

APPENDIX 4

Getting ready for writing!

A quick 'Workout' Sitting at Tables

Children with handwriting problems often experience difficulty with fine hand movements. However, all children will benefit from participating in these activities to warm up their muscles and joints to complete handwriting tasks. This is a good whole classroom based activity with one or two exercises from each section used, with adaptations as necessary.

A short 'desk based' set of hand and arm activities before every handwriting session in the classroom can be helpful. Five minutes is quite enough – daily if possible.

Use your own ideas to vary and enhance as you like.

Getting in a good sitting position

Ask the children to check ...

Is their back straight? Head tall? Bottom on the back of the chair? Feet flat on the floor?

Getting warmed up

Workout 1:

- Sit on your hands – sit on one, wave the other. Swap.
- Hold the edge of the chair (2 hands). Push up on hands. Lean right and lean left.
- Lift (shrug) 2 shoulders, then 1 shoulder. Lift alternate shoulders.
- Shake 2 hands in the air then shake 1.
- Shake up, down, fast, slow, one hand still, one hand shake.
- Hands on table, talk about them. Name them, name the fingers, thumbs. Touch them.
- Shake hands with neighbour

Workout 2:

- Make 2 fists (hands on table).
- Straighten arms (elbows off table). Are hands level?
- Thumbs out then in. Pull fists towards you. Hide thumbs under the table.
- Stretch arms again (keep fists).
- Lift 2 arms up to shoulder level.
- Lift 1 arm up, keeping the other down.
- Move arms in, out, and cross them.
- Turn them over fingers up.
- Bend elbows, thumbs on top.
- Thumbs in, out. Wriggle them.
- Clap 2 fists together. Climb fists upwards (thumbs in) as in 1 potato, 2 potatoes.

Workout 3:

- Make 2 flat hands (thumbs out).
- Spread fingers (thumbs touching).
- Close fingers and thumbs.
- Turn them over (touch little fingers), stand flat hands up (thumbs up).
- Put 1 hand on the other and cross them.
- Lift hands and straight arms.
- One higher, one lower, one up, one still.
- Make a V with 2 flat hands.
- Rest chin in it.
- Make a \wedge with hands, put on head.
- Clap hands to rhythms. Simple... Hard.
- Clap hands then thighs to rhythms.
- Increase complexity.

Workout 4:

- Make 1 fist, 1 flat hand, change.
- Touch body parts with fist, flat hand.
- Lift from table – shoulder level.
- Lift 1 keep the other still.
- 2 fists on shoulders – 2 flat hands on table, cross them.
- Clap fist on flat hand, change.
- Make rhythms this way.
- Clasp 2 hands together, make a clapping noise.
- Interlock fingers.
- Stretch forwards, sideward, circle them.
- Flat hands and elbows together on table, slide elbows out wrists down, hands stay together.
- Church/steeple etc.

Workout 5:

- Rub hands together (fronts and backs).
- Hands flat on table, thumbs up, tap all fingers.
- Tap individual, named fingers.
- Make clasped hands again.
- Press all finger tips and thumbs together.
- Move them (pressed together).
- Pincer grasp. (N.B. thumb and finger should make a circle i.e. thumb/finger should not be straight).
- Look through them (glasses, monocle).
- Hold ears with finger and thumb.
- Cross arms and hold ears.

- One hand, hold nose.
- Finger games e.g. Incy Wincy Spider.

Workout 6:

- Use cardboard tubes or small sticks.
- Grasp with 2 hands (thumbs under).
- Stretch forwards, back, sideward.
- Lift up, behind head, down.
- Hold with thumb under on 1 hand, over the other.
- Swap.
- Hold 2 tubes or sticks.
- Stand them up, turn them over.
- Tilt them sideward.
- Lift alternate tubes.
- Use chopsticks or pencils and pincer grasp.
- Twiddle and twirl.
- Walk fingers up and down etc.

Workout 7:

- Name fingers again.
- Link on the other hand.
- Touch 2 Peter Pointers.
- Put him in/out from a fist.
- Repeat with elbows stretched.
- Peter Pointer points patterns in the air/on the table/on your hands etc.
- Touch 1st hand 2 fingers and thumb.
- Hold soft leaded pencil -> talk about grasp.
- Chant rhythmic patterns on paper, Mmmmmmmmmmm wwwwwwwwwww
- To finish draw round your hand naming fingers.

Now start writing!