

HIAS HOME LEARNING RESOURCE

Engaging activities to support handwriting strengths at home

KS2

HIAS English team
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Final version

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Background

You might think that improving handwriting just comes from doing more handwriting; however, fluency and neatness also come from having the right strengths in the body. Again, you may think this comes from just hand strength, but it requires more than that. For children to achieve beautiful, fluent handwriting they need strength in their core, shoulder, elbow, wrist and hand. If any one of these is missing, children may struggle to write neatly, or it may hurt their hand.

The nature of lockdown means children will spend more time 'contained' and potentially leading a more sedentary lifestyle than normal. In addition, children are likely to be writing less often than normal. The good news is that activities that support the development of the physical strengths needed for handwriting are fun, wide ranging, family friendly and possible in confined spaces.

The materials:

- Each booklet contains ideas of age appropriate activities.
- The more frequent the activity is carried out the greater the impact.

How can parents, carers and siblings help?

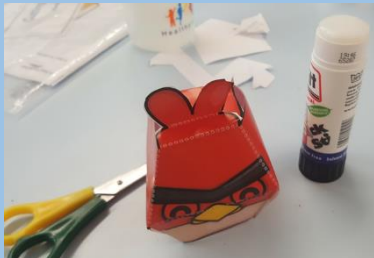
- Try a variety of activities over time, but also return to the same ones to develop the strength, notice improvement and ensure the movements are becoming more automatic and smoother.
- Adapt any of the resources and materials as you feel necessary to support your child's needs or the items you have available at home.
- Adapt the games depending on the resources you have available at home – be creative!
- If your child has a competitive nature, include this over time:
Can they do it faster?
Can they sustain the activity for longer?
Can they build it taller / longer?
Can they knock more / hold more in the same time limit?
- Join in with the session and make it fun!

Glossary

Gross motor skills: games to strengthen the core ie pelvis, stomach, back. Supports balance and coordination between left and right side of the body to ensure equal strength on both sides. Encourage children to cross from one side of their body to the other ie make sure their right arm crosses over the midline to their left etc. Crawling, walking, jumping, leaping, hopping, skipping, running, and balancing all require strength and increasing accuracy without them even knowing!

Fine motor skills: hand and finger games to improve hand strength. Developing coordination to enable pencil to be held without the hand tiring / hurting. Eg cutting with scissors, tracing, drawing, squeezing, sticking, folding paper, colouring, threading.

Fine motor activities

Water pistols A fun activity to develop strength of the trigger finger. Create targets, what can be knocked down? How accurately? 	Finger football Flick the ball across the table using the index or middle finger. The flicking finger needs to work independently from the rest of the hand. 	Egg box share Using anything suitable eg raisins, beads, sweets, dried beans – put 6 objects into palm of hand, then place one at a time into egg box using thumb and forefinger. Increase difficulty with number of items to hold and manipulate / against the clock etc. 
Pegging Clip and unclip pegs from the washing line / rope or smaller stationery ones from card. Try keeping hold of the pegs taken off, how many can be held at one time without dropping? 	Craft Find craft ideas online. Using scissors accurately is an excellent way to improve hand strength. Find an idea you want to create and complete as accurately as possible. 	Artwork Use any materials available at home to paint, draw, colour, trace. Use felt tips, crayons, colouring pencils which all require different pressures and skills with the hand 
Play dough / clay / plasticine Roll, squeeze, squash, pull, pinch and poke in modelling materials is a great workout for the whole hand. Use each hand in turn and both together. Create something amazing! 	Chop sticks / tweezer games Set yourself a challenge, find the equipment, invent your own rules and go for it! 	Sewing A kit with pre-punched holes makes sewing easier, but there are plenty of options and levels of difficulty to try. 

Gross motor activities

Balancing Stand on one leg whilst doing various games eg Throw a ball against a wall; throw and catch to someone else; rotate ball around the waist then change direction. Make it harder by standing on something to make it unsteady. Switch to do both sides equally! 	Making bread / cooking Bread should be kneaded for at least 10 minutes – this requires lots of shoulder and wrist strength. Any cooking requiring stirring etc is also useful. 	Dance Follow / learn a routine from online, or just have a disco at home! Encourage balancing and crossing the body with control. 
Keepy Uppies with balloons How many times can you flick the balloon in the air without it dropping to the floor? Try a rally between two or more players or add another balloon! Reach and cross left side to right side etc. 	Tummy skittles Lay down on your front and lift the whole body up from the waist, roll the ball and hit the targets! 	General games Any game already owned at home is likely to be helpful eg football tricks, playing in goal, balance boards, tennis, badminton, cricket, catch, skipping, hula hoop, cycling. 
Dodge Tuck a tie or scarf in the waistband of normal clothing at the back. Two players face each other and stay facing each other all the time. Standing on balls of the feet, players aim to 'steal' the other player's scarf, whilst dodging (protecting) their own from being caught.	Obstacle course indoors / outdoors Create a course eg crawl under a chair, jump over something, balance on a wobbly item, throw a ball into a bucket, run around a loop and repeat. 	Housework / gardening The great news is that digging, Hoovering, dusting, wiping, washing up, washing the car etc all require different physical strengths! Learning real life skills at home is also supporting movements to become automated through repeated muscle movements. All important for developing fluent handwriting!

Try <https://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/teach-handwriting-parents.html> or <https://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/gross-and-fine-motor-skills-games.html> for more free ideas and information.

HIAS English Team

The HIAS English team offer a wide range of high-quality services to support schools in improving outcomes for learners, including courses, bespoke consultancy and in-house training.

During the current school closures, we are still offering school support in a variety of ways such as video conferencing, phone calls and bespoke creation of resources remotely. Coming soon will be teacher training via virtual classrooms. We would be happy to discuss your needs.

For further details referring to English, please contact:

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For further details on the full range of services available please contact us using the following details:

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