

Put the Pencil Down & Get Outside

The Unconventional Guide to Improving Handwriting Skills



Fine motor skill development is only possible if core strength and stability is present.

Ditch the expensive baby gadgets – Avoid restricting your baby’s movement by placing him or her constantly in Bumbos, bouncy seats, exersaucers, jumpers, high chairs, car seats or strollers.

Do more tummy time – It’s important to give babies time in the prone position when awake. Play with baby on the floor with toys/books/mirror, hold baby high up on your shoulder (burp!), lay down on the floor with baby on your stomach or place & help support baby on an exercise ball or boppy.

Allow kids more time for unstructured free play outdoors!

Climbing trees, jump off rocks, rolling down hills and playing with sticks in the mud! Don’t overschedule - **unstructured** is what’s important - kids will seek out the proprioceptive input they need to develop.

Limit screen time – Kids spend an average of 7.5 hours **outside** of school on screens!

Increase recess - Don’t ditch outside time in place of test prep. If kids are fidgeting it means they need to move and won’t be able to learn properly.

Hold off on organized sports - At the early elementary age sports involve a lot of herd running and don’t build much strength - if you must, opt for gymnastics, martial arts, dance or swimming.

Provide natural playgrounds - Rocks, trees, hills, logs, recycled tires, sand, bricks, sandbags and gardens allow for more high quality play than traditional playground equipment.



For in-depth research and expert advice from pediatric OTs & PTs read the full article at BlueMangoLLC.com

Modern Toys are Ruining Your Child's Handwriting

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Before kids can use a pencil properly to write, they need to develop their hand muscles and pincer grasp through carefully selected toys & everyday activities.

Get rid of modern toys - Avoid anything with batteries or buttons to push, stick with natural materials and look for toys with “loose parts” such as blocks, legos, mancala, tool sets & pegboards.

Give time for independence in daily routines - At mealtimes kids can peel fruit, pour drinks, use spoons & forks, cut & spread with knives, open & close containers and drink out of real cups.

Also encourage kids to put on & take off socks and shoes, do zippers/snaps/buttons, learn to tie their shoes, brush their hair, squeeze their toothpaste and begin to learn to floss.

Help out around the house - Kids can help tear lettuce for salads, mash avocados for guacamole, grate cheese, scrub potatoes, mix thick batters and knead & roll dough in the kitchen.

Make use of everyday objects - Play with cardboard boxes, tweezers, chopsticks, turkey basters, scoops & measuring cups, medicine droppers, squirt bottles, chip clips, buttons or dried beans.

Have great arts & crafts materials on hand - Have tools available such as scissors, glue, hole punchers, tape, staplers and brass fasteners. Sculpt and build with clay, play dough, Wikki Stix and recycled containers & boxes.

Thread or sew with plastic needles, yarn, pipe cleaners, wire, uncooked pasta and beads. Decorate with small objects such as buttons, pom poms, jewels, toothpicks and stickers.



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