

How Can I Help My Child to Print?

Part 4: Building a Foundation

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Learning objectives

Participants will:

- Develop an understanding of what activities to implement to encourage successful fine motor development and upper extremity strengthening in children.
- Be able to build resources, such as FUNctional BINS, to have readily available.



Printing readiness

- Children who are taught handwriting before they are truly ready to master the skill may become discouraged and develop poor writing habits that become troublesome down the road.



Building blocks of printing readiness



Building blocks of printing readiness

- Upper extremity strength
- Fine motor control
- Bilateral coordination
- Left and right discrimination
- Pencil grasp
- Colouring
- Letter recognition
- Pre-printing strokes



Upper extremity-Strengthening

- Control of arm and hand movements develops from the trunk out to the fingers
- To control fine movements, children must be able to hold some body parts steady (stabilize) while moving others.
- Provide opportunities to develop trunk strengthening and shoulder stability

Therapy Skill builders (1991)



Upper extremity – activities

Weight bearing activities

Stimulates the muscles around the joints and increases stability

- Animal Walks
- Obstacle courses
- Wheelbarrow walking
- Push and pull games or activities (i.e. pulling a wagon or toboggan, pushing a wheelbarrow)
- Doing activities on your tummy (i.e. puzzles, colouring, FUN bins, etc.)



Fine motor control

- **Skilled fingers**

- Index finger, middle finger and thumb
- Want them to be as efficient and strong as possible!

- **How to encourage**

- In-hand manipulation activities
 - Learning to use one hand by itself to turn and manipulate small objects (i.e. getting the quarter amongst the change in your hand to your finger tips to put into a parking meter)
- Strengthening activities



Fine motor control- activities

- Flicking
 - Try flicking cotton balls or rolled up pieces of paper. Make a goal and try to score on it!
- Nuts and bolts
 - Have a variety of nuts and bolts. Have children remove and replace them as fast as they can.
- Turkey baster
 - Try moving cotton balls around on the table by squeezing a turkey baster. Make a finish line and race a friend!



Fine motor control- activities

Strengthening hands

- Clothespins
- Spray bottles



Bilateral Coordination

Using both hands to perform a task at the same time



Bilateral Coordination- Activities

Symmetrical use of both hands

Coordinated use of both hands in symmetrical (same on both sides of body) movement patterns

How to encourage:

- Musical percussion instruments such as maracas, cymbals and drums
- Interlocking toys that can be pulled apart or pushed together
- Finger paint
- Rolling pin and dough/clay/putty

Bilateral Coordination- Activities

Differentiation of function

Hands are used for different functions, with one hand carrying out the major manipulations of the activity and the other hand assisting.

How to encourage:

- Opening and closing jars and containers. Have them filled with something fun (i.e. stickers)
- Tracing templates/stencils
- Cutting with scissors
- Buttoning & unbuttoning



Left and Right Discrimination

The ability to distinguish between the left and right side of the body

Reason for teaching: making letter formations and printing require understanding of left and right concepts.

How to encourage: Hokey Pokey; Simon says; Mother may I; maneuvering through obstacle courses and focusing on the concept of turning left or right



Drawing a Person

Reason for teaching:

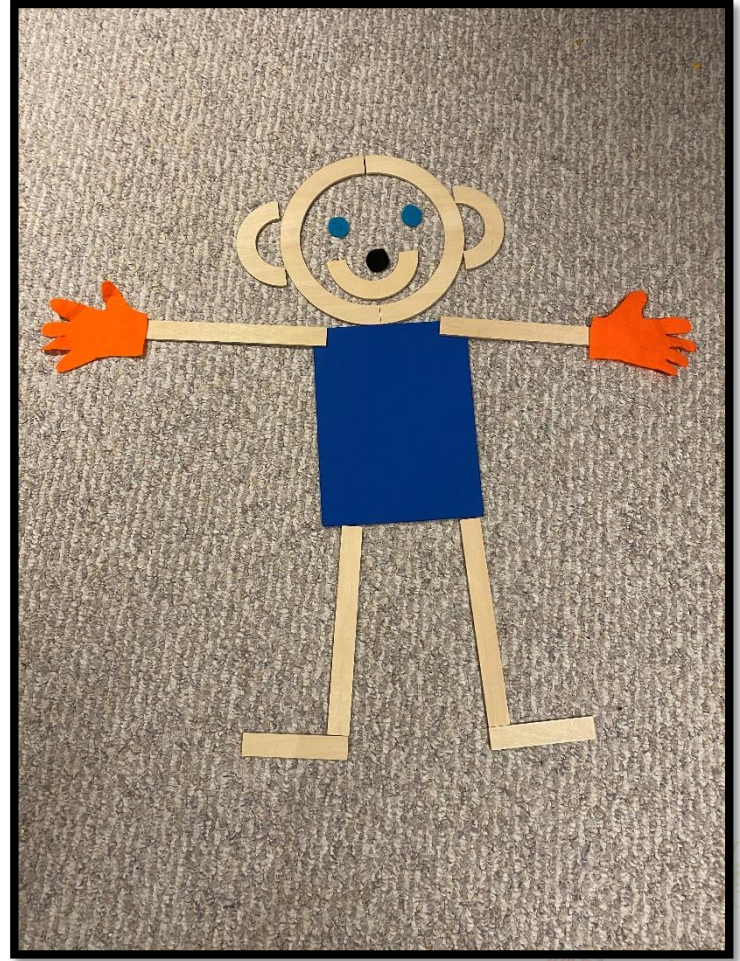
- builds important readiness skills:
 - Body awareness
 - Drawing and pre-writing
 - Pre-printing strokes: | - ○ + / □ \ × Δ
 - Counting
 - Building
 - Socializing and sharing



Drawing a Person

How to encourage:

- Mat Man!!



Colouring

Reasons for Teaching:

- helps to learn how to hold and move crayons
- Gives us clues about readiness skills

How to encourage:

- Aim and scribble
- Aim and colour (fill in colouring)
 - Use small shapes
 - Use glue gun or Wikki Stix around the border of the shape

Adapted from Get Set for School Readiness & Writing



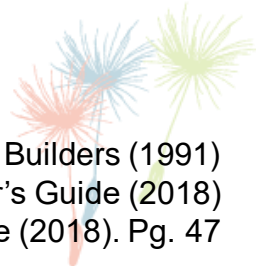
Letter Recognition

Reason for teaching:

- Before learning to print the child needs an idea of what the letters look like.
- The ability to recognize forms and shapes develops at an earlier age than the ability to reproduce them.
- Children can recognize letters prior to naming them
- Capitals are the first letters children can recognize

Stages

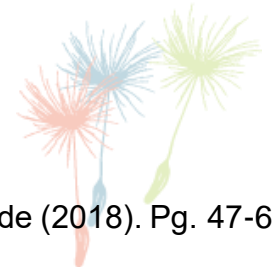
- Singing the ABCs correctly
- Putting letter names and symbols together
- Learning to name letters in any order



Letter Recognition

How to Encourage:

- Sing the “ABC” song
- While singing point to the letters in order. Have a capital letter display visible to children
- Make tactile letters (i.e. pipe cleaner, sand paper, etc.) that the children can trace with fingers
- Letter matching activities
 - ie. Place letters in a bag and have children pull them out one at a time. Children can match the letters to existing capital letter display.



Additional Building Blocks of Printing

Pencil Grasp

Pre-printing strokes

Please see ***Webinars on Demand*** at Autism Ontario

“How Can I Help My Child to Print?: A Printing Readiness Workshop for Parents with Taunia Clouthier”

<https://www.autismontario.com/node/656>





FUN^{CT}IONAL Bins

- Prepared activity bins that serve a function. Readily available for children to explore, learn and have FUN.
- Simple way to encourage development of certain skills





FUNCTIONAL Bins - Strengthening

Pompom Bin

– Supplies

- Mega blocks
- Pompoms
- Clothes pins/large plastic tweezers

– Task

- Children sort pompoms by colours using tweezers to pick them up.

– Targeting

- Strengthening hand muscles





FUNCTIONAL **Bins** - In-hand Manipulation

Coin Bin

– Supplies

- Piggy bank
- Coins
- Small bin
- Laminated pictures

– Task

- Children pick up coins and fill up the piggy bank.
- Children can also have fun placing coins onto mats with circular spaces embedded throughout

– Targeting

- In-hand manipulation



Colour sorting bin

– Supplies

- Ice cube tray or egg carton
- Small items of a variety of colours
- Small bin
- Paint

– Task

- Paint the inside of the ice cube tray/egg carton a variety of colours (or use colour stickers)
- Children pick up 2-3 small items at a time using a pincer grasp and place them into the correct coloured hole

– Targeting

- In-hand manipulation



Jars & containers bin

– Supplies

- Variety of jars (sizes and shapes)
- Sand, beads, stickers ect.
- Small bin

– Task

- Children open and close jars
- Children can pour contents of one jar into another. Hide small objects (beads) in the sand that they have to find!

– Targeting

- Bilateral coordination (differentiation of function)



THANK YOU!

Don't hesitate to contact me 😊

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