



Physical development – fine motor skills – information for parents

Dear parents,

The educational programme in the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework states:

Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

It is important that we provide your child with the skills they need to be confident writers in the future. We play lots of games and plan regular activities for them to develop these skills, for example - regular access to mark making – large and small scale – painting, drawing etc; threading games to strengthen hands and arms; games to develop core strength and stability. We take the chairs away, so your child is encouraged to stand and further develop their balance.

An important part of preparing your child for writing is to play crossing the midline games – the midline is the middle of the body. Being able to cross the midline – and decide whether to use your right or left hand – is an important part of child development. Children need this skill for reading, writing and other school-ready activities. If children struggle with crossing the midline you will notice that they switch hands and cannot decide which hand to use for things like writing and using a spoon and they may over-compensate in their whole-body movements when learning to write. Poor midline crossing skills lead to poor reading and tracking ability and poor, weakened or delayed writing skills at school, so it's really important that we play lots of midline games with early years children. Here are some midline activity ideas we use in our setting:

- ✓ Car or train tracks – make giant tracks on the floor and use one hand to drive the along them.
- ✓ Big painting – use big paint brushes and rollers with a bowl of water outside and encourage the child to use one hand at a time and reach up high – and down low – to the left – to the right – when painting.
- ✓ Car washing – wash up and down, left and right – with one hand and then the other hand.
- ✓ Window washing – use a spray bottle and cloth – again, wash up and down, left and right with one hand and then the other hand.
- ✓ Wipe the table – use a spray bottle and cloth to wipe the table.
- ✓ Horizontal mark making – put silly soap or shaving foam on a flat table and wipe hands across it – left and right, round and round, up and down.
- ✓ Dance – touch one knee with the opposite hand – and swap.
- ✓ Water the plants – use a watering can or hose in one hand and stretch across to the plants.

If you have any questions about how we develop fine motor skills, please ask. Thank you.

Childcare Happy Days

March 2022