

# Preschool

## Resource Pack



# Introduction

This pack includes a wide range of activity suggestions for your preschool aged child.

At your child's age they will benefit from engaging regularly in a combination of the activities outlined in the various sections of this resource pack. We recommend choosing a small number of these activities to focus on at any one time. Demonstration, repetition, and daily exposure is key to achieving the underlying skills necessary to facilitate overall functional development.

The length of time your child engages in the activities should be as tolerated by them. They should never be forced to partake in activities but should be encouraged appropriately. Your child should be supervised at all times when engaging in the activities described.



Please find the link to our Pinterest page, 'FUNSPOT' located at the beginning of each section for further activity suggestions.



Enjoy!

# Preschool



## Gross Motor Skills Strategies for Home



<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/funspot123/preschool/gross-motor-ideas/>



## What are Gross Motor Skills?

Gross motor movements involve the larger muscle groups. Gross motor movements allow us to walk, run, jump, and balance. The first gross motor movements our children learn is their ability to control their head.

## Why are Gross Motor Skills important?

- Provide a basis for the development of finer movements.
- Provide a basis for the development of self-care skills.
- Important for leisure and social skills.
- Important for self-esteem
- Promote language development

## Crawling Tasks:



- Through a tunnel.
- Across cushions.
- Under furniture.
- Fill the tunnel with a range of different scarves of varying textures.
- Introduce a jigsaw puzzle e.g. place the jigsaw pieces at one side of the room, encourage the child to collect one piece, crawl across the room to complete the jigsaw.

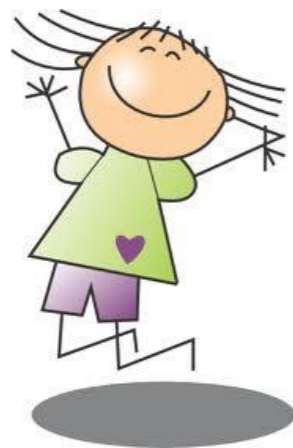
## Balancing Tasks



- Stepping up/down/over objects
- Walk along a narrow surface.
- Standing on one leg/hopping on one leg
- Pretend tight rope: walking forwards, backwards, side stepping on top and over a piece of rope placed in a range of positions.
- Support your child initially then withdraw support gradually to promote independence.

## Jumping Tasks

- Jumping into/out of hoops or off a small step/ledge.
- Jumping onto spots. Try using textured spots with bare feet.
- Encourage jumping two feet together.



## Gross Motor Skills

Activity Suggestions

## Outside play tasks

- Encourage use of a trike/bike.
- Remove pedals of bike and utilise as a balance bike initially to improve balance and confidence.
- Go for a walk
- Go for trips to a local playpark.

## Catching and Throwing Tasks

- Kicking a ball from a stationary position
- Catching and throwing a ball. Try using different textured balls of varying sizes.
- Throwing/rolling a ball at a large target, as this skill progresses the size of the target could be reduced.



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## What is W-Sitting?

W-Sitting is when a child is sitting on their bottom with both knees bent and their legs turned out away from their body. Their knees and thighs may be touching together or spread apart.



## Why Discourage W-Sitting?

It is okay for a child to move into a W position for a short time only. However, they should be discouraged from sitting in this position for a longer period of time. A child should not use it as their regular sitting position as it:

- Limits trunk/core strength
- Reduces cross body movements
- Delays hand dominance

**DISCOURAGE**  
**'W' Sitting**

## Alternative Positions

W-sitting can be discouraged by showing a child alternative sitting position such as:

**SIDE SIT**



**LONG LEG SITTING**



**PRONE**



**SQUAT**



**SITTING**



# Preschool



## Fine Motor Skills Strategies for Home



<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/funspot123/pre-school/fine-motor-ideas/>



## What are Fine Motor Skills?

Fine motor skills involve using the smaller muscles in our hands. Our fine motor skills develop over time, starting with grabbing at objects to more precise activities that involve precise hand-eye coordination.

## Why are Fine Motor Skills important?

- Helps us to be able to do self-care skills such as dressing, toileting etc.
- Prepares and develops our ability to complete handwriting tasks.
- Helps us be able to open/close containers, bags of crisps etc.
- Helps us pick up small items.
- Helps us to use our fork and knife/scissors effectively.



## Manipulation Skills

Manipulation skills involve moving objects in one hand without the help of the other. It helps establish precision and control which is important to effectively complete daily activities for example, positioning buttons, a zip, or a pencil for writing. Activities to develop manipulation skills:



- Picking up a small item and hiding it in your hand. Then continue to pick up another whilst still holding all items in your hand.
- Moving coins from the palm of your hand to place into a piggy bank.
- Picking up a number of coins using only one hand.
- Holding a number of pegs within the hand then one by one placing them into a peg board.



## Hand Strength

Hand strength is important when engaging in a wide range of functional tasks, it also improves a child's endurance for functional tasks such as handwriting. Activities to develop hand strength:



- Playdough
- Scrunching paper of varying texture and thickness
- Using tongs or tweezers to pick up objects to transfer to another container.
- Punching holes



- Water pistols and spray bottles
- Feed the Tennis Ball (see Pinterest page for further details).

## Pincher Grasp

A pincher grasp is effectively picking up an item using your index finger and thumb. A well-established pincher grasp is necessary for functional tasks for example, fastening buttons/zips and holding a pencil. Activities to develop an effective pincher grasp:

- Opening and closing clothes pegs.
- Placing coins into a money box/jar.
- Placing pegs into a pegboard
  - Picking up small objects i.e. cheerio's, sweets etc.
  - Hiding small objects in playdough and encouraging child to retrieve the hidden objects.



**Always ensure your child completes these activities using their index finger and thumb only.**

## Using 2 hands together

Also known as Bilateral Integration, we require our hands to work together effectively to accomplish a whole range of activities/tasks. Activities to develop this skill:

- Threading
- Catching and throwing a ball
- Squeezing a spray bottle
- Opening and closing lids/containers
- Using playdough; using a rolling pin, cutters
- Construction toys e.g. Mega blocks, Duplo, and Lego



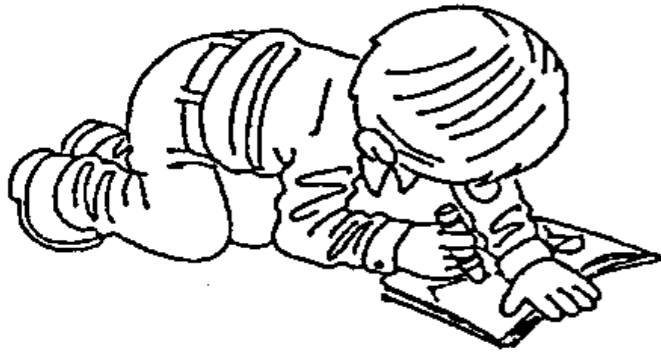
## Fine Motor Skills

### Activity Suggestions

# Positions of Play

When developing fine motor skills, it is important to consider the importance of changes in positions during the day. See below for a range of positions you can use with your child when they are engaging in fine motor tasks:

**All Fours Position**



**Prone Position**



**Kneeling Position**



**Sitting Position**



**Standing Position**



# Scissor Skills

## Step 1: Mastering Grasp and Release

**Step 1:** The first step involves mastering the grasp-release motion to open and close scissors. The following activities develop this skill.



- Using Spray bottles as it involves repetitive grasp and release of the whole hand.
- Opening and closing clothes pegs can help your child learn the squeeze and release motion required for using scissors.

## Step 2: Learning to Snip

**Step 2:** Start with short simple snips and progress with time.



- Start with snipping playdough
- Snipping across the width of narrow strips of paper, increase the paper width with time.
- Snipping around a circle picture or paper plate.

## Step 3: Mastering Cutting

**Step 3:** Children master scissor cutting with time and practice. Commence by cutting:

- Straight lines
- Progress to spiral and circles
- Then finally progress to simple shapes



## TOP TIPS

- ❖ Make sure your child uses an appropriate scissor grasp. Their **Thumb** in one hole, and **middle finger** through the other. The **index finger** can rest on the outside of the scissors or be in the same hole as the middle finger.



- ❖ Use age appropriate scissors
- ❖ Make sure left-handed children use left-handed scissors.
- ❖ Encourage your child to hold the paper off the table with their non dominant hand. Discourage your child from holding the paper down on the table.
- ❖ Children who are **Right-handed** should cut **to the right** of the shape, and those who are **left-handed** should cut **to the left** of the shape.
- ❖ **Do** encourage your child to start cutting lines on the **line furthest from the holding hand**.



# Preschool



## Visual Perceptual Skills Strategies for Home



<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/funspot123/pre-school/visual-perceptual-skills/>



## What are Visual Perceptual Skills?

Visual perceptual skills help us understand and make sense of what we see.

## Why are Visual Perceptual Skills important?

Visual perceptual skills are important for completing puzzles, finding a toy in a messy cupboard, recognising a familiar face, reading, writing, cutting, drawing, and dressing as well as many other skills.

# Visual Perceptual Skills

## Activity Suggestions

- ❖ **Inset Boards:** Begin with basic boards, demonstrate to your child initially and progress as appropriate.



- ❖ **Post-a-shape:** Have your child match a range of shapes of varying sizes to the correct opening.

- ❖ **Sorting Shapes:** Show and talk to your child about shapes and place them into categories according to their size, shape, colour or pattern.



- ❖ **Jigsaws:** Commence with a 2-piece puzzle and increase the complexity with time. It can be helpful to have your child complete the puzzle on top of the picture or with the picture close by.

- ❖ **Reading:** When reading, encourage your child to look for things in books e.g. where is the flower? Where is the baby lamb?



- ❖ **Dot-to-Dot:** Try to get your child to guess what the dot to dot will reveal before and during the activity.

- ❖ **Building Blocks/Construction toys:** Encourage your child to build with blocks. Make up simple models such as steps or bridges. See if your child can copy the same model with their blocks.



- ❖ **Feely bag:** Encourage your child to pick out a shape or object from a box without looking. The aim of the activity is that they would feel for the shape/object without visualizing it.

- ❖ **Matching lids:** Collect various sizes of lids and jars and mix them around on the tabletop before getting your child to match the correct lid to each jar.



- ❖ **Crafts:** Cut card, playdoh or pipe cleaners into different lengths and rearrange in order of size.

- ❖ **Picture Assembly:** Cut up simple pictures and have the child put or glue them together as the original.



**NB:** When engaging in the activities suggested above, emphasise spatial terms to teach your child the concept of in front, behind, above, below, beside, right, left, etc.

## Gross Motor Activity Suggestions to develop Visual Perceptual Skills

❖ **Obstacle course:** Setup should involve your child going in, out, over, under, through, around and between.

❖ **Target games:** Using bean bags or balls.



❖ **Directional games:** Play games where your child will have to point to parts of their body e.g. “Show me your hair, now your knee etc.” This should progress to games that name sides, such as “Show me your right elbow, now your left foot”. Other games include Simon Says and Hokey Cokey.

❖ **Container play:** Pouring liquid or sand from one container to another, beginning with wide containers to narrow necked bottles.



❖ **Hidden Treasure:** Play a game in which you hide an object, and your child must find it. You begin the game by saying, “I have something hidden (e.g. under the blanket, in the cupboard etc.).”

❖ **Hide and Seek**



# Preschool



## Pre-Writing Skills Strategies for Home

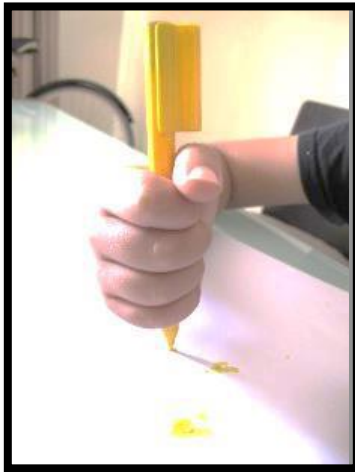


<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/funspot123/pre-school/pre-writing-skills/>



# Pencil Grasp Development

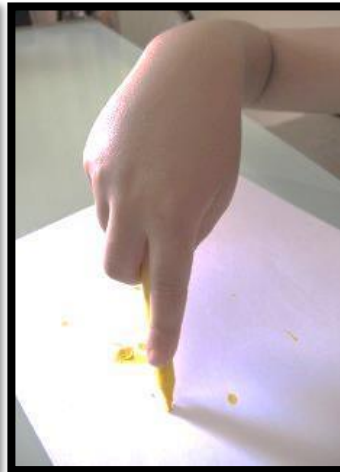
Holding a pencil can be a complex task. Below are the developmental stages that a child may go through when learning to hold a pencil:



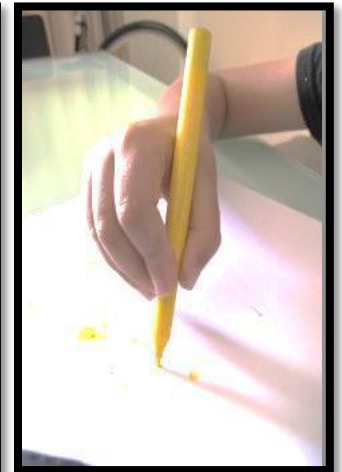
Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4

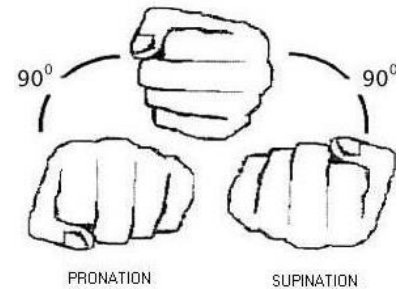
The aim should be that your child develops a dynamic tripod grasp (see picture 4). This type of grasp is considered the most efficient way to hold a writing utensil for legibility and handwriting endurance.

There are a range of key skills necessary to develop before being able to grasp a pencil:

- Isolate index finger movement e.g. pointing.
- Hold objects using a pincer grasp.
- Finger and thumb opposition



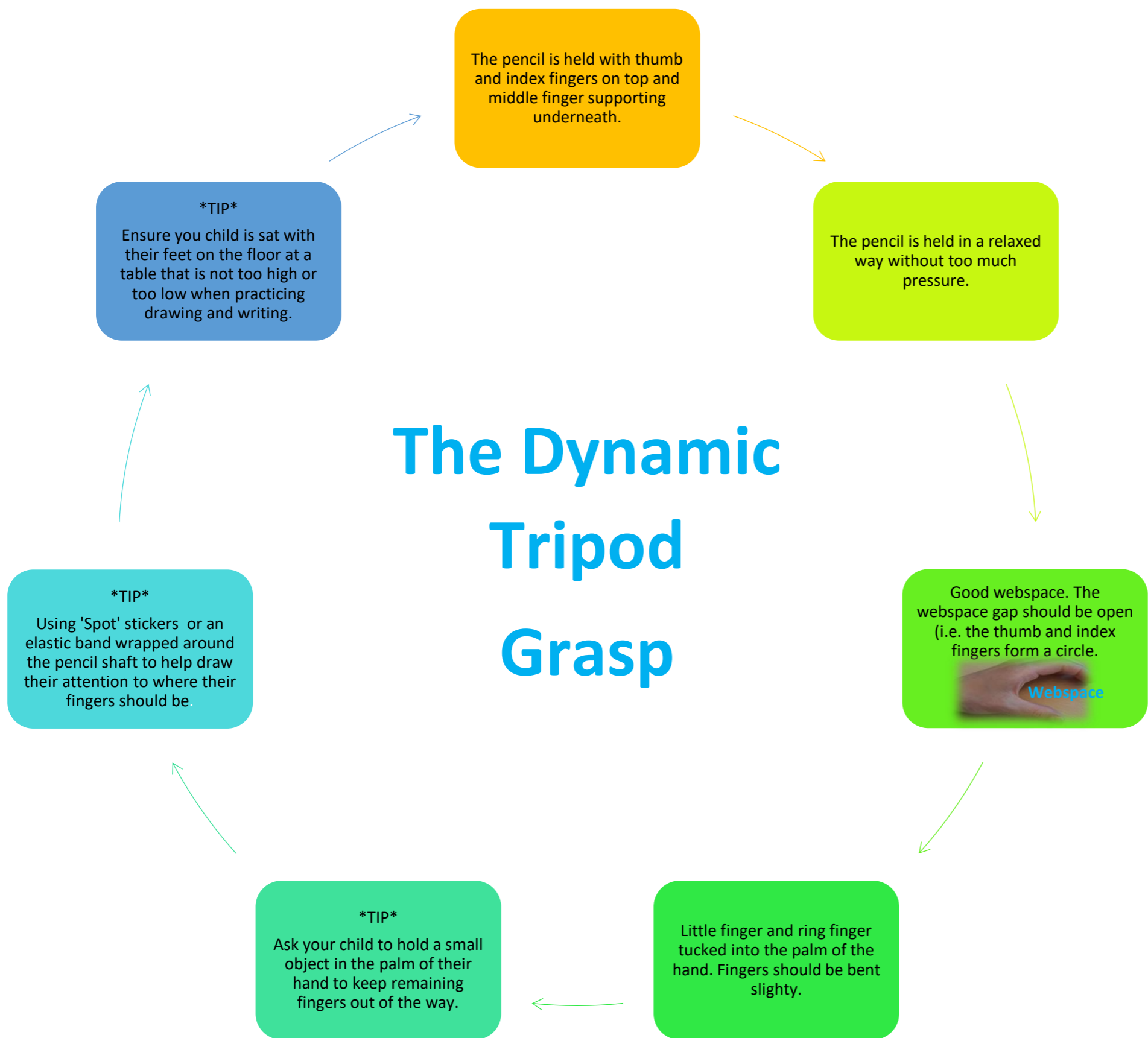
- Identifying objects by touch in the absence of vision.
- Finger and hand strength
- Shoulder stability
- Wrist and forearm movements (pronation/supination).
- Hand dominance
- Using both hands together.



If you feel your child has not achieved all of the skills as outlined above. It is recommended to engage your child in a range of gross motor and fine motor activities as outlined in the previous sections.



If your child has not established a dominant hand. Practice activities which require a 'working' hand and a 'stabilising' hand e.g. threading, scissors (further activity suggestions can be found in the fine motor section of this document). Ensure to place activities in front of your child and not to one side so they are making an active reaching choice.

# The Dynamic Tripod Grasp



See simple video demonstration on how to teach your child to use a Dynamic tripod grasp. <https://youtu.be/woRg7h0aPuQ>

## ACTIVITIES WHICH WILL ASSIST WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A DYNAMIC TRIPOD GRASP

- ❖ Transfer water from one container to another using a turkey baster or medicine dropper 
- ❖ Placing clothes pegs around the edge of a container
- ❖ Picking up small objects using tongs and then tweezers
- ❖ Popping bubble wrap 
- ❖ Playdough modelling
- ❖ Playing with construction toys such as Lego
- ❖ Placing pegs in and out of a pegboard
- ❖ Use felt-tips and crayons that are thicker and shorter. Very short crayons cannot be held with a whole hand grasp therefore encourages a more appropriate grasp 

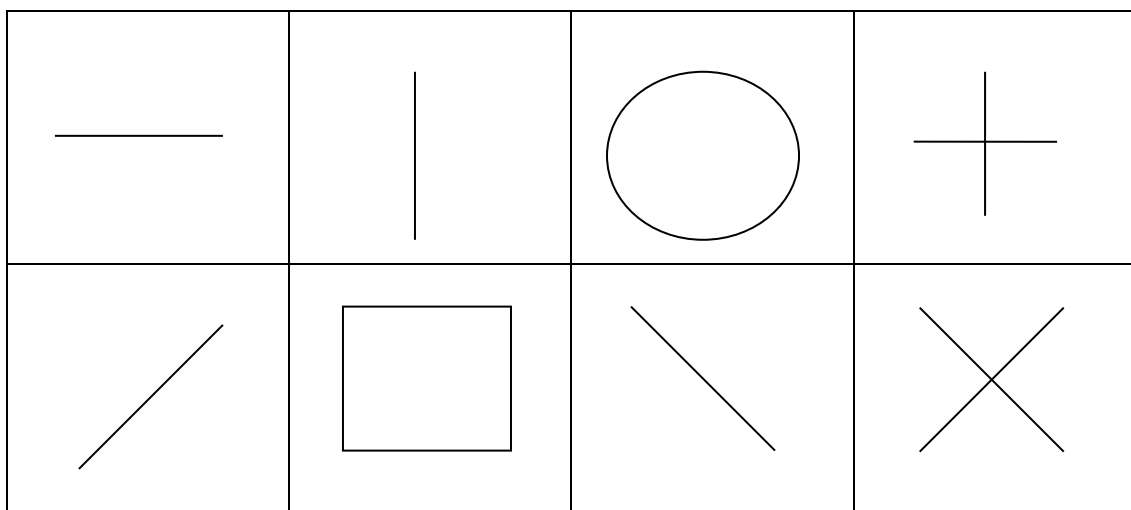
**REMEMBER to monitor your child's grasp when completing the above activities and re-correct if necessary.**

# Letter Formation

Letter formation facilitates the development of fluent handwriting and forms the foundation for joining letters.

Forming letters needs to become automatic so your child can concentrate on the content of their writing rather than using up lots of their energy on how to write the letters.

A child should begin by learning to copy the basic pre-writing patterns and shapes as outlined below. It is best to demonstrate to your child by drawing out the shape first and then have them imitate you. Lots of practice is the best way to help letter formation become automatic.



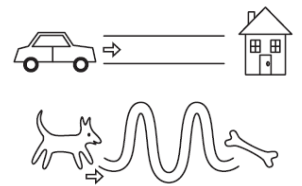
# Letter Formation

## Activity Suggestions

❖ Copy patterns using building blocks, matchsticks, coins, buttons, and pegboards.

❖ Copy shapes and patterns using a variety of textures e.g. playdough, drawing in sand etc.

❖ Mazes



❖ Tracing activities e.g. around your child's hands and feet.

❖ Create shapes using rope, string, or tape and encourage your child to walk along it.

❖ Follow-the-leader in different shapes.

❖ Finger painting with shaving cream, paint, cornflour and water.



❖ Sand drawing with sticks, fingers, rakes, spades or even feet.

❖ Make the shapes out of pipe cleaners or string.

❖ Water painting on a brick wall using a paintbrush or a squirter bottle.



- ❖ Join the stars/stickers to make the shapes.
- ❖ Drawing in the air with a ribbon stick or wand.
- ❖ Encourage the use of working on a vertical surface e.g. above the child's shoulder height on an easel, blackboard, whiteboard, or even cello tape a page to the wall as this will also encourage a tripod grasp.



- ❖ Colour in shapes and pictures. Start with simple pictures then progress to pictures with more detail.
- ❖ Draw around your child's body on a large piece of paper and get him to colour in his clothing.



# Preschool



## Attention & Calming Strategies for Home



<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/funspot123/pre-school/attention-calming/>







# Attention & Calming

## Activity Suggestions

### ❖ Resistance work

- Lifting / pushing / pulling / pedaling / digging
- Helping activities e.g. putting away chairs, pushing away tables, tidying up or setting out large toys.

### ❖ Engage your child in movement that is in a straight line as this can be calming and organising to your child's sensory system. For example:

- Jumping up and down on the ground, or trampoline.
- Slow rocking on a yoga ball, or 'row, row, row your boat' etc.
- Swings
- Walking/jogging games
- Swimming or Cycling



### ❖ Pillow Squeezes: while your child is standing gently squeeze between two cushions on chest and back, hold and count aloud slowly for 5 seconds then repeat.



## ❖ Tummy work:

- Encourage time on tummy throughout morning e.g. to complete a fine motor task.
- Crawling e.g. through tunnel, under table. If possible, encourage commando crawling



❖ Sit together and look at books. Point at the pictures and name the items in them.

❖ Play games where the child has to wait for 'go'. E.g. rolling the ball between each other.

❖ Sing action songs and rhymes e.g. the wheels on the bus.

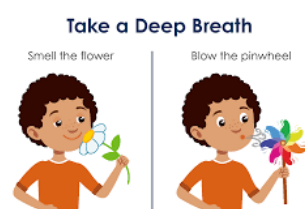
❖ Play turn taking games e.g. Building a tower of blocks, putting the pieces in a puzzle, posting games.



❖ Provide hand over hand assistance if required to enable the child to engage fully in an activity.

❖ Use calm lighting in the environment and try to speak to your child in a calm, relaxed tone.

❖ Try some deep/slow breathing exercises.



# Preschool



## Self Care Strategies for Home



<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/funspot123/self-care/>



# Toileting

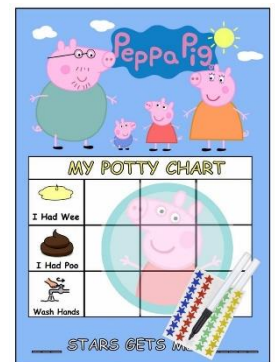
## Top Tips



- Choose a time to start toilet training when there is time to focus on this and when you are feeling relaxed and positive e.g. when on holiday.
- Encourage your child to sit on the toilet without a nappy.
- Try to change your child in or near the bathroom frequently so they learn that 'weeing' and 'pooing' go in the toilet.
- When you change your child's nappy always talk about 'wee' and 'poo' in a good way e.g. "Good girl/boy you've had a poo!"
- Have your child sit on the toilet before and after a bath as part of their normal bed-time routine and after meals/snacks.
- When you start, remove the nappy during the day and opt to use pants.
- Try using a nappy liner or wear pants inside a nappy so your child can feel when he/she is wet.

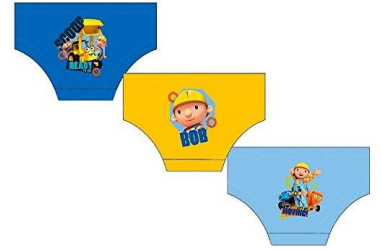


- Empty any 'poo' from the nappy into the toilet, flush, show and tell your child what you are doing.
- For a boy, be flexible about standing or sitting.
- Have a consistent and clear routine for toileting which everyone follows.
- If your child has communication/understanding difficulties; it can be helpful to show a picture of a toilet to your child at each nappy change as it will help as a physical cue.
- Give your child a book, a special small toy, sing songs or blow bubbles while they sit. Sitting on the toilet should be a relaxing time.
- Use visual prompts, reward charts, social story to assist your child with toilet training.
- Avoid battle, if toilet training is causing stress to you or your child it may be best to have a break and try at another time.
- Always change your child's nappy with them standing up, if possible, as this enables them to take an active part in the process e.g. such as pulling pants up and down and starting to learn to wipe their bottoms.



- Use clothes which your child can easily remove i.e. elastic waistband, Velcro to facilitate their own independence.

- Pants with cartoon characters may be a good incentive to keep clean and dry.



- Toilet breaks should be at times which are before or after an activity not in the middle.
- It is best to avoid asking your child 'do you want to go to the toilet' instead tell your child to go to the toilet.
- Try not to postpone toilet training for too long or your child may get used to wearing a nappy and find it comfortable and less troublesome.
- If you think your child might be constipated, then see your GP.

# Self-Care

We have a wide range of resources available for developing your child's functional skills in the following areas:

- ❖ Dressing
- ❖ Buttons and Zips
- ❖ Feeding
- ❖ Using Cutlery
- ❖ Tying Shoelaces
- ❖ Tying a Tie

Please click on the link below where you will be able to access all the resources as described above.

<https://view.pagetiger.com/childrens-ot/information/page14>

