

PLAY AND LEARN AT HOME



May 2021

WRITING

Reading and writing develop together, reinforcing one another. The fine motor skills needed for writing will also allow children to manipulate a computer mouse, cut with scissors and tie their shoelaces. This month we're offering age-appropriate ideas to help develop your child's fine motor skills, enabling them to do more independently. Core body and shoulder strength will be needed for a child to be able to sit in a chair and write or draw at a table with control. Children will strengthen their fine motor muscles and practice prewriting skills using the dry erase board and crayon included in this month's kit.

LEARNING ON THE GO: BUILDING EARLY LITERACY SKILLS

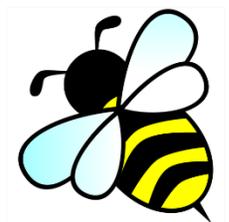


Learning to write includes learning to control the marks you make on a paper to be able to create letters. Tracing lines is a simple way to practice this skill! Not only does it help grow hand muscles and coordination, but it also helps build confidence.

Start with a tracing page. There are free examples online to print, but you can also make your own or use the dry erase board included in your kit. Mark a page with dotted or dashed lines – zig zag, straight, bumpy, wavy, stop-and-start. Have your child trace over them with a crayon, marker or pencil. We make each of these line types when we write letters and words.

To make the activity even more fun, make the line a path from one object to another: a car going to the carwash, for example, or a bee flying to her hive. Can you help the bee fly home?

Place dot stickers on a piece of paper. Have your child connect the dots to make a letter or other shape. If your child is old enough to use stickers, have them place the stickers on the page to make their own path to connect.



READY, SET, KINDERGARTEN!: SOCIALLY AND EMOTIONALLY READY FOR SCHOOL

My birthday is on...

I am _____ years old.



Hi! My name is...

My eyes are...

My hair is...



We write to convey information, and children love to write about their favorite subjects: themselves! Use the All About Me book included in the kit to get your children excited about writing, using their fine motor skills to grasp crayons and pencils and thinking about their personal characteristics. If they're not ready to write the letters of the alphabet, ask what they'd like you to write down.

As you write their answers, point out the words and talk about the letters. Move your finger across the page to show in which direction your language is read.

When you've finished the pages we made, ask your child what other pages they could add to their book. Choose from pets, favorite foods or colors, a picture of their house or whatever they want to talk about. Suggest they share with other family members and friends to tell their story.

LITTLE EXPLORERS: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, ART AND MATH

STEAM skills such as engineering and art go hand-in-hand with small motor skills.

Create your own STEAM bins, boxes or tubs to support fine motor skill development through building and creating! Playdough, chalk or straws let young children practice their pencil grip. Sponges, tweezers, playdough and chalk will encourage children to use their small muscles to pinch, twist, mold or stack.

Add these items* to your own STEAM bins:

- Clothespins
- Large buttons
- Chalk
- Legos or any blocks or items to build and stack
- Pom-poms
- Cotton balls
- Tweezers
- Q-Tips
- Eye droppers
- Stickers
- Pipe cleaners
- Child-safe scissors
- Sponges
- Playdough and playdough tools
- Craft supplies like googly eyes or sequins
- Straws

**Note: Some of these items are potential choking hazards for very young children.*

FAMILY PLACE PLAY AND LEARN: LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

The pincer grasp is the coordination of the index finger and thumb to hold an item. Children typically develop this by age 1. Children of all ages will continue to develop fine motor control, along with eye-hand coordination.

Some easy at-home ideas appropriate for children under three, though may appeal to older children:

- Provide pipe cleaners or uncooked spaghetti to lace through a colander.
- Shoelaces or ribbons would be a slightly more difficult option because of the need to pull them through the opposite side.
- Attach clothespins to paper plates (or other items) or use them to pick up small objects like cotton balls. For a more difficult option, add numbers to the plate and clothespins for a fine motor matching game.



FIND OUT MORE!

If you'd like to know more about prewriting skills or any early literacy topic, we're happy to help! Visit arapahoelibraries.org, click on **Services** and select **Educator and Parent Support**. Tell us what you'd like to learn about and we'll help you find the answers!