



Activity ideas to support Learning at Home for the 3-5s

Early Years Service, Children's Services

Buckinghamshire Council

HANDS, FEET & FINGERS

Hands, fingers and feet are our first mark makers. Trail fingers, hands and feet in paint or mud then walk them across the paper (rolls of wallpaper are excellent for this.)

Encourage children to draw every day with pens, pencils or crayons of different thicknesses and lengths.

Encourage children to stand up, sit, kneel or laydown when mark making. If they are in a stable position, they can focus on the mark making



ENCOURAGING EARLY WRITING

HANDWRITING

If your child is interested in handwriting, start with the letters in their names.

Talk about how you are forming the letters as you demonstrate e.g. 'round the circle, up to the top again and down and flick for an 'a'.

On the alphabet below, the red dot shows you where to start and which direction to go in.

Practice letter movements on paper, in shaving foam, rice, sand or glitter.



ROLE PLAY

Get involved in your children's play and model writing for a purpose e.g.

- Bus, train, zoo, cinema tickets.
- Set up a shop with labels, signs and notices.
- Plan a party for toys and write the invites.
- Write a letter or a card to a relative or friend.
- Use a lost object story like [Dogger by Shirley Hughes](#) to make LOST posters or a lost at sea SOS message in a bottle.

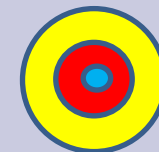
OUTDOORS

- Paint with leaves, twigs or other natural materials.
- Try attaching a pen or paintbrush to the end of a stick to use their whole arm. You can use water instead of paint.
- Fill old ketchup plastic bottles and have fun squeezing them to make patterns or letter shapes with water.



CHALK

- Games e.g. hopscotch, noughts and crosses, target circles for aiming into.
- Maps and mazes
- Farmyards, zoos or streets.
- Rangoli Patterns
- Record how many goals are scored.



a b c d e f g h i j k l m

Top Tips

Mark making helps children to develop imaginatively, creatively and physically. It helps children to tell stories, record facts and is a way of communicating with others.

How children hold a pen or pencil changes over time as they develop. For children to eventually hold their pencil in a triangular/tripod grip, they will need to strengthen the many muscles within their hands and fingers.



Triangular Tripod grip

Using playdough, construction toys, finger puppets, screws and nuts, hammer and nails, puzzles, threading, squeezing sponges or bottles are just some of the activities that will help strengthen hands and fingers.

Starting with large movements first allows children to gain control more quickly.

Information for Parents and Carers

Hand-Eye Co-ordination

Good hand-eye co-ordination is really important to help us to play sports and to learn to read and write.

This can be developed through many activities including throwing and catching, threading and lacing, weaving and joining inter-locking bricks.

Use old cards and shoe laces to create your own threading activity.



Writing:

You might notice that your child:

- Can describe what they have drawn and written (ask them to tell you about their mark making.)
- Will copy some of the letters that you write particularly those in their names.

Find out More.....

[Hungry Little Minds – Simple fun, activities for kids aged 0 – 5](#)

[Small Talk - ideas for Parents](#)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/games/get-squiggling-letters-mobile>

[What to expect when – Developmental Guide for Parents](#)

Physical Development:

You might notice that your child:

- Can use scissors to cut and cutters to make shapes from dough.
- Can hold their pencil near the top, like a grown up, using their thumb and finger and not their whole hand.
- When they use a pen or pencil they are beginning to be able to make anti clockwise circle marks and lines that go down and up and up and down.

