

Supporting Muscle Development for Writing

Perceptual motor skills in addition to loco motor skills play an essential role in a child's development of writing. While every child's needs are different, the following are strategies and ideas that teachers can try to facilitate the development of these necessary skills. (PLF 2010, 59)

To facilitate Proprioception Development try:

- Have children wake their bodies up by massaging their arms
- Have children wake their bodies up by tickling their arms, legs, and head
- Have children do the same activity with different material weights such as tossing bean bags that weigh different weights

To facilitate Tactile Discrimination Development try:

- Mixing finger paint with salt or glitter
- Hiding crayons in sand and inviting children to choose a crayon before writing
- Hiding puzzle pieces in beans and inviting children to reach in and grab the pieces before completing the puzzle
- Providing different types of paper such as sand paper and wax paper for children to experience.

To facilitate Visual Perception Development try:

- Outlining the edges of paper, letters, or puzzle pieces with Elmer's glue
- Cover a table in a contrasting background (usually a dark color)
- Inviting children to explore letters on a board light
- Inviting children to explore letters that have dimension

To facilitate Posture Development try:

- Inviting children to stand while participating in table activities
- Inviting children to change positions while sitting on the floor frequently
- Providing table easels for children to draw and write with while sitting in a chair with their feet flat on the floor.
- Inviting children to practice balancing objects on their heads
- Providing obstacle courses that require movement from a standing to sitting, kneeling, or crawling position

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To facilitate Core Muscle Development try:

- Inviting children to sit - straddling a chair backwards - while they write
- Inviting children to play write or draw while laying stomach down on the floor
- Inviting children to play balance games including walking on a line or a skinny beam
- Inviting children to play with hula hoops
- Inviting children to play movement games that require balance such as the “Hokey-Pokey”
- Inviting children to play games that require stabilization and movement from the floor to their feet, such as tracing their friend’s bodies.

To facilitate shoulder Muscle Development try:

- Inviting children to paint with on a vertical surface such as a fence or easel
- Providing equipment that require pushing and pulling, such as toy wagon.
- Providing equipment that requires scooping and pouring such as sand, water, or gravel.
- Inviting children to play games involving throwing, catching and rolling a ball

To facilitate grip Development try:

- Providing materials that require pinching such as tongs, chopsticks, and tweezers.
- Inviting children to participate in activities that require pincer grasp, such as beading, gluing small objects, or peeling stickers.
- Inviting children to participate in activities that require squeezing such as using glue bottles, kneading playdoh, or wringing out wet washcloths.