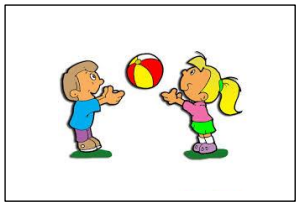
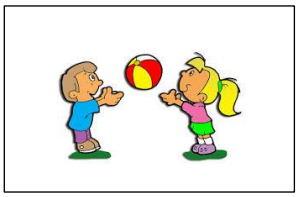


Physical Development

Moving and Handling

Health and Self Care



Physical development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement.

Physical development in children follows a directional pattern:

Large muscles develop before small muscles. Muscles in the body's core, legs and arms develop before those in the fingers and hands. Children learn how to perform gross (or large) motor skills before they learn to perform fine (or small) motor skills such as drawing.

The centre of the body develops before the outer regions. Muscles located at the core of the body become stronger and develop sooner than those in the feet and hands.

Development goes from the top down, from the head to the toes. This is why babies learn to hold their heads up before they learn how to crawl.

Motor skills are used everyday throughout our lives. They help us move and do everything from lifting heavy items to typing on a keyboard. Motor skills and motor control begin developing after birth, and will progress as children grow. Having good motor control also helps children explore the world around them, which can help with many other areas of development. Motor skills are broken up into two categories: gross motor skills and fine motor skills. Mastering both are important for children's growth and independence. To be able to write successfully it is also vital for children to develop hand-eye co-ordination and pencil grasp development. Children also need many opportunities to mark make and then develop a kinaesthetic awareness of letter formation.

Gross Motor Skills and Hand–Eye Coordination

Gross motor skills - when a child uses their whole body in a movement, such as jumping or running.	Hand-eye coordination - when a child's hands and eyes are working together, for example catching a ball.
	
Activities such as digging, 'painting' outdoor surfaces with water and a large brush, sweeping and swishing a scarf through the air in different shapes are a few examples to help develop large motor movement	

Gross Motor Development and Hand Eye Co-ordination Development At John Hampden School Wendover

Gross motor skills are movements related to large muscles such as legs, arms, and trunk. Children in the Foundation Stage have the opportunity to build on their skill set in our Foundation Stage Garden. We have a number of different spaces to develop a wide range of physical skills.

climbing frame	tennis	activity course
		
toadstools	**scrap shack**	**activity trail**
		

PE at School

In addition to this, we have structured Physical Education sessions. Yoga with Mrs Grimsdell on a rota basis and a weekly session with Premier Sports. Children wear a PE kit – navy shorts and a white t-shirt. We do sell white PE t-shirts with the John Hampden logo and plain white t-shirts are widely available to purchase.

Changing into a PE kit takes a great deal of practise. Here are some simple step by step instructions:

1. First take your PE kit out of your PE bag.
2. Then take your shoes and socks off. Tuck your socks into your shoes and put them under your chair.
3. Next take your school jumper/ cardigan off, fold it and place it in your PE bag.
4. After that take off your trousers/skirt and school top, fold them and place them in your PE bag.
5. Finally put on your PE shorts and your PE top.

It would be really helpful to practise this over the summer holiday so that your child can get changed for PE independently.

Fine motor skills - when a child uses precise movements using specific body parts, such as the thumb and finger to pick objects up.

Fine Motor Skill Development At John Hampden School Wendover

In each classroom and in our shared area we have a dedicated fine motor area – Funky Fingers.

Honeybees	Caterpillar Class	Ladybird Class
		
Funky Fingers	**Funky Fingers**	**Funky Fingers**
		
The Octagon Funky Fingers Activities		
		

Developing Fine Motor Skills Throughout The Day

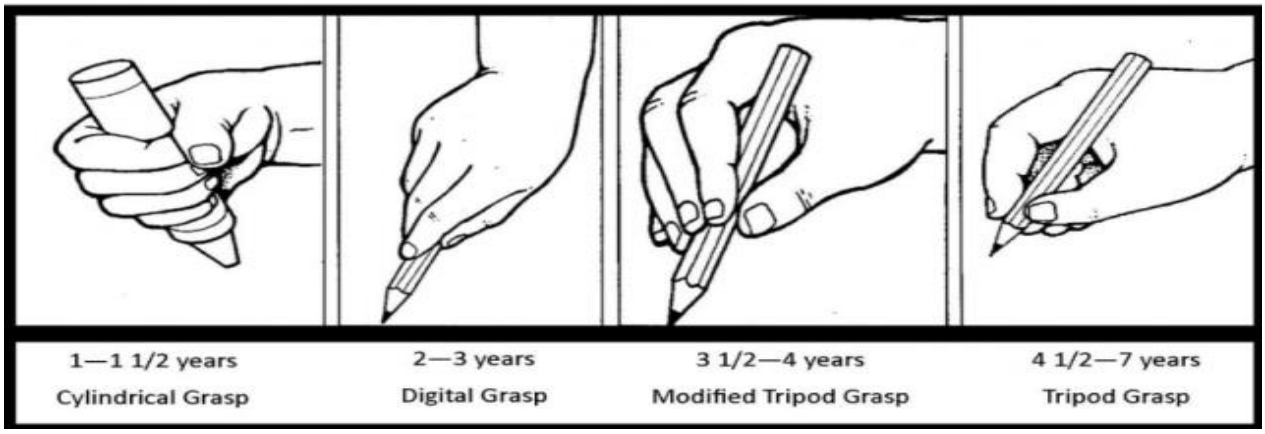
Children develop fine motor skills throughout the day without even realising it!

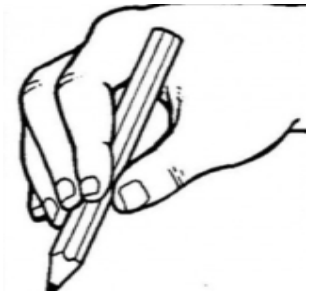
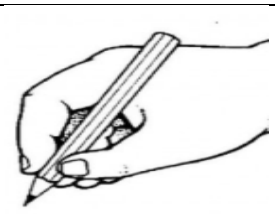
		
dressing – buttons and zips	**eating snack - raisins**	**hanging out the washing in the home corner**

All of the above will help develop the pencil grasp needed for writing.

Pencil Grip Development

As your child grows, they will naturally hold their crayons, pens and pencils in different ways. They way in which your child holds their crayon, pen and pencil depends on how 'ready' their shoulder and arm muscles are. It is important for children to go through stages of pencil grip. Most children will develop an efficient pencil grasp by using and mastering the following steps:

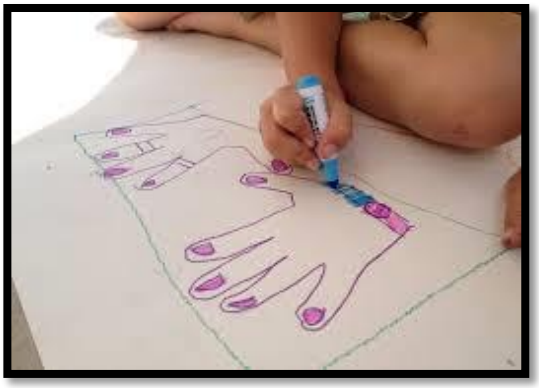


	**Fisted Grasp: When your chid initially picks up a crayon, he/she will most likely hold it in their closed fist. This is typically around 1- 1½ years of age. Your child will use movement from their shoulder (whole arm movements) to scribble and colour.**
	**As your child starts to develop more control over their shoulder and arm muscles they will move on to hold a pencil with their fingers. With the Palmer grasp, the hand is facing downwards towards the paper, with the pencil lying across the palm of the hand. A child develops this grasp typically around 2 -3 years old. The child will continue to use the whole arm movements to scribble with this grasp.**
	**From 3 ½ to 4 years old, your child may move on to hold the pencil with 3 fingers (tripod grasp with index, middle finger and thumb) or four fingers (quadruped grasp with ring finger added). Using the fourth finger can provide children with a little more support to hold the pencil. This is a static grasp, as the fingers do not move independently and movement is usually initiated from the wrist.**
	**From 4 years, your child's tripod grasp will mature to a dynamic grasp. The fingers will now move independently and allow for more practise drawing and writing.**

These four grasps are common in pencil grasp and fine motor development. Putting pencils into little hands before they are ready may lead to immature and inefficient pencil grasps. Instead, engage your child in age-appropriate activities to help develop the upper body, shoulder, arm and wrist muscles. Activities such as jumping, scribbling on vertical boards, shovelling sand with a spade, playing with play dough and doing arts and crafts are all great fine motor activities to lay the foundations for a good pencil grasp.

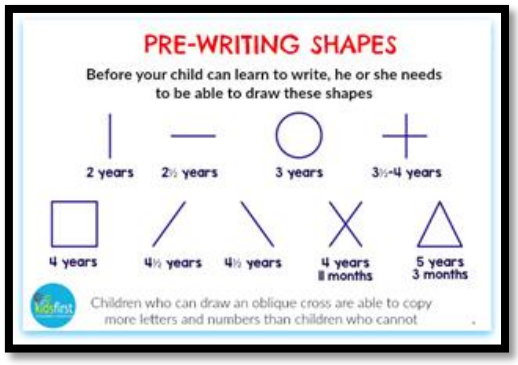
Mark Making
This includes a vast range of activities, from a child making marks with their fingers in sand, to dipping their hands or fingers in paint, to paint a picture.

The Importance Of Mark Making
Your child will notice adults around them reading and writing and they will want to copy them. Mark-making is the first step towards writing. Mark making in the early stages is closely linked to physical development. The more opportunities your child has to develop large and small movement in their arms, hands and fingers, the easier it will be to make marks with a variety of tools. Small or fine motor movement will be needed to hold pencils and pens correctly. In the early stages of learning to write, your child will like to experiment, making marks on paper with a variety of writing tools such as brushes, pens, pencils and felt-tip markers. They will often include drawings with their 'writing.'

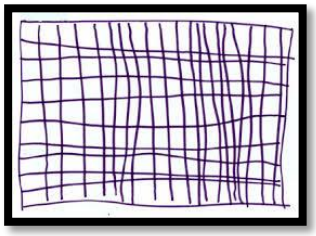


Pre-Writing Shapes

Before a child can form letters correctly, they need to be able to draw specific shapes. Certainly, children who can draw these automatically do not get frustrated when writing. You can see from the image below that this is developmental in stages. Although there is an age band milestone, different children progress at different rates.



Pre-schools and nurseries do a fabulous job in developing this vital skill through drawing, painting sand and messy activities.

We continue to teach the children to draw the shapes. We start from the shape they can already draw and we then teach each shape in turn, moving on when individual children have mastered each shape. We continually revisit all shapes – not only does this increase automaticity and muscle memory, it also increases writing stamina. Frustration occurs when children desperately want to write, to imitate what they have seen adults doing, but cannot because there is a physical barrier of not being able to actually write the shapes. With this is mind, to prevent frustrations we invest a great deal of time in teaching pre-writing shapes.

Writing Names

It is important that children are able to copy and draw the shapes before they write any letters or their name. Sometimes children learn to write their name in capital letters or learn to write their name without forming the letter shapes correctly. It can then be hard to break that habit, which in turn causes frustrations and in some cases reluctance to write. Parents often worry if their child cannot write their name before they start school. <u>IT IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT FOR CHLDREN TO BE ABLE TO RECOGNISE THEIR NAME.</u> The more children see their name, the more they will be able to remember what it looks like in terms of sequence of letters. Once children can draw the shapes, we then teach the formation of letters through letter families and then they are quickly able to write their name.

Megan ✓	 ✗

Kinaesthetic Awareness Of Letter Formation

Letter formation needs to be explicitly taught and needs to be consistent. When we teach letter formation, we teach the letters in letter families – the curly caterpillar family, the long ladder family, the one-armed robot family and the zig zag monster family. These are four key movements underpinning letter formation. They are introduced through large scale movements from the shoulder and children make the movements symmetrically using both arms. Children need considerable practice of each of the four movements to develop co-ordination and control and to establish them in kinaesthetic memory. Once a movement is firmly established, we ask them to try it with the right arm only (or left if they are left-handed) and the we give many opportunities to practice and overlearn the shape and the direction. The next stage is to reduce the scale - for example sky writing, palm writing or using a friend's back with forefinger or using sticks in the sand. Finally, this shape making can come down to an even smaller scale using pens crayons and pencils.

Introducing The Long Ladder

First of all the children look at the shape and the size of the letter, they listen to the patter:

"Start at the top, go down the long ladder and flick up at the end."

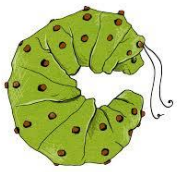
They practise writing the letter in the air, on the palm of their hand, on a friend's back, when painting, in the sand, in cous cous, as well as on paper using felt tips, pens and pencils and every time we are repeating the patter. Eventually the patter becomes embedded and the children make the movement automatically. They then use this as a base for learning the other letters in the family as they all follow the same key movement.

l i t j u y

Start at the top, go down the long ladder and flick up at the end.

Introducing The Curly Caterpillar

First of all the children look at the shape and the size of the letter, they listen to the patter:



"Start at the caterpillars head, go up and round under his tummy and curl up for his tail."

They practise writing the letter in the air, on the palm of their hand, on a friends back, when painting, in the sand, in cous cous, as well as on paper using felt tips, pens and pencils and every time we are repeating the patter. Eventually the patter becomes embedded and the children make the movement automatically. They then use this as a base for learning the other letters in the family as they all follow the same key movement.

c o a d s g q

Start at the caterpillar's head, go up and round under his tummy and curl up for his tail.

Introducing The One Armed Robot

First of all the children look at the shape and the size of the letter, they listen to the patter:

"Start at the robot's head, go down his body, back up his body and over his robot arm."

They practise writing the letter in the air, on the palm of their hand, on a friends back, when painting, in the sand, in cous cous, as well as on paper using felt tips, pens and pencils and every time we are repeating the patter. Eventually the patter becomes embedded and the children make the movement automatically. They then use this as a base for learning the other letters in the family as they all follow the same key movement.

r n m b h k p

Start at the robot's head, go down his body, back up his body and over his robot arm.

Introducing The Zig Zag Monsters

First of all the children look at the shape and the size of the letter, they listen to the patter:

"Zig, zag, zig zag."

They practise writing the letter in the air, on the palm of their hand, on a friends back, when painting, in the sand, in cous cous, as well as on paper using felt tips, pens and pencils and every time we are repeating the patter. Eventually the patter becomes embedded and the children make the movement automatically. They then use this as a base for learning the other letters in the family as they all follow the same key movement.

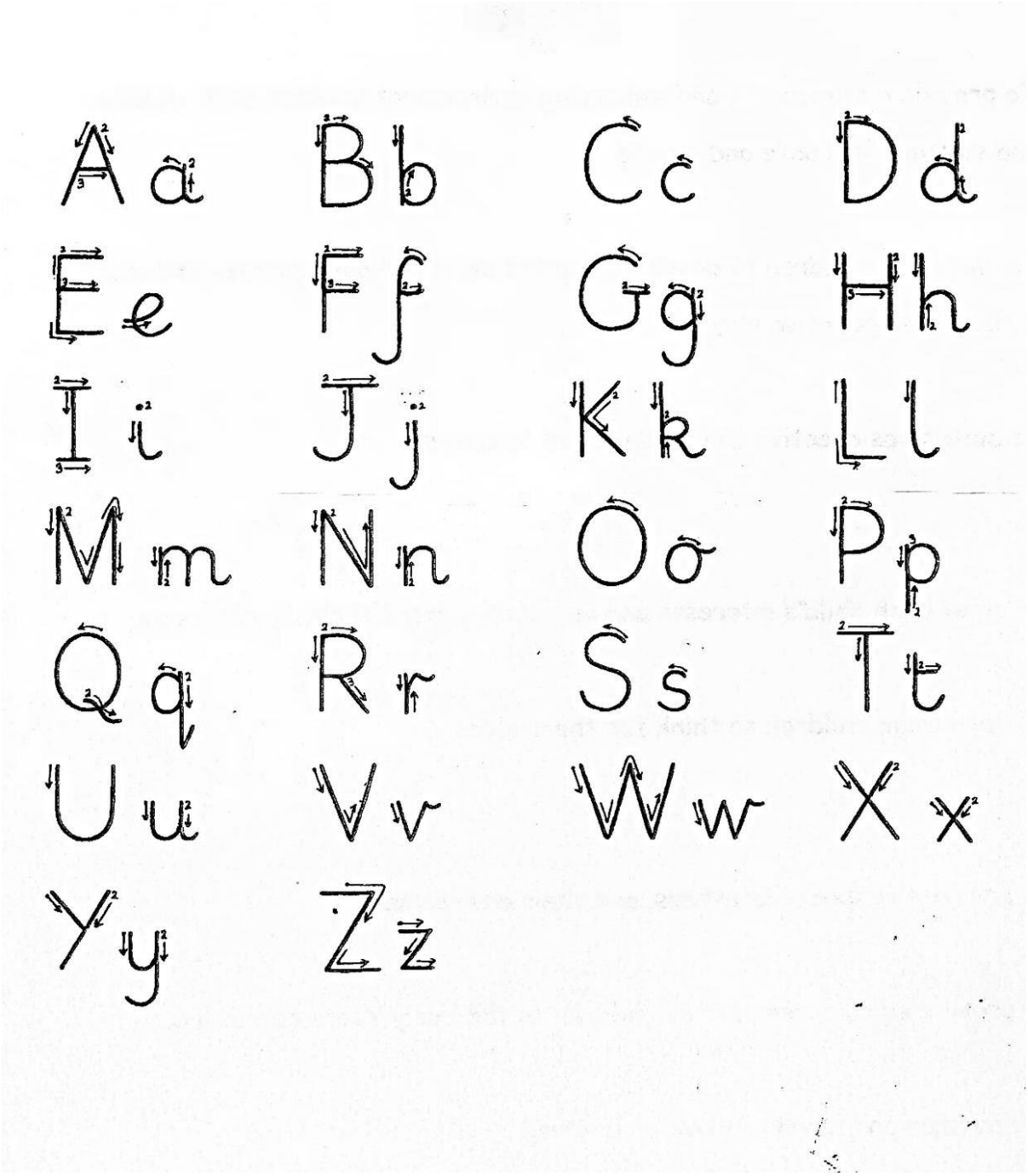
z w v x

Zig, zag, zig zag

Letter Reversals

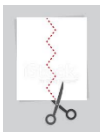
Children need a great deal of time to look carefully at the letters and practice to develop complete control of the four underpinning movements before teaching of specific letter formation begins. Some children may reverse letters and parents can worry about this. It is very common and usually due to one or two things – the child hasn't had adequate visual experience of the letter or the patterns of movement are not embedded so they are not forming the letter automatically. Sometimes they have moved on too quickly. Once a child has developed inefficient motor habits for writing, it can be very difficult to re-learn new patterns of movement, therefore it is vital we ensure careful preparation for writing letters in terms of pre-writing shapes, overlearning the four underpinning movements and teaching letters in handwriting families. Children do not need to be able to hold a pencil correctly before they learn the key movements. We spend a considerable amount of time teaching the key movements in the air, with a wand, a stick or even a light saber.

John Hampden Letter Formation

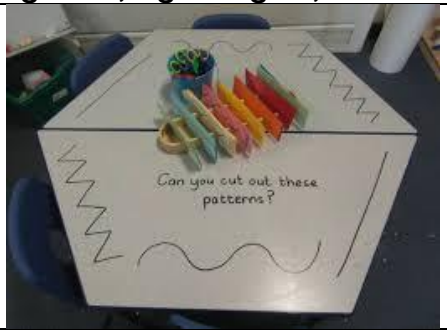


Scissor Skills

Cutting is another important skill to develop that requires a huge amount of practice. Pre-schools, kindergartens and nurseries are fabulous at teaching children how to use scissors and how to cut in stages. We continue with this, starting at the stage that the children are on when they arrive with us. Here is the progression.

Rip	Snip	Fringe	Straight lines	Zig zag lines	Right angles (squares and rectangles)	Curved lines (circles, wavy lines, hearts)
					  	
1 year old	2 ½ - 3 year old		3 ½ year old		square – 4 year old, circle 4 ½ year old, 5 wavy lines	

Once we have taught the next stage we give the children many opportunities to practice and apply their learning.

rip	snip
	
fringe	**straight line**
	
zig zag lines, right angles, curved lines	
	

Helpful hints

The 3 T's: Rules for Using Scissors

1- **TUCK!**

TUCK your elbow by your side

2- **TOP!**

Keep your thumb on TOP

3- **TABLE!**

Cut toward the TABLE and away from you

www.KidsMasterSkills.com