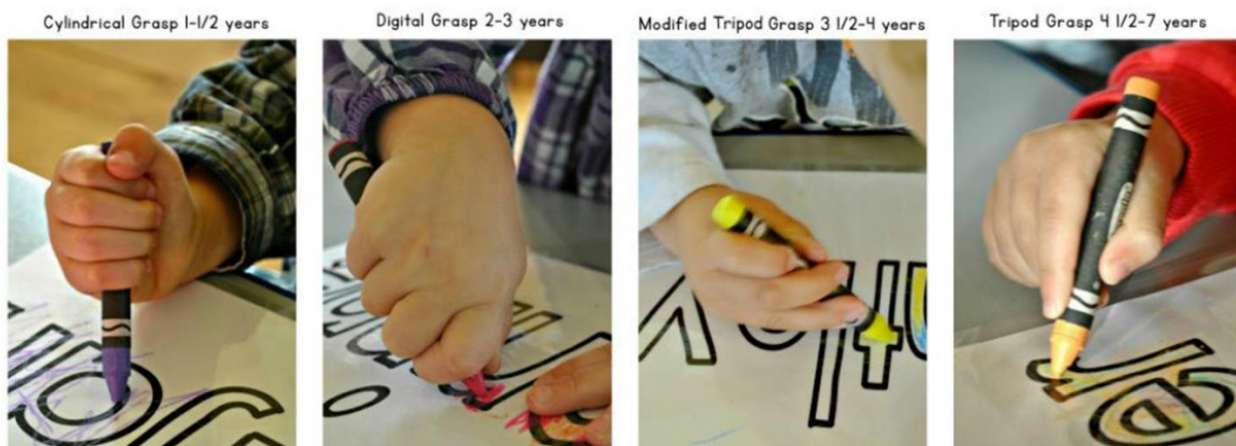
Once children are ready for handwriting don't forget to check that they are sitting in the correct position:

- Feet flat on the floor or on a wide surface
- Knees at a right angle with two fingers space behind them
- Hips at approximately 90° with back supported.
- Sit a fists distance from table
- Arms should rest on the table.



Finally...

Don't forget that pencil grip development follows a timeline, the one below is classed 'typical development'. All children are unique, support your child with the step they are on before striving to complete the next one.



WHO TO CONTACT IN THE SCHOOL?

Teresa Suddaby (SENDCO)
Jenna King (SENDCO Support)

If in doubt ... talk to someone