

# Activity: Helping Your Child's Fine-Motor Control



By Joanna Nesbit

Writing is a skill that requires hand-eye coordination and fine-motor control (the ability to use fingers, hands and wrists for small, controlled movements). Children acquire fine-motor skills throughout early childhood, but the rate of development varies greatly. Some kids may have well-developed fine-motor skills by age 2, while others are still developing them at age 6. Experts recommend parents provide plenty of pre-writing activities to help their kids' development. Here are some fun ways for kids to practice their fine-motor skills, build hand strength and learn about the shapes that will later translate into letters:

- Play with clay or play dough to strengthen the hand muscles used for writing.
- Finger-paint with paints or shaving cream to see the motion of finger movement.
- Do art projects with stubby crayons or small pieces of chalk that force gripping with fingertips, not the whole hand.
- Draw shapes — circles, rectangles and triangles — on a chalkboard or slate.
- Build with blocks and play with small cars and other small toys.
- String beads or practice lacing with cardboard lacing cards.
- Work on a puzzle.
- Make a collage or other project that uses scissors and glue or paste.
- Play games that include small game pieces and cards.
- Sort small objects, such as buttons or beans, or stack coins into piles of pennies, nickels and dimes.

- Draw shapes or letters in the sand or dirt with a stick.

- Draw shapes or letters in the dark with a flashlight or laser pen.

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