**Gross motor skill activity suggestions for handwriting skills**

**Postural control**

1. Seated balance and core strength activities – seated balance exercises help strengthen the core and help improve sitting posture.
2. Shoulder strength and mobility activities – any hanging or climbing activities – hanging on monkey bars, doing chins ups and pull ups, swinging from trees, climbing the ladders and ropes on the playground increase muscle strength and mobility in the shoulder girdle muscles.
3. Shoulder stability activities – pull a heavy wagon or push another child on a swing, play with yo-yo’s or play arm wrestling. These pushing and pulling motions help the shoulder learn to coactivate to produce the right amount of force and stability.
4. Weight bearing activities through the arms – wheelbarrow walking, crawling, playing twister and push ups/planks all help to increase muscle strength and improve coactivation of the shoulder and postural muscles.
5. [Yoga Poses](https://www.yourtherapysource.com/yogacards.html) – provide muscle strengthening and postural control
6. Large art projects – hang some paper on a wall or use an easel. Children can reach up, left and right while painting.

**Motor planning**

1. Sky Dancing – use scarves to make patterns in the air to music, e.g. handwriting patterns, name, lazy 8, crossing the midline, throw and catch etc.
2. Sky Writing – air write the letters using your entire arm describing each step as you go
3. Obstacle courses – handwriting requires the ability to formulate a motor plan to complete multiple steps just like completing an obstacle course. Include activities from the list above.  For example, crawl to a skateboard, lay on your tummy and pull yourself along a line and wheelbarrow walk to the finish line.
4. Body Letter Formation – children can practice making their bodies into letters to improve the imprint on the brain of how the letter is formed.
5. Coordination activities – jumping jacks, jumping rope, hand clapping games, etc all require extensive motor planning and coordination skills.

**Hand-Eye coordination**

Hand-eye coordination activities to help develop handwriting skills include any type of [throwing, catching, rolling and aiming](https://www.yourtherapysource.com/teachcatchthrowkick.html) activities to practice guiding the hands to go in the proper direction and location.

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| **Seated balance and core strength activities**(Children can either have both feet on the floor, one foot on the floor or both feet in the air) |
| **Activity** | **Notes** |
| **Let’s go on a….**With the children sitting on chairs tell a story of a bike or car ride. The children act out different movements on the journey, e.g. turning right- extend right arm, turn the wheel or handle bars – mimic the action, going up a steep hill – lean backwards etc.  |  |
| **Super G**Begin by sitting in the chair as if you were travelling on a chairlift. At the top, jump off (sitting jump) then give the children instructions as if you were skiing down a mountain, e.g. slalom, downhill, moguls, aerials, snowplough stop, freestyle, ski jump, giant slalom, parallel stop. |  |
| **Simon Says**Play ‘Simon Says’ sitting on a chair, e.g. reach both hands up high, lift up one leg, reach out to the side, touch your toes, feet on tip toes etc. |  |
| **Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes**Sing the song and perform the actions whilst sitting on a chair. |  |
| **Bean bag Transfer**One child lies on the floor with their feet in the air. Another child puts a bean bag between their partners feet who lowers the beanbag to the floor to land in a hoop. |  |
| **Seated Volleyball**Play a modified version of seated volleyball individually, in pairs or small teams. Using a balance, beach ball or soft volleyball children must try to tap the balloon to their partner who has to return it, both children must be seated. Challenge the children by creating a ‘net’ (e.g. line on floor, markers, bench etc) or making the game competitive. |  |
| **Musical Statues**Children perform a seated balance showing different body shapes when the music stops. |  |

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| **Shoulder strength and mobility activities** |
| **Activity** | **Notes** |
| **Swim Dance**The Swim Dance is a 60s-novelty dance. Use swim stroke arm actions to create a repeatable phrase that you can perform to music. |  |
| **Cheerleading**Teach some basic cheerleading arm motions to the children who can then create a simple routine using these and other arm motions. |  |
| **Skipping**Teach the children individual skipping and jump rope games. |  |
| **Parachute Games**See separate sheet |  |
| **Balloon Challenge**Children to keep a balloon up in the air with either their hand or with a racket (or paper plate on a stick). Set challenges, e.g. how many times can they hit it before it touches the floor, how high can they hit it etc |  |
| **Ball Pass**Stand back to back and pass a ball by turning to the side in one direction, than reverse. |  |
| **Bubble Pop**Blow bubbles in the air and ask children to reach up and pop them. |  |

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| **Shoulder stability activities** |
| **Activity** | **Notes** |
| **Row, Row, Row your boat**Children to sit opposite each other with knees bent, toes touching and holding hands. They rock backwards/ forwards and side to side as they sing ‘Row, Row, Row your boat’. |  |
| **See Saw Margery Daw**Children to sit opposite each other with knees bent, toes touching and holding hands. Keeping arms straight one child stands whilst the other remains seated then reverse while singing ‘See Saw Margery Daw’. |  |
| **Musical Statues**Children perform different partner balances when the music stops. |  |
| **Hand Push/ Arm wrestling**Placing palms together children push as hard as they can. |  |
| **Chair Push**Sitting with palms flat on the chair seat children push to try to lift themselves off the chair. |  |
| **Tug of War**In pairs, using a twisted towel, children pull against each other. Challenge by using larger groups and sheets. |  |
| **Wall Pushes** Children to straighten arms and place open hands on the wall. Try pushing the wall over. Alternatively, they can try taking their nose to the wall and then pushing back again |  |

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| **Weight bearing activities through the arms** |
| **Activity** | **Notes** |
| **Tick-Tock**Children start in a front support position. Keeping their feet in a fixed position they walk their hands around in a full circle. Ask pupils questions to add interest/ extend, e.g. what time is lunch time, where is north? Etc |  |
| **Animal Walks**Children to copy various animal walks – crab, bear, monkey, caterpillar, rabbit, frog. Tell a story and the children must walk like the animals in the story. |  |
| **Crab Football**In a crab position children try to keep a balloon up in the air using only their feet. Challenge them by playing a small sided competitive game where they must move around an area in the crab position, moving the ball with only their feet and try to score a goal. |  |
| **Back to Front**Ask the children to transfer from a front to back support position and vice versa. |  |
| **Musical Statues**Children perform a balance using a combination of only hands and feet showing different body shapes when the music stops. |  |
| **Bean Bag Curling**In a mini or full front support position children slide beanbags to hit or reach targets. |  |
| **Physio Balls** Children to lie on top of a physio ball with tummy touching and hands touching the floor. Challenge them to move their body so different parts are touching the physio ball. |  |

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| **Yoga activities** |
| **Activity** | **Notes** |
| **Add a Pose!**In a group, child 1 performs a pose and everyone practices this pose. Child 2 performs a different pose and everyone practices the two poses in order. Continue. |  |
| **Make it Up!**Ask children to make up their own poses to represent a letter, word, object or phrase. |  |
| **Where in the World?**Ask children to point to a country or place on a globe or map. Perform the airplane pose to represent ravelling there and then a pose from the alphabet or a new one that is specific to that country or place, e.g. Cobra pose= Australia, Lion pose=Africa, Sphinx pose=Egypt, Cow pose=Texas etc. |  |
| **Yoga Dice**Put a picture of 6 poses onto a dice. Ask a child to roll the dice to another child, the receiving child demonstrates the pose the dice lands on and everyone copies. |  |
| **Musical Poses**Play musical statues and shout out a pose you would like the children to perform when the music stops. |  |
| **What’s Under There?**Cut out pictures of the different poses and stick on the underside of a cone. Children travel around an area to music and when the music stop, the look under the cone and perform the pose they find. |  |
| **What’s in the Bag?**Fill a bag/ pillowcase with toys representing different poses., i.e. dog, mouse, rag doll, jack-in-the-box etc. Give each child a turn at pulling out a toy the everyone practices that pose. |  |
| **What am I?**Children to take turns performing a pose and everyone must guess which one and then copy. |  |
| **Birds of a Feather**In a group, ask each child to perform a pose of a different bird from the alphabet or made up, e.g. peacock, swam, flamingo, dove etc. |  |
| **Under the Sea**In a group, ask each child to perform a pose of a different aquatic animal from the alphabet or made up, e.g. frog, otter, swan, alligator, dolphin, shark etc. |  |
| **Who am I?**Ask the children to perform the poses of the letters of their name. |  |
| **What’s today?**Ask the children to perform the poses of the letters of the letters of the day and/ or month. |  |