



Pencil Skills

What are they?

Pencil skills refer to a range of skills needed to draw, copy and colour accurately. Some important pencil skills include holding a pencil correctly, always using the same hand to hold the pencil, starting and stopping pencil strokes in the correct spot, changing direction of pencil stroke accurately, using the right amount of pressure through the pencil, maintaining an upright posture and strength in small muscles of hands and fingers. These skills are needed for a child to become proficient using a pencil and to develop the ability to automatically form shapes (e.g.: letters and numbers).

How to develop

Provide lots of different materials for drawing and writing including short, fat crayons, chalk, paints, felt pens, different coloured and shaped paper, glue, stapler and tape. Writing on a vertical surface (eg: easel or paper stuck to a wall) helps children adopt an efficient pencil grip and use the small muscles of the hand to control the pencil. Activities to develop pencil skills, include:

- Duo drawing – draw dots & squiggles for your child to join up to make a picture
- Encourage your child to draw a person – if needed give prompts such as “what about arms” etc
- Draw simple pictures such as snakes, flowers, trees, spiders, cat
- Draw on a mega sketcher
- Make birthday cards
- If a child is interested in letters, show them how to write each individual letter in their name and they can copy it.
- Draw around your child’s body then have them colour in their clothing.
- Trace around hands and feet, have your child colour each toe and finger a different colour
- Draw lines and shapes then ask your child to trace over them in different coloured pencils or chalk
- Trace around stencil shapes
- Simple mazes and dot to dot pictures