



SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S FINE MOTOR SKILLS

An effective play based programme provides experiences which foster the development of children's fine motor skills. Fine motor development focuses on the strengthening of small muscles. The muscles in the fingers, hands and arms.

The development of fine motor skills is crucial as they are an important foundation for other skills including reading, writing and numeracy skills as well as everyday tasks such as getting dressed and using a knife and fork.

As with all other skills, children develop their fine motor skills at their own pace.

It is important to provide a range of interesting and engaging activities to allow children to develop these skills.



A Play based environment provides opportunities for children to develop these skills at the different learning centres.

Dramatic play: children have access to the use of dress ups that have zips, press studs and both large and small buttons.

Lines for pegging up dolls clothes, the use of cooking utensils, tongs, biscuit cutters, cups and spatulas.

Writing materials: notepads to use in role play activities such as writing shopping lists or restaurant menus.

Writing Table: provide a variety of materials pens, pencils, chalk and crayons of various sizes.

Tracing boards to develop motor skills and hand eye coordination.

Wikki sticks, playdough and plasticine are freely available and their use is encouraged.

Construction area: children build and create with blocks and lego and have the opportunity to create with boxes and collage materials, buttons, bark, fabric and sticky tape.

At home: Parents can assist with the development of fine motor skills by providing opportunities for children to help with:

Cooking : stirring, mixing, peeling, icing, decorating and kneading all help children use small muscles.

Games and construction: Board games, marbles or games with small figures or magnets are useful.

All construction materials lego, mobilo and hammer and tacks are engaging and fun while also promoting creativity.

Both teachers and parents play an important role in supporting children and providing ongoing experiences to enrich and promote their fine motor skills, to enable them to have the best possible foundation for writing, reading and numeracy.



MATHEMATICS IN THE EARLY YEARS

Maths skills are important to a child's success – both at school and in everyday life. Understanding maths also builds confidence and opens the door to a range of career options.

How will my child learn maths?

Children learn maths best through activities that encourage them to learn easily when they can connect maths concepts and procedures to their own experience. By using common household objects (such as measuring cups and spoons in the kitchen) and observing everyday events (such as weather patterns over the course of a week), they can "see" the ideas that are being taught.

What maths activities can I do with my child? Understanding Numbers

Numbers are used to describe quantities, to count, and to add, subtract, multiply, and divide. Understanding numbers and knowing how to combine them to solve problems helps us in all areas of maths.

- **Count everything!** Count toys, kitchen utensils, and items of clothing as they come out of the dryer. Help your child count by pointing to and moving the objects as you say each number out loud. Count forwards and backwards from different starting places. Use household items to practice adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing.

• Sing counting songs, read counting books.

Every culture has counting songs, such as "One, Two, Buckle My Shoe" and "Ten Little Monkeys", which make learning to count – both forwards and backwards – fun for children. Counting books also capture children's imagination, by using pictures of interesting things to count and to add.

• Discover the many ways in which numbers are used inside and outside your home.

Take your child on a "number hunt" in your home or neighbourhood. Point out how numbers are used on the television set, the microwave, and the telephone. Spot numbers in books and newspapers. Look for numbers on signs in your neighbourhood. Encourage your child to tell you whenever he or she discovers a new way in which numbers are used.

• Ask your child to help you solve everyday number problems.

"We need six tomatoes to make our sauce for dinner, and we have only two. How many more do we need to buy?" "You have two pillows in your room and your sister has two pillows in her room. How many pillowcases do I need to wash?" "Two guests are coming to eat dinner with us. How many plates will we need?"

• Practise "skip counting".

Together, count by 1's, 2's and 5's. Ask your child how far he or she can count by 10's. Roll two dice, one to determine a starting number and the other to determine the counting interval. Ask your child to try counting backwards from 10, 20, or even 100.

• Make up games using dice

and playing cards. Try rolling dice and adding or multiplying the numbers that come up. Add up the totals until you reach a target number e.g. 20 Play the game backwards to practice subtraction.



- **Play "Broken Calculator".** Pretend that the number 4 key on the calculator is broken. Without it, how can you make the number 4 appear on the screen? (Sample answers: $2 + 2$, $5 - 1$). Ask other questions using different "broken" keys.

NUMERACY AND PLAY IN THE BLOCK CORNER

Blocks are open ended play materials that stimulate the imagination and provide endless opportunities in the development of mathematical concepts.

Play in the block corner is one of a variety of activities offered to enhance the children's numeracy skills in Pre Primary.

Children are encouraged to work co-operatively, while being engaged in construction play, they are given time and space to explore and experiment with blocks. Through this children learn about the numeracy concepts of space, weight and shape they develop an understanding of size and weight through handling different blocks as they build and also learn the correct names of both 2 dimensional and 3 dimensional shapes. Paper, drawing and measuring tools are placed in easy reach of the children enabling them to measure blocks, write and record numerals and draw shapes

Children may build a tower with friends, estimate and count how many blocks they have used, categorise and record what they have discovered on sheets provided and may choose to draw and label a picture of their construction.

Use of mathematical language, the language of position under, over, next to, behind, and the development of spatial awareness are all important math skills the children can acquire through this activity.

In addition to this the children's communication and conversational skills and those of problem solving and turn taking are also highlighted and encouraged.

DADS COUNT



Fathers can make a great contribution to their children's development from the earliest age by talking, singing and reading with them. Dads who talk and read with their very young children will help create a secure foundation for learning.

Research has shown that when fathers take an active role in their children's education

children are more likely to do better academically and enjoy school more. Children also benefit in numerous other ways from having involved fathers, including higher self esteem and better social skills.

A father's reading habits can have a powerful influence on a child's ability to read, their levels of interest and their reading choices. Research has shown that the lack of male role models involved in reading and other literacy related activities during children's early years is one of the possible causes for the declining rates of school achievement for boys.

While fathers might want to increase the amount of time spent with their children there may be work pressures that hinder increased involvement. One of the biggest contributions you can make to your child's education and personal experience is to read with them regularly. Making time to read a bedtime story with your child is a great way to ensure that you are having a positive impact on your child's learning. Research shows that when dads read bedtime stories their children do better at school. Bedtime stories encourage speech and language development and help children learn literacy skills in an enjoyable way. If nothing else, a story at bedtime helps set down healthy sleep patterns.



How to read a bedtime story.....

- Bedtime stories should be told in a relaxed atmosphere – so switch off the TV. Try to add dramatisation to the stories. Try reading in different voices, use silly voices or carry out some of the actions being performed by the characters in the book. Anything that makes it a more stimulating story will make story time more fun.



- Regularly read the same story. This will help your child's language development and enhance their memory. Hearing a story over and over again helps children become familiar with words and establish speech patterns.
- Avoid turning story time into an academic exercise by using it to test your child's reading skills. Ask open questions about the stories that help them build a link between the story and their everyday life. For example: "What would you do?"

- It's even more important for dads to actively encourage their sons to read. Reading can sometimes be thought of as a 'girly' thing to do – which may explain why boys tend to do worse than girls in literacy tests. If young boys see their main role model enjoying reading it will encourage them too. Reeling off your favourite line or two from a newspaper story, magazine or football programme will help them build an association between reading and fun.



- If you are away from home, try taping or videoing yourself reading a favourite book.
- Find books about things your children like; or about things coming up like a beach holiday or a trip to the dentist.

A selection of books for Dads to enjoy with their children

The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle
What a caterpillar ate before it turned into a chrysalis, then a butterfly.

Ginger & Ollie - It's Raining by Ed Vere
Ginger likes feeding the ducks. Ollie hates it. But they both like singing in the rain.

Dear Zoo by Rod Campbell
Zoo animals and their attributes. Flaps and lots of fun.

Fidget & Quilly Make A Noise by Mike Haines and David Melling

The Cat in the Hat by Dr. Seuss
Dogger by Shirley Hughes
Boy has favourite soft toy, loses it, then sister helps him find it.

Rory and the Lion by Jane Cabrera
Rory loves lions but one night he hears a real lion and no-one believes him.

George and the Dragon by Chris Wormell
The story of a scary dragon who terrifies everyone except little mouse.

We are Going on a Bear Hunt by Michael Rosen
Good fun especially with a few children, as they can all join in with the sounds. .

Cinderboy by Laurence Anholt, illustrated by Arthur Robins
Football meets Cinderella and gets to go to the game.

Some books for Dads to enjoy themselves

Affliction by Russell Banks
Father and son live, love and hate together on a remote farm.

The Soldier's Return by Melvyn Bragg
A father and his six year old son must get to know each other after father returns from WW2.

All This Is Mine by Ray French
Wayward son grows up trying not to be like wayward father.

Fever Pitch by Nick Hornby
A boy and his weekend father get to know each other at the football.

My Ear at His Heart by Hanif Kureishi
A memoir about how Kureishi became a writer from the ashes of his father's literary calling.

Before the Frost by Henning Mankell
Moody detective Kurt Wallender is joined by his daughter on the murder squad.

And When Did You Last See Your Father by Blake Morrison
A memoir of a son looking back at his father with love and irritation.

Four Fathers by Tom Palmer
Four sons tell the story of their dads, themselves and what lies between.

Man and Boy by Tony Parsons
A man facing the trials and rewards of bringing up a young son alone.

EARLY CHILDHOOD TEAM

Mrs Janine DelGrossi

Mrs Anna Tancredi

Mrs Lorna Brook

Miss Sarah Raspa

Miss Cassandra Lioni

Miss Catherine Connell

Mrs Angie Lionetta-Civa

Mr Peter Scutti

Ms Laura Nelson

Mrs Eleonora Panaia

Mrs Anna Drew

Ms Joanne Cox

Mrs Karen Krikstolaitis

Mrs Teresa Torre

Ms Sharon Tzaicos

Mrs Natalie Vuong

Mrs Julie Gannaway

Mrs Narelle Paolino

Ms Pam Rimmer