



Carla Grobler
Arbeidsterapeut
Occupational Therapist



🏠 Elturon Christian School
256 Tipperary road
Hennospark
Centurion

Pr No. 0660000080136

☎ 084 581 0644
✉ carla.grobler@vodamail.co.za
www.carlagrobler.co.za

Getting little hands ready for writing

Which skills are important for writing?

- Postural control
Being able to keep my body upright in the chair and to sit still
- Vision
To be able to see what I am writing
- Eye muscles
The muscles of my eyes should be able to work together or my writing will blur
- In-hand manipulation skills
To be able to hold and manipulate the pencil in my hand
- Finger and hand strength
My fingers should be strong enough to hold the pencil and not get tired when I write
- Fine eye-hand coordination
To be able to write neatly and accurately
- Visio-motor integration
To copy work from the blackboard or textbook
- Dynamic tripod grip
To hold the pencil correctly for optimum manipulation and that my hand won't get tired when writing
- Bilateral integration
My non-dominant hand should support the paper while I write
- Midline-crossing
To be able to cross the imaginary midline of the body
- Hand dominance
To have one hand that is dominant when performing fine coordination tasks
- Visual perception
The building-blocks for reading, writing and maths: discrimination, memory, sequential memory, foreground-background, form constancy, spatial relations and position in space
- Visual focus
To be able to sit still and focus on a task for 10 minutes



How will I know if my child isn't ready for formal writing?

- Find it difficult to sit still for less than 10 minutes
- Complains that their hand gets tired when colouring/drawing
- Have an awkward pencil grip
- Rub their eyes when having to focus on table-top work and/or complains of headaches
- Uses their whole hand to manipulate objects instead of just some fingers
- Struggles with fine motor tasks e.g. colouring, cutting, threading beads
- Hasn't chosen one hand as dominant
- Still doesn't know his shapes/colours/body parts
- Cannot sit still and focus on a task for 10 minutes
- Struggles to copy work

- Has messy/untidy writing/drawing skills
- Cannot yet write his/her name
- Struggles to perform tasks where 2 hands must work in a coordinated way
- Cannot build a 15 piece puzzle yet
- Cannot copy a triangle and diamond
- Cannot cut a 9cm square accurately on the line
- Cannot draw a recognizable person with finer details

Activity ideas to get the hands ready for writing

- Manipulate objects with the thumb and each finger e.g. sort all the blue beads using the thumb and index finger/sort all the circles using your thumb and middle finger, etc.
- Pegboard tasks
- Fastening and unfastening buttons
- Colouring tasks
- Putting money into a money box
- Manipulating play dough - making snakes, rolling balls, etc.
- Threading beads
Start with big beads and grade to smaller beads as your child's ability improves
- Tearing paper into small strips or tearing paper on a pre-draw lines/shapes
- Lacing activities
- Cutting with scissors
- Start with straight lines and no detail to pictures with wavy lines and fine detail
- Shoot marbles using each finger of both hands
- Placing washing pegs onto cardboard
- Picking up small objects e.g. small beads with fingers and putting it into a bottle
- Playing with Lego's
This with strengthen hand and finger muscles
- Doing daily eye-muscle exercises
- Improving your child's visual perceptual skills
- Picking up small objects using a tweezer
- Dot-to-dot activities
- Spray with a spray bottle by using one the first 3 fingers of the hand
- Put clothing pins onto a surface using each finger with the thumb
- Fasten nuts onto bots using the first three fingers
- Hold a toothpick and make a hole into clay/paper



References

- <https://childdevelopment.com.au/areas-of-concern/writing/writing-readiness-pre-writing-skills/>
<https://sites.google.com/site/smallschoolot/information-for-teachers/activities-to-improve-hand-skills>
<https://handsonaswegrow.com/fine-motor-skills-activities/>