

Help Your Child with Writing

Playdough

Playdough is a great finger-strengthening activity. Add cutters and tools, theme it with a story or practise moulding letters.



Drawing

Drawing is a very good entry point for handwriting as it gives children an opportunity to practise guiding a pencil. They can follow a simple guide or use their imagination to draw.



Go Shopping

Go shopping and let your child write a small part of your shopping list. Give your child the list while you are there for them to find the items and add them to the trolley. You might help them to form the letters or write it together so it gives meaning to making marks.



Scissor Skills

Scissor skills help to develop fine motor muscles. Have long strips of paper available and draw a mixture of pattern lines on them (wavy, zigzag, straight). Invite children to cut along the lines to complete the pattern.



Strengthening Fingers

Strengthen fingers by using a pestle and mortar in the garden. Collect things in the garden and break them down using the pestle and mortar; talk about the smells and the changes as it breaks down. Try some spices from the kitchen too.



Writing Letters

Writing letters in sand, water or paint (or on whiteboards or chalkboards) is a great way to practise letter formation. Start with the letters from your child's name and move onto initial sounds.

Fine Motor

Fine motor and hand-eye coordination will develop through lots of activities that use pinching, grasping, twisting, threading, squashing and squeezing. Activities such as threading, weaving and manipulating small items with tweezers will all help build fine motor control.

Sensory

Sensory opportunities are an excellent way to make writing fun and exciting. You could squirt shaving foam onto a smooth surface and add some paint in colours linked to a theme, such as seasons, rainbows or under the sea. Children can spread the shaving foam and mix it with the paint. They can make marks in the shaving foam with their fingers or with paintbrushes. Provide letters or patterns for your child to copy.

Mark Making

Making marks is often where early writing starts. Encourage mark making in natural materials, such as mud, sand or snow. Children can use a variety of tools to make marks, such as brushes, sticks and feathers. Pattern books can also be fun to do and allow children to practise mark making.

Help Your Child with Reading

Re-read

Reread your child's favourite stories as many times as your child wants to hear them. Choose books and authors that your child enjoys.



Talk

To help your child develop their vocabulary, talk to your child as much as possible about what you are doing. Ask them about their day. What have they been doing? What was their favourite thing? What games did you play today?



Sit

Sit close together and get comfy! You could encourage your child to hold the book themselves and turn the pages. Use funny voices, puppets or props to bring the story alive.



Ask Questions

Ask questions when you are reading together, such as 'What can you see on this page?', 'How do you think the characters feel?' and 'What is the story about?'



Look

Look at the pictures and talk about them. For example, 'Can you find a bird or a cat?', 'What else can you see?', 'What are the children playing? Have you played that before?'



Visit

Visit the local library together. It is fun choosing new books to read. Keep an eye out for special story events at the library or local bookshops that you can join in with.



Storytelling Tin

Make a storytelling tin. Collect together a group of objects with a story theme. Open the tin and explore the objects inside. Your child can choose a character, talk about where the story will be and think about what might happen. Have fun making up a story with the objects from the tin.



Story Sacks

A story sack is a great way to get your child talking about a story. They are bags that contain the story itself, alongside a variety of items linked to the story. It could be the story CD, a related nonfiction book, puppets, models or objects that are in the story and a related activity.



Encourage

Encourage family and friends to share books with your child. The more your child sees you and others reading, the more they will want to read too.



Help Your Child with Phonics

I Spy

I Spy is great for identifying and hearing initial sounds in words. It helps your child to tune in to the beginning of words and identify the sound. Play it at home, on a walk, in the car...anywhere!



Sound Hunt

Hide some sounds around your house or garden and see how many your child can find and identify.

Say the Sounds

Say the sounds correctly at any given opportunity for your child to hear. In all games and activities, make sure you pronounce speech sounds clearly. There are videos online that will help you to check this.



Read

Read to your child. It is important to keep enjoying books together. This helps your child to learn the rhythm and order of stories. It also helps with their vocabulary development for writing and builds their imagination.



Joining In

Joining in with stories and songs can be a great way to support children. When you are reading to your child, ask them to join in with phrases that are repeated. For example, 'Run, run, as fast as you can! You can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man!'. Traditional stories, such as 'The Gingerbread Man' and 'The Three Little Pigs', often have repeated phrases and children will love doing the voices!



Singing

Songs and nursery rhymes help your child to hear the sounds in words and build up a bank of familiar vocabulary. Encourage them to join in with actions - you could try and make up your own nonsense rhymes too!



Listen

Listen to your child read. In reception, your child will start bringing books home to read. Try to find time to hear them read every day. It could be snuggled up on the sofa, at bedtime or before school.



Play

Play rhyming games with children. For example, play a game of 'silly soup' and pretend to put in objects that rhyme (such as a bat, a hat, a cat, a mat). Play this with your child and then see if they can do it independently.

Sounds

Sound boxes can be a fun way to look at initial sounds with children. Start by filling a box with shredded paper. Alternatively, you could play in a sand pit or the bath (depending on the objects you choose). Then, add objects that begin with two different initial sounds. Write the two sounds on pieces of paper or whiteboards for your child to match the objects to. For example, if it was a duck, it would match to 'd'.



Help Your Child with Maths

Counting

Practise counting out objects, such as buttons, toys or sticks collected on a walk. Encourage your child to point to each object as they say the number name.


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Matching

Dominoes can be a great way to understand that a number refers to an amount of objects. Matching games can also help your child to understand 1:1 correspondence.



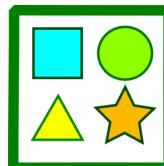
Cooking

Measure ingredients and bake something yummy together and set the timer for it to cook.



Shapes

Understanding shape helps us to make sense of the world around us. Go on a shape hunt around your house. See if you can find circles, squares, rectangles or triangles.



Ordering Numbers

Once your child has become familiar with counting then they can start ordering numbers. You could label blocks, cars or dinosaurs with numbers 1-5 then 1-10 and enjoy putting them in the correct order, muddling them up and starting again.



Play

Play with objects, such as shells, bottle tops, beads or building blocks. These can be sorted into sets, used to make simple patterns or pictures (like a face or boat) or used to prompt discussions about shape.



Songs and Rhymes

Songs and rhymes are great for helping young children learn to count. Focus on numbers 1-5 and then 1-10. Try 'Five Little Ducks Went Swimming One Day' and '1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Once I Caught a Fish Alive'.

Talk

Talk to children about the different uses of numbers. Talk about numbers you see all around you. For example, 'Look, there are three cats on the wall' or, 'Can you see the number 5 on the gate?' Play games and talk about the numbers on the dice (board games are great for this).

Number Spotting

Try and spot numbers wherever you go – on a menu at a cafe, on the bus, at the shops or people's front doors on a walk.

Sorting

Anything can be sorted into groups! Sorting objects into sets of things with similar characteristics is important for beginning to understand what things have in common. This could be snacks, buttons or toys and can be extended to talk about how many are in each group. You could ask, 'Which has more? Which has less? Let's count and check!'

Every Day

Do maths every day! You might not think it but you will be doing maths every day. Helping your child get dressed, going to the shops, singing counting songs, counting the steps on the stairs, following a daily routine – most activities we do with our child involve maths.