

The ability to write is a complex one, not only do children need to have the confidence to pick up a pencil and make marks on paper, they also need to be developmentally ready to write with a **strong core** and **hand muscles**. The hand is a really complex piece of machinery and is made up of lots of joints and muscle groups that interconnect and work together to provide maximum dexterity.

# How do muscles develop?



Children's arms and hands contain a series of pivotal joints which develop from biggest to smallest (shoulder, elbow, wrist, fingers). Once the pivots have worked their way down to the wrist, the journey doesn't stop there, though for many children it becomes far trickier and they often face difficulties. The end of the pivot journey is when the mark making ends at the smallest set of pivots, right at the end of the fingers. If children can hold their mark making tool there, then they will have the fullest, most dextrous range of movement that their bodies can provide and be ready to write for life. This is fine motor control. However, it is important to remember that a child cannot master fine motor activities until gross motor skills are developed.

# Core strength

Heavy lifting

Gardening/digging.

Is it a challenge?

Use of tricycles/balance bikes.

Outside- big physical play. Climbing/running.



## Gross motor skills

Painting with rollers/mops

Walking

Dancing

Being outside- running, jumping, twisting, pushing, hopping, skipping, pulling, spinning, turning.

Bikes and trikes

Obstacles courses. Den building.

Brushing and mopping with large brooms and mops.

Is it challenging?

Large loose parts- wooden planks, tyres etc.

Lift and transport objects.

Climbing equipment.

Playing swing ball.

Sweeping the leaves.

Ribbon/scarf twirling.

Throwing and catching.

- Gross motor skills are all the skills that children develop using their whole body.
- Children's development of gross motor skills affects their learning and development.
- Children need access to outdoor areas every day.

## Fine motor skills

Playdough and clay

Fine motor skills involve small muscles working with the brain and nervous system to control movements in areas such as the hands, fingers, lips, tongue and eyes. Developing fine motor skills helps children do things like eating, writing, manipulating objects and getting dressed.

Threading

A baby uses their fingers and thumbs to pick things up. They will also feel and taste objects with their mouth and lips. An older child will use their fine motor skills for actions like pulling up a zip or using scissors to cut up paper. These important skills will contribute to a child's development and independence across all areas of learning.

Cooking

Sewing

Painting and finger painting.

Research shows that the development of fine motor skills depends on the development of [gross motor skills](#) and that a joined-up approach to physical development is important. Young children need many opportunities to develop fine motor skills alongside gross motor skills so they can become confident to explore the world around them.

Sand and water play.

Building

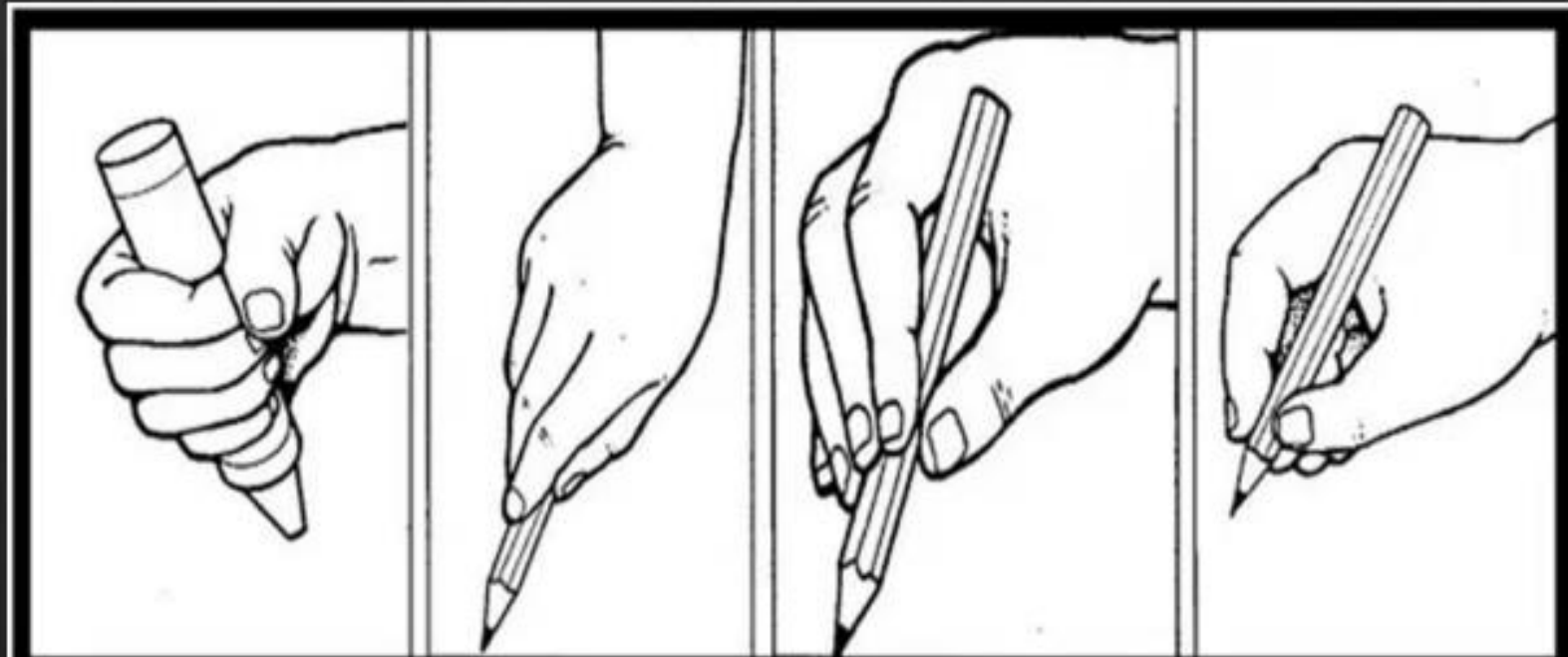
Play with small world activities.

Puzzles

Arts and crafts

Gardening

# Types pf pencil grips



Mark making

Chalks

Paint brushes

Paper and pens

White boards and pens

Large paper on the wall or on the floor.

Correctly writing the sounds.

Making shapes.

Making shapes and sounds in the air.

Writing their name.

Writing initial sounds in words. *What sounds can you hear?*

Writing words using the sounds the children already know. *What sounds can you hear?*