Shoulder Stability

In order to learn to write and complete other fine motor tasks, children need to have good control of their whole arm, starting from their shoulder down to their elbow, wrist and then their hands and fingers. This allows them to hold their arms in a stable position while their hands complete activities.

Activities to try at home to increase shoulder stability and wrist extension:

Weight bearing activities through the upper limb will develop shoulder stability which allows better upper limb control in all fine motor activities. Additionally weight bearing activities help to develop good balance, posture and movements skills. This will help to increase your child’s awareness of where their body is in space. Activities on a vertical surface will also promote shoulder stability. It will encourage wrist extension and help to develop a more mature grasp.

**Weightbearing activities:**
- Animal walks (e.g. pretending to be a bear or crab)
- Tug of war
- Wheelbarrow walks (hold your child at their knees, later progress to holding at ankles)
- Wall push ups (e.g. try and push the wall over!)
- Play twister
- Outdoor play, e.g. hanging on to the monkey bars, climbing up the ladder to slide, swings
- Play activities while lying on tummy e.g. puzzles.
- Push and pull wheelbarrows, prams or a trolley. Adjust the amount of weight to be pushed or pulled.
- Walking on hands over a barrel or gym ball.
- Floor or chair push-ups; child pushes through their hands to try and lift their bottom off the floor/chair

**Activities on a vertical surface:**
- Use an easel (e.g. for drawing or painting)
- Drawing on blackboards/paper stuck to the wall
- Felt boards on the wall
- Play with shaving foam or window markers on mirrors or windows.
- Draw on blackboards and wipe them clean!
- Placing stickers onto an easel
- Playing with magnets on the fridge
- Paste a picture on an easel/wall– glue shapes and pictures to make a hanging design
- Animal tracks– draw a line on a large sheet of butchers paper and blue tack to a wall. Have your child walk an animal figure along the trail to the end or on a road:
- Rocky Road – Draw parallel paths for your child to use a pencil to ‘drive like a car’ down the centre or use a toy car to move between the tracks. Begin with short, straight roads, then, add some curves, some obstacles, and later make it a racetrack!
- Use stamp-pad and stamps to make designs across a page attached to the board/wall (from left to right).
- Trace around their hand (or get them to trace around their own hand) on a vertical surface
- Pretend to paint the fence using a paintbrush dipped in water

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