

## Sensory Activities

The following activities ought to be done frequently to increase large muscle strength. These activities also strengthen the child's awareness of his or her hands.

1. Clapping games (loud/quiet, on knees, together, etc.)
2. Catching (clapping) bubbles between hands



## Sand Tray or Finger Paints

Children enjoy writing letters with their fingers in a tray of sand or with finger paints. These ways provide good opportunities to teach correct letter formation.



## Other activities

- Throw and catch a ball
- Drive pegs into holes
- Draw crosses and circles in a top to bottom direction
- use multisensory materials to keep drawing and pre-writing interesting, such as drawing in shaving cream,
- Manipulate clay by making balls, snakes
- play with wind-up toys
- construction toys such as Duplo, Bristle Blocks , wooden blocks
- toy tools such as hammer and nails, screwdriver, nuts and bolts

## Scissor Activities

When scissors are held correctly and when they fit a child's hand well, cutting activities will exercise the very same muscles which are needed to hold a pencil correctly, that is, between the thumb and index finger with the pencil resting on the middle finger.



1. Cut up junk mail or favourite items from catalogues/magazines.
2. Cut play dough with scissors.
3. Cut straws or shredded paper.



# Learning through Play

# Developing skills for writing



Why begin with strengthening muscles?

### Body Stability

The joints of the body need to be stable before the hands can be free to focus on specific skilled fine motor tasks. Upper body strength and wrist stability are required before children can write successfully.



Top tip: Encourage your child to keep both thumbs in an upward position when cutting. That is, the thumb on the scissor hand and the thumb on the hand that is holding the paper or object should both be facing upward, toward the ceiling.

Activities to do at Home...

### Wrist stability

- Walk or race while balancing a tennis ball on a large spoon; don't let it fall!
  - Play with a Yo-Yo
- Putting weight into the arms and hands with some **Animal Walking** activities also help the wrists
- When sitting on the floor to play, lean into one hand and keep the hand open; Reach across your body with the other hand to play. This is a good position for drawing with sidewalk chalk, doing a floor puzzle, playing with blocks and other small toys.
- Practice opening jars of all sizes
- Pour water from a pitcher into several cups
- To keep the wrists straight while colouring, drawing and writing, use a slanted or vertical surface such as an easel or a wide 3-ring binder turned sideways. Paper can be taped to a wall as well.



### Sounds Scrapbook

Write a letter at the top of each page of a scrapbook. Concentrating on a few letters at a time and collect pictures of objects that begin with those letters. Do not use as examples words where the first sound does not make its normal sound such as in giraffe, ship, cheese, and thumb. Stick the pictures on the appropriate pages.

