

GETTING READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

BUILDING EARLY WRITING SKILLS

HADDON TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Importance of Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor involve the use of the muscles that control the hands, fingers, and thumbs.

Writing skills allow students to gradually build and strengthen their fine motor skills throughout the school year.

To prepare your child for Kindergarten, you can do fun activities to build their fine motor skills.

Finger and Hand Exercises

- **Tripod Fingers** - Practice holding the pencil with the thumb, index and middle finger to control the pencil.
- **Finger Ball Walk**- Take a hand-sized ball such as a tennis ball or rubber ball, and have your child “walk the ball” up and down their leg with only their fingers.



Finger and Hand Exercises Continued

- **Playdough Finger Exercises** - Use the tripod fingers to roll small balls of playdough to build finger strength.
- **Squirt Bottle Play** — Squeezing a squirt bottle is great for strengthening hands. Have your child use a squirt bottle to water outside plants or clean a fence.
- **Pull/Push wagon over grass** — The grass acts as resistance, so pulling or pushing a wagon or a stroller is hard work and a great outdoor hand strengthening activity!



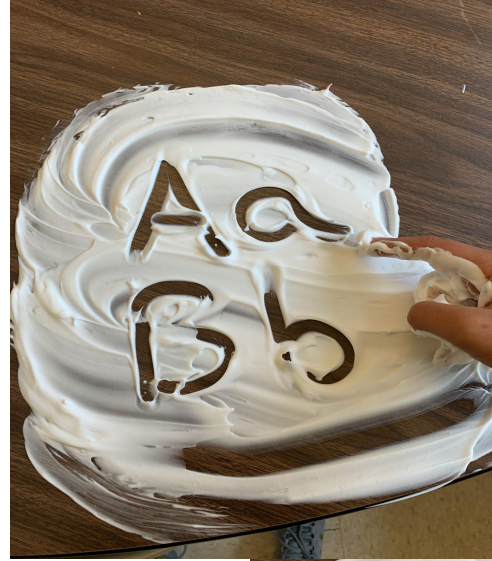
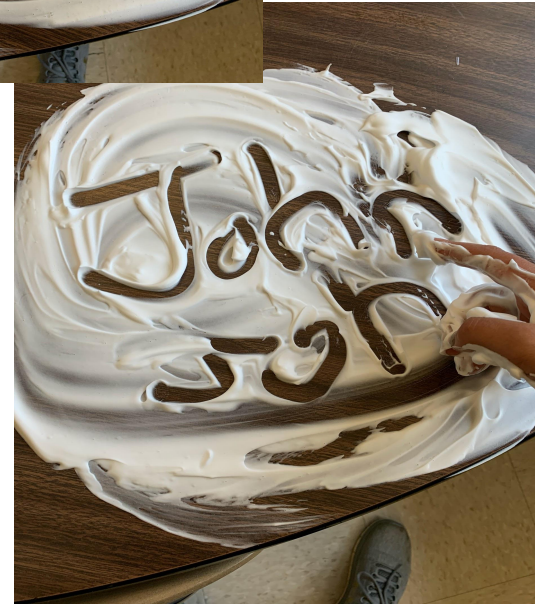
Finger and Hand Exercises Continued

- **Catching and Throwing a Ball-** Catching and throwing are a great way to strengthen different hand and finger muscles. Try different types of balls to work different muscles.
- **Sponge Clean Toys outside-** Have your child clean some of their toys with a sponge. Carrying and squeezing a sponge works hand muscles.
- **Puzzles-** Builds finger strengths and flexibility.
- **Bead-Stringing-** Make special necklaces and bracelets for family and friends.



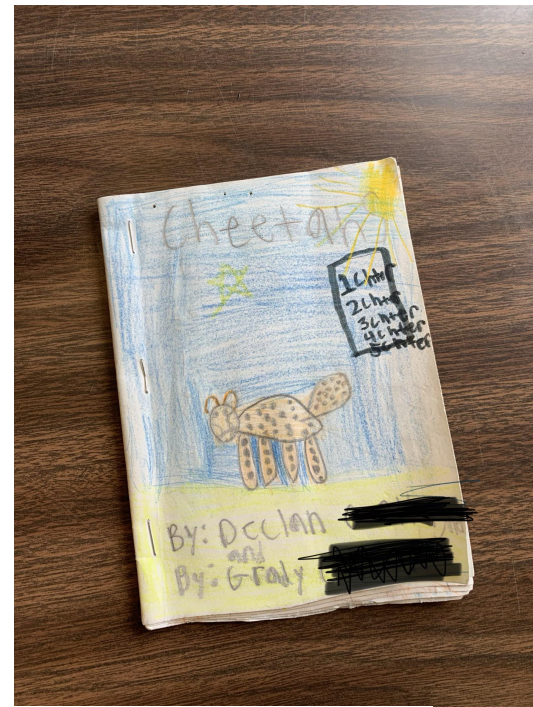
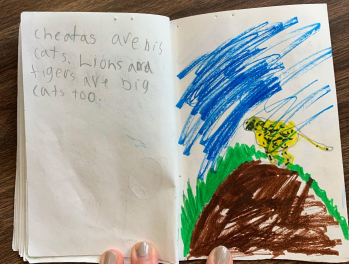
Games and Activities

- **Shaving Cream** - Practice letters and names in shaving cream. The kids have fun while practicing their letters! Great sensory activity!
- **Side Wall Chalk**- Write letters and have your child trace them with different colors.



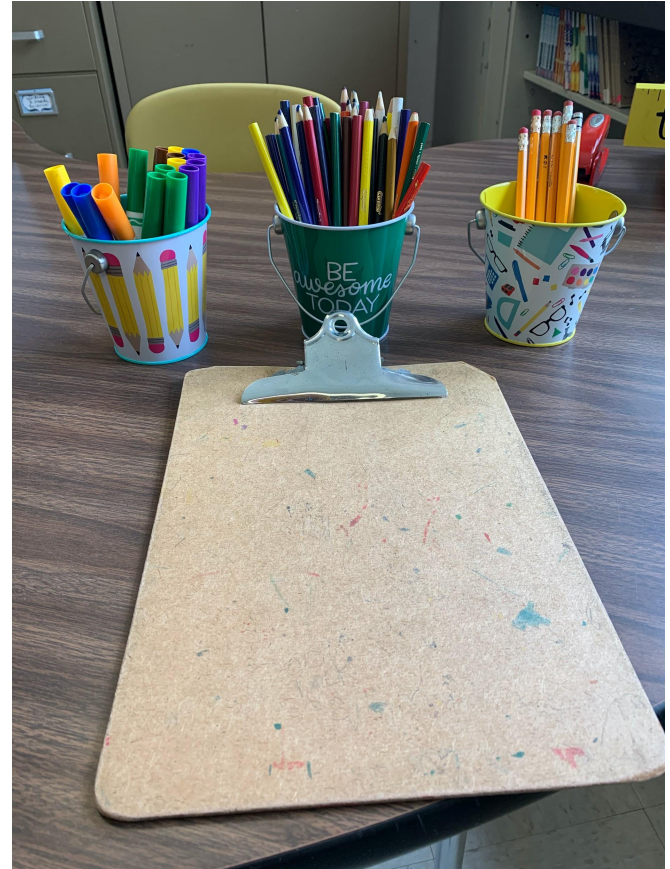
Games and Activities Continued

- **Have your child write their own book-**
Take some blank papers, fold them over and staple them into “mini-books”. Work together by creating a story and writing it in a mini-book. Stories can be real or not real. As long as they are having fun!
- **Write a letter-** Pick a special person and write a letter to them with pictures and words. Have your child put on the stamp and put the letter in the mailbox to make it extra special.



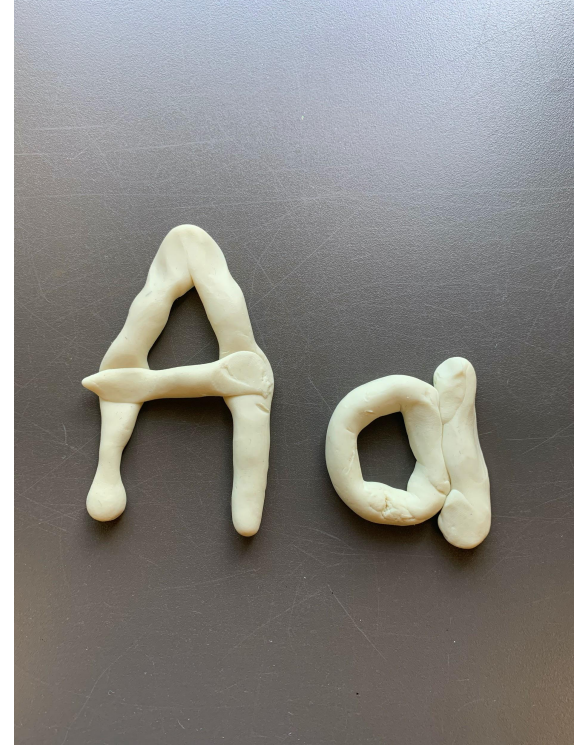
Games and Activities Continued

- **Prepare a writing center**-Give your child a special writing space with a variety of writing tools where they can go to draw, write and and explore. Join them in the writing center and write and draw together.
- **Make a grocery list together**- Write some groceries on a special piece of paper for your child and have them trace it with a writing tool. You can also have them copy the word. For extra fun, have them be in charge of finding the groceries when you go shopping!



Games and Activities Continued

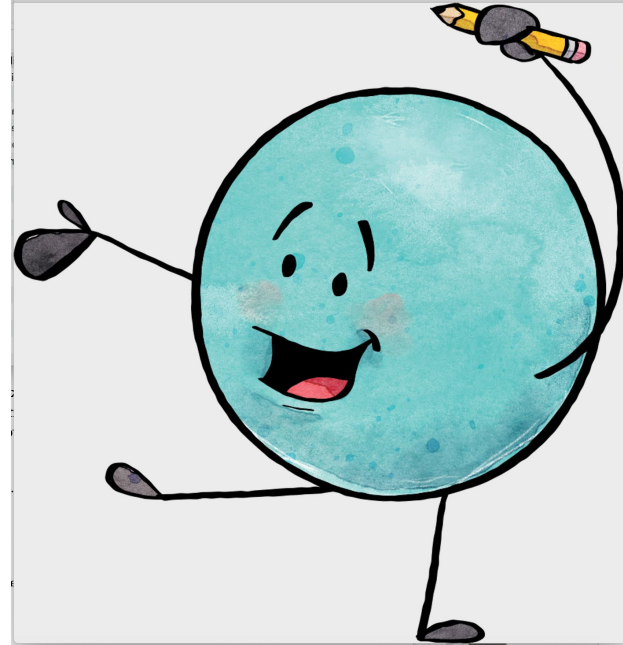
- **Make letters with Playdough-** Practice forming letters with Playdough. Try uppercase and lowercase letters. If your child needs assistance, create the letter first and then have your child look at yours as they make their letter.
- **Make labels for your home-** Print some important words for labels in your home. Have your student trace over the words or copy the words. Place the labels around the home for them to see (door, couch, bathroom, light, book).



Skills

Remember, your child does not need to know all of these skills by the beginning of the year. Make a list of the skills your child already knows and what skills you would like to work on over the summer.

- Write their name with uppercase and lowercase letters (if possible).
- Identify uppercase and lowercase letters in the alphabet.
- Use scissors, glue, paint and other relative materials with ease.
- Care for, organize and use writing tools. (sharpen pencil, put lids back on markers, put crayons back in the box.
- Draw meaningful pictures to convey a thought or idea.



Discussions at Home

Ask about writing tool preferences -

As your child uses writing materials, give them different options and notice which ones they prefer. Have a discussion with them about why they chose a particular writing material rather than another one. They might not feel comfortable with certain tools if they do not know how to use them correctly.



Discussions at Home (Continued)

Talk about their pictures-

As your child writes and draws, have discussions about the writing and drawing relationship.

Does your child's story match up with the pictures they are drawing?

Do they understand how pictures and writing help us communicate?

Discussions at Home (Continued)

Have your child notice everyday words and sentences-

When you are with your child, have them look for words or sentences they see

EXAMPLES: warning signs, do not enter signs, stop signs, support essential workers signs).

Ask why someone might write that.

Ask who might write that. Have a discussion about how writing helps us communicate.

Helpful Websites

- <https://otperspective.com> - Great ideas on how to strengthen fine motor skills at home.
- <https://www.education.com/magazine/article/prepare-for-kindergarten-writing/> - More ways to prepare your child to write.
- <https://www.scholastic.com/parents/school-success/school-life/grade-by-grade/preparing-kindergarten.html>
- https://www.readingrockets.org/teaching/prek_guide
- <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/learning-at-home/encouraging-reading-writing/6-tips-for-helping-young-kids-learn-to-write>