

Tips on Good Handwriting Development

Most people do not realize that good handwriting is a direct result from good upper body strength. Crawling is a natural milestone that children need to learn. Crawling develops power in the shoulders, arms, wrists, and hands. Have you heard or personally ever stated “My child skipped crawling and went straight to walking!” While walking skills may be advancing quickly, it is also a good indication that the child will have poor fine motor skills.

Poor fine motor skills will impact a child’s ability to fasten buttons, snaps, zippers, pick up small objects, and especially to have legible handwriting. As a child crawls, his/her grasp will start to mature, allowing for more precise movements later on in development. Thus, good posture and arm strength are critical factors in improving your child’s handwriting. They are also beneficial areas to work on from birth to 5 years, during a child’s prewriting years.

What are good activities that can promote upper body strength? The following are some techniques that you can try at home: crawling through tunnels, wheelbarrow walking (child is walking on hands and adult is holding his/her feet), climbing ladders, lifting heavy objects, kneading dough (play dough), monkey bar play, or moving a scooter board by laying on stomach and pushing through his/her arms (also can be done up or down ramps).

For those of you who have older children, you may know handwriting lessons are not always the most fun. Prior to having your child participate in a fine motor activity, have him/her perform one of the above upper body strength activities. These activities will stimulate the muscles and encourage good postural control during a handwriting or fine motor activity. Also, it may increase your child’s attention and focus! Do not have your child sit for more than 15-20 minutes, especially if he/she is under 5 years old. Eventually increase his/her time in small increments until you reach the desired practice time. It is important for you to provide a happy handwriting experience! Have fun!

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