

# Ready to Write

In order for young children to become successful writers, they must first be introduced to the pre-requisite skills in the proper order. Every child progresses through these skills at a different rate based on his or her own individual levels of development.

## **What are fine motor skills?**

Fine motor skills involve the small muscles of the body. These small muscles need to be developed because they are required for more advanced tasks such as writing, grasping small objects, and fastening clothing. When we refer to fine motor skills in the context of handwriting, we are typically referring to the small muscles in the hands and fingers used for writing.

Young children benefit from daily practice to help develop fine motor skills in their fingers and hands. Children should have strength and dexterity in their hands and fingers before they can be expected to hold a pencil, or even master writing letters, children should develop the strength and dexterity in their hands and fingers to successfully accomplish these tasks without frustration or anxiety.

We help students strengthen those muscles in the classroom by providing fun, hands-on, and developmentally appropriate activities on a daily basis. These activities also help children develop an appropriate pencil grasp when they are ready.

## **What can parents do at home to help?**

Attached you will find a list of recommended activities you can do at home with your child using supplies you may already have on hand.



- ✓ Cut a length of yarn or twine and invite your child to string Cheerios or macaroni.



- ✓ Play with play dough.



- ✓ Use a rolling pin to roll play dough.



- ✓ Tear paper.



- ✓ Roll "snakes" with play dough using palms of hands.



- ✓ Pick up objects like cotton balls or pom-poms using spring-loaded clothespins.
- ✓ Transfer each object from a bowl to an egg carton or an ice cube tray to make it more interesting.



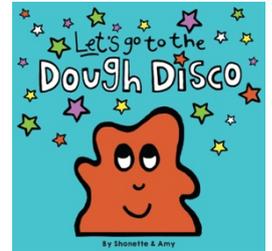
- ✓ Roll play dough into tiny balls using only the fingertips.



- ✓ Cut junk mail, especially thick paper.
- ✓ Cut play dough with plastic scissors.
- ✓ Cut plastic, disposable straws or shredded paper.



- ✓ Use a spray bottle filled with water to spray plants indoors or outside.
- ✓ Add food coloring to water in a spray bottle and spray designs in snow.



# What is Dough Disco?

Dough disco involves moulding play dough in time to music and performing different actions.

This activity helps to strengthen children's fine motor muscles to enable them to develop their pencil grip which in turn will help to develop their writing skills. But most of all it's fun!

## Dough disco moves!



### Roll

Roll the dough into a ball using both hands.



### Poke

Poke the dough with each finger and thumb in turn to make holes in the dough. Make sure you swap hands so all fingers and thumbs are used.



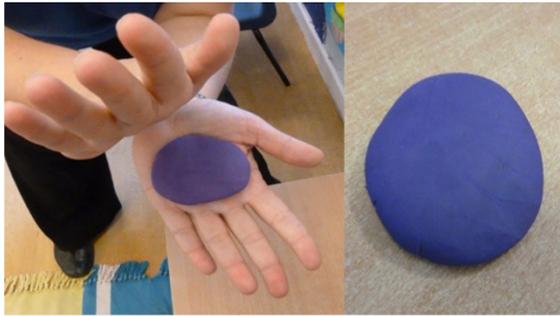
### Squeeze

Squeeze the dough with all the fingers and thumb using a fist grip one hand at a time.



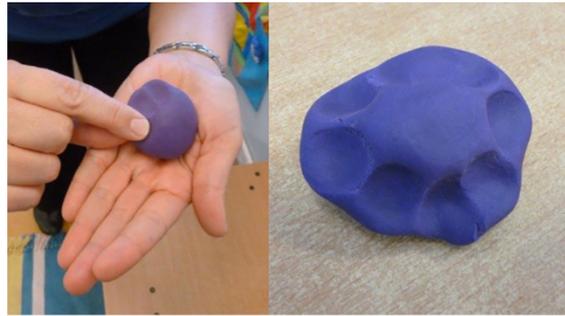
### Sausage

Roll the play dough between both hands moving backwards and forwards to make a sausage.



### Pancake

Hold the play dough in one hand and push the other hand flat into the play dough. Repeat this until the dough is flatter!



### Pinch

Pinch the play dough. Hold the play dough in one hand and use Tom Thumb and Peter Pointer to pinch the dough. Then swap hands and repeat.

**Try it at home!** Give it a go and have some fun!

## No cook playdough recipe

### You will need:

- 2 cups plain flour
- 1 cup salt
- 1 tbsp oil
- 1 cup cold water
- 2 drops liquid food colouring (any colour of your choosing)



### Method:

1. Mix the flour and salt together in a large mixing bowl.
2. Add the cold water, oil and drops of food colouring and mix together.
3. When your ingredients are well mixed, take them out of your bowl and place your dough onto a flat surface, such as greaseproof paper.
4. Knead vigorously for a few minutes, until your dough feels like modelling dough and all of the stickiness has gone.

### What is kneading?

This is when you press, massage, squeeze and fold your dough.

If your dough is too wet, add a little extra flour and carry on kneading.

If your dough is too dry and crumbly, add an extra drop of cold water and carry on kneading.

Make sure you add any extra ingredients a little bit at a time.