



Building Blocks for Handwriting – Controlling our Hands

Why is this important?

There are a number of skills that children need to master to hold a pencil well. To begin with we need to be able to hold our body upright and steady, in order to be able to move our arm and hand in a controlled way. Think of a pencil being held in the hand like the end point of a crane. If the body of the crane is wobbly, it would not be able to pick up a small object with control.

Children tend to learn in stages - see below for more information.

First: Using two hands together

- Push and pull toys for age and stage – pram, wheelbarrow
- Play park and soft play - climbing frames, building with big blocks
- Digging with shovel, mopping, sweeping, raking leaves
- Helping at home - carrying clothes basket or shopping bag
- Games with balls or balloons – throwing overhead



Next: Beginning to use a busy hand and a helping hand

- Large paint rollers on fence or wall, big bubble wand, ribbon sticks
- Pouring games with sand (at beach or sand pit) or water in bath
- Hammering games
- Lock together toys for push and pull
- Playing in different positions – for example propping self in side sitting/lying, kneeling on all fours, or lying on tummy



Then: One hand taking the lead and becoming more skilled with smaller controlled movements of wrist, thumb and fingers.

- Drawing, painting, stamping on an upright surface e.g. wall or easel
- Stubby chalk and crayon pieces – holding between thumb and tips of fingers
- Small world figures
- Pinching and rolling out play dough
- Games with buttons, beads, counters and threading
- Games with clothes pegs – e.g. placing them around the edge of a box to make a 'zoo' for toy animals. Or try to make a snake by joining pegs together.

