

# MOTOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

March 2021 Newsletter



## MOTOR SKILLS AND LITERACY

*Reading and writing are inseparable skills that work together while supporting each other. Developing and practicing fine motor skills is an effective way to prepare young children for writing (and learning) letters and numbers for all future learning.*

## WHY ARE MOTOR SKILLS IMPORTANT?

*Working on gross motor skills helps a child gain strength and confidence in his/her body as well as helps them get exercise. Developing these skills helps a child's ability to do more complex skills in future activities, such as playing soccer with a team. Fine motor skills involve the small muscles of the body, in this case the hands, that are used for writing, grasping small objects, and fastening clothing. These activities will also support the development of appropriate pencil grasps when the child is ready.*



## HOW DO MOTOR SKILLS DEVELOP?

*Before children develop the fine motor control needed to perform tasks like writing, they must develop their gross motor skills. Babies develop from the head down to their toes. They learn to control their head first, then neck, core, etc. Preschoolers (ages 3-5) need lots of opportunities to practice movement! That's how they learn and grow.*



## ALPHABET RESCUE MISSION

*Letter recognition is a crucial first step to learning to read. For this activity, tape magnetic alphabet letters to the wall or table. Your child has to rescue the "trapped" letters and bring them to their home (a cookie sheet that has the letters of the alphabet written on them).*

*This activity is a great way to blend practice for both fine motor skills and early literacy skills. As your child plays, he/she will work on letter recognition by:*

- *naming the letters he/she takes off the wall,*
- *matching letter shapes,*
- *and finding and pointing to letters that were named.*



## MARK MAKING ACTIVITIES

*There are many types of early mark-making you can try that develop many fine motor skills, including:*

- *Drawing with their fingers in messy substances such as foam or gel*
- *Holding ribbons or streamers and skywriting*
- *Holding unusual writing tools such as sticks and drawing in mud*

*Top Tip - Use big surfaces, active experiences, and exciting mark-making tools.*



## TONG TRANSFER AND COLOR SORT

*Introducing tongs to a child is a great way to build hand strength and develop fine and gross motor skills. This activity can be done with chip clips, spoons, and many other utensils you have in the house. When kids use tongs, they have to learn to "separate" the two sides of their hands (thumb/index finger side and middle/ring/pinky finger side). This is exactly what is needed in order to successfully operate both scissors and a pencil.*

