

Ideas for Motor Movements

Gross Motor Skills

- Uncluttered classroom and cloakroom
- Desk and chair at the correct height
- Feet should be flat on the floor when seated
- Chair with arms may help
- Sloping desk top
- Brain gym
- Daily physical activity
- Opportunities to work on specific skills during play and PE
- Use scarves, koosh balls, fur balls etc for throwing and catching
- Use balloons - these travel more slowly and allow more reaction time for catching and for tennis
- Use balls of various sizes for catching, rolling and chasing (the size of the ball used must correspond to the child's skill level)
- Use bean bags - for various balance challenges, such as on head, hand, foot etc

Fine Motor Skills

- Making, kneading, squeezing, rolling, flattening, pinching activities with play dough, plasticine or clay
- Games/activities - "pick up sticks", tiddlywinks, pegboard, threading beads, dealing out cards, tweezer games e.g. Operation
- Finger puppets/ finger painting/popping bubbles
- Sand and water play
- Construction materials – duplo/lego, stickle bricks, etc
- Drawing/copying/tracing/colouring activities using a variety of materials - paints and various sizes of brush, blackboards, whiteboards, shaving cream on a desk, sand trays, crayons, chalks, markers etc
- Finger rhymes/action songs - e.g. Incy Wincy Spider
- Craft activities
- Scissor skills - use easy grip scissors, use a heavier weight of paper
- Using a mouse in IT
- Simple paper folding
- Paper tearing to make pictures

- Scribbling and patterning (try it in time to music)
- Stencils and templates
- Playing musical instruments

Graphomotor (handwriting)

Pre-writing activities

Children should be encouraged to draw following the developmental sequence below.

Group 1 | □ O

Group 2 L T +

Group 3 □ X Δ

(A child who has difficulty copying/drawing groups 1 and 2 will find letter formation very difficult.)

- Examples of activities for drawing vertical and horizontal lines –
 - trace with finger first then use chunky felt pens, pencils, chalk
 - use whiteboards, blackboards, sheets of paper on wall or desk
 - draw in sand or shaving foam
 - complete simple dot to dot and mazes
 - toy car driving along a track from left to right/ toy car racing around a circular track
 - make circles in the air ribbons, scarves etc
- Practise handwriting patterns in a wide range of media - paint, sand, air, chalk etc
- Pre-writing exercises (see OT sheet)
- Finger strengthening exercises (see OT sheet)
- Use a toy car on the ground or in the sand, the car has to drive in the right direction for each letter
- Use chubby pencil/pencil grip/triangular pencil or pen/wrap elastic band around pen or pencil to provide surer grip and stop slipping
- Use sloping surface/board for writing
- Use non slip matting or a clipboard or clip paper to cardboard to help stabilise paper
- Lined/squared paper may help size and spacing
- Use coloured paper or raised line paper
- Arrow on desk to indicate direction of work

- Mark the jotter with a coloured spot or similar to indicate where to start writing and help with setting out work
- Use roll and write letters to provide visual stimulus
- Sandpaper letters to feel
- Tape the alphabet or specific letters to the desk as a reminder
- To make copying from the board easier by using a different colour for each line
- Allow extra time to complete written tasks
- Praise **content**
- Alternative methods of recording - scribe/computer/dictaphone
- Parents may act as scribes for homework tasks
- Teacher can provide work sheets/copies of notes to reduce the amount of written work
- Use of mind maps, diagrams, charts, cartoon strips etc to record the main ideas
- Provide outlines of diagrams, apparatus drawings, maps, etc so that the pupil only has to label the relevant parts or annotate the diagrams

Advice for Left-handed Writers

- *Writing tool and grasp* - In order to see the text as they write, left handed pupils should hold the pencil at least 2cm from the point. This can be indicated by a small elastic band around the desired area or by using a pen with an integral grip. A left handed pupil often pushes the pen/pencil across the paper so choose a writing tool that moves smoothly across the paper (eg, fibre tipped pen, a softer pencil), experiment until you find the best option.
- *Paper position* - The position of the paper in relation to the pupil will affect the flow and speed of hand writing. The best position for the paper is to the left of the body midline at an angle of 35-45°. An easy way to achieve this is to:
 - sit straight at the table with the correct posture
 - clasp hands together in line with both head and midline of body, placing forearms on the table to make a triangle
 - move the whole triangle to left of midline so hands are in front of the left shoulder
 - place paper parallel to left arm inside formed triangleThe paper should be far enough to the left for pupil to rest their elbow on the working surface and move the forearm in an arc without crossing the body.
Position the left hand below the writing line so that the pupil can see what they are writing.
- *Sitting position*
 - select a table and chair suitable for the height of the pupil
 - feet should be flat on the floor
 - knees are at 90°
 - chair seat depth will fully support thighs
 - lower trunk is touching the back of the chair
 - pupil leans slightly forward
 - forearms on the table
 - head is up
 - chair is pulled into the table
 - to avoid arms colliding, ensure a left handed pupil is not sitting too close to a right handed pupil

Perception - Visual
• Try to provide a distraction free environment
• Give slow, simple, clear instructions
• Demonstrate movement/task
• Allow extra time to complete the task
• Practise tasks using a multi-sensory approach
• Break tasks down into simple steps and gradually increase to more complex instructions
• Reinforce concepts of shape, size and space by using concrete materials such as blocks, Lego, construction toys to build and copy models/pictures
• Drawing/copying/tracing/colouring activities using a variety of materials - finger paints, paints and various sizes of brush, blackboards, whiteboards, shaving cream on a desk, sand trays, crayons, chalks, markers etc
• Use tracing paper to copy shapes/pictures
• Draw/copy geometric forms (eg, circle, cross, triangle and vertical/horizontal diamonds)
• Drawing and copying a repeated series of shapes
• Drawing cartoons - eg, use books which give children step by step guides to creating pictures and cartoons
• Picture completion - drawing of an object with a part missing, the child finishes the drawing
• Share picture books and ask the child to find items in the picture – find the little bear, how many kittens are in the picture? etc
• Hidden pictures - find objects hidden in the picture
• Use puzzles, such as dot to dot and mazes
• Word searches/spot the difference/odd one out
• Games – snap/pairs/lotto/ dominoes/ Connect 4/ludo
• Matching pairs - objects/shapes/pictures
• Jigsaw puzzles
• Knots and crosses
• Cutting the dot-to-dot pictures without drawing on the lines first
• IT - using a mouse
• Modelling with clay/dough/plasticine
• Sorting - colour, size, shape, texture
• Copying from the board - provide the child with their own copy of what is on the board

- provide a good contrast, ie yellow or white chalk on a blackboard or blue and black pens on a whiteboard
- write sections in different colours for easy location or number sections
- ensure pupil is facing the board and near the front of the classroom
- talk as you write on the board
- alternate board work with desk work to reduce fatigue
- the child may benefit from using a sloping board

- Printed materials
 - simple type faces are easier to read
 - consider density of print, letter spacing and line spacing
 - avoid texts where pictures are superimposed on print
 - provide visual cues for L-R movements (eg, red margin as a reading cue)

Perception - Sensory

- Seat the child where there is a minimum of coming and going so that they are not bumped into unexpectedly/give them a desk to themselves/seat at the end of a row
- When sitting on the floor or in the gym place them on the periphery of the group/give them a marker to designate personal space - tape, hoop, carpet square etc
- Use a dynamic cushion
- Provide a "fidget item" - eg, koosh ball, stress ball, small toy etc
- If PE is outside they may need a mat to sit on
- Avoid unexpected physical contact when working with the child/avoid touching or approaching from behind/explain what you are about to do and use firm pressure
- Allow the child frequent "movement breaks", these may involve "heavy work" activities - eg, carrying books/moving chairs/stretching
- Give the child opportunities to move - eg, sharpening pencil, taking a message, putting something in the bin etc
- Brain gym/class moves
- Child should either be first or last in the line when lining up
- When possible minimise the amount of time the child is expected to stand in line
- Explain that at times other children may accidentally bump into them and how to deal with this
- Help the child stay organised and focused:
 - provide a daily schedule - pictures/words/words and pictures
 - tape alphabet and/or number line on desk to refer to

- use pictures or other visual cues to help organise personal belongings
- keep visual distractions to a minimum in the child's work area
- use dim lighting and pastel coloured paper (backing paper and work sheets)
- use squared paper to help setting out in number work
- use minimal visual information on each page

- Whenever possible warn children of any loud noises before they occur
- Use sound blocking headphones
- Use soft background noise for calming
- Allow the child to listen to calming/favourite music with headphones
- Use soft talking to help the child know what to attend to
- Establish eye contact with the child before speaking to them
- Break instructions down into small steps and allow the child time to process in between each step
- Use gestures and/or visual supports along with the verbal instructions
- Ask child to repeat instructions before beginning the task
- Teach a cue when the child needs to attend - eg, hand signal, touch on shoulder