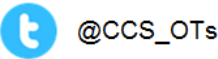


For further information about this service contact:

Paediatric Occupational Therapy Service

Redgrave Children & Young People’s Centre
Redgrave Gardens
Luton
LU3 3QN
Telephone: 01582 708141

Child Development Centre
Hill Rise
Kempston
Bedford
MK42 7EB
Telephone: 01234 310278



Parking

Disabled parking spaces are available near the entrance at both venues and there is ample other free parking.

If you require this information in a different format such as in large print or on audio tape, or in a different language please contact the service on the details above.

If you have any compliments about this service or suggestions for improvements, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 0300 131 1000 (charges may apply depending on your network) or email: ccs-tr.pals@nhs.net.

For free, confidential health advice and information 24 hours a day, 365 days a year please contact NHS 111.



**Bedfordshire
Community
Health Services**



Tips for developing Handwriting Skills

Paediatric Occupational Therapy



- Play games such as snakes and ladders, pick up sticks or operation.
- Encourage your child to hold an object (a coin or marble) against the palm of their hand with their ring and little fingers whilst doing some of the above activities.
- Encourage your child to draw, write or paint on a vertical surface, for example use an easel, blackboard, or tape some paper to a wall.

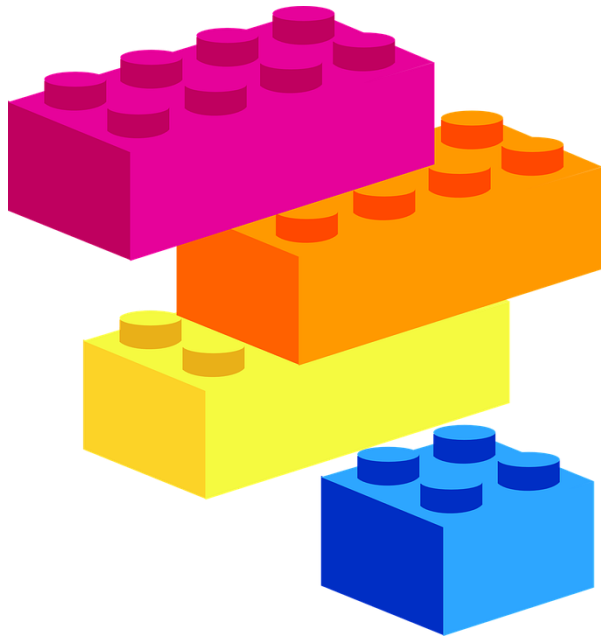


- Play Connect 4.
- Wheelbarrow walking supporting the child at their hips, thighs or ankles depending on their strength.
- Hitting balloons upward.
- Pat bouncing a large ball

Tips to develop and strengthen thumb, finger muscles and wrists

Encourage your child to do these activities with their preferred hand and use their thumb and index finger (and middle finger if required).

- Do up and undo buttons.
- Use tweezers to pick up small pieces of food, beads or toys and put them into a container.
- Take coins out of a purse/wallet one at a time.
- Play with playdough - roll, squeeze, push, poke and knead it. Pinch the playdough between the thumb and index finger, thumb and middle finger and thumb, index and middle fingers together. Make small balls by rolling the playdough between the thumb and fingers.
- Threading activities such as beads or lacing cards.
- Play with Duplo and Lego.
- Squeeze clothes pegs to put them on and take them off the rim of a container.



Writing is acquired in a developmental fashion. First a child begins to scribble and colour in, then they master copying and drawing of the following forms prior to being able to adequately grasp letter formation:

It is also beneficial to develop fine motor skills – see tips for developing fine motor skills advice sheet for activity ideas.

The following are activities to try with your child at home to develop their handwriting skills:

- Use a multisensory approach:
 - ⇒ Try making patterns using paint, chalk, etch-sketch/white board, shaving foam, rice, sand, play dough etc. Ask your child to imitate your shapes using his/her index finger or a long stick.
 - ⇒ Try 'writing' on aluminium foil, construction paper of different colours, different kinds of paper, standard paper or colouring books.
 - ⇒ Use special colouring books in which the colour appears when children paint with water.
 - ⇒ Try 'writing' on sandpaper with different crayons, paintbrushes or chalk.
 - ⇒ Draw around sandpaper or stencils.
 - ⇒ Try drawing with scented markers.
 - ⇒ Add a few drops of bubble bath or scented oil to finger-paint.
 - ⇒ Use a musical toothbrush to paint.
 - ⇒ Attach bells to the end of a paintbrush.
 - ⇒ Try finger painting in whipping cream on a flat pan of jelly.
 - ⇒ Try drawing on a frosted cake to decorate it.



- Using water and paintbrushes paint lines and shapes on the pavement for your child to copy.
- Use sandpaper shapes for feeling and drawing over.
- Rainbow drawing – draw lines, shapes or simple designs. Ask your child to trace the line using different coloured pencils, pens or chalks.
- Draw simple pathways for your child to draw along. For example a straight lined road so that a car can get to a house or a dog can get to a bone. Start with straight, wide paths and progress to narrower curving paths.
- Incorporate the lines and shapes into drawings/ pictures eg faces made up of circle and lines, houses made up of squares and diagonal lines etc.
- Practice mazes, dot-to-dots and tracing over lined drawings. Do this in large scale as well as small.
- Children learn through movement experiences, especially those that utilise their large muscles and involve gross motor co-ordination. Ask your child to walk on straight, curved and diagonal lines made from a board, tape or string. Your child can walk with or without shoes. Your child can help define the line by putting a beanbag, ball or toy at the beginning and end points. Your child can walk, run, crawl or roll from the beginning to the end points. Ask your child to walk on shapes drawn in sand.
- Draw pictures with the above pre-writing shapes to develop a cognitive understanding of putting together shapes to form pictures and letters.



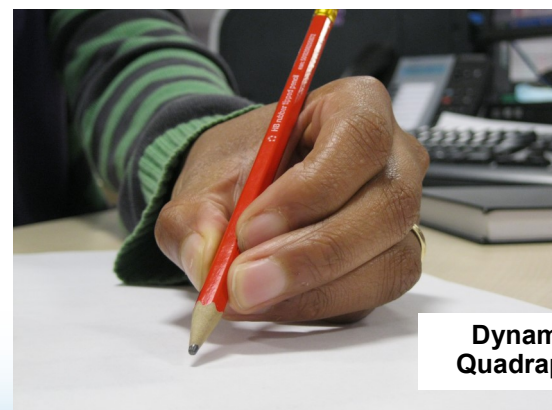
Developing pencil grasp: Most children naturally develop a pencil grasp that is comfortable for them and a variety of different grasps can be seen in any classroom. A pencil grasp only becomes a problem if the child complains of fatigue, pain in their hand, or has difficulty writing neatly and at a reasonable speed (as compared to their peers). An awkward or unusual pencil grasp becomes more difficult to change as a child gets older; therefore it is important to encourage your child to hold their pencil with a grasp that:

- Positions the pencil between the thumb, index and middle fingers.
- Has the ring and little finger bent and resting comfortably on the table.
- Has the thumb and index finger forming an open space.
- Have the wrist extended slightly and the forearm resting on the table.
- Holds the pencil approximately 1-2cm from the tip.
- Allows their hand and fingers to move when writing and drawing.

The most efficient grasps are the dynamic tripod and dynamic quadrapod (see below).



**Dynamic
Tripod**



**Dynamic
Quadrapod**