

# Funky Fingers... ...and early writing

Wednesday 16th January 2019

# Aims of Today:

- Why are fine motor skills so important?
- What do we do in school?
- How we can assess the children's needs?

# Why are fine motor skills so important?

- Many children come to school unable to hold a pencil and can find it tricky to write. Sometimes this is due to a genuine lack of interest in writing up until this point, but sometimes it is due to the child being asked to hold a pencil before they are ready. This is when bad habits can form!
- At this stage, children are not developmentally ready to write and need specific help to target and strengthen their core and hand muscles.
- The hand is a complex piece of machinery made up of lots of joints and muscle groups that interconnect and work together to provide maximum dexterity.

# Why are fine motor skills so important?

- We use daily intervention activities, like Dough Disco and Funky Fingers, which involve a series of hand, arm, shoulder and finger exercises.
- By making sure that children are receiving the targeted support they need in order to be confident writers, we are giving them the tools to succeed in writing in the national curriculum.

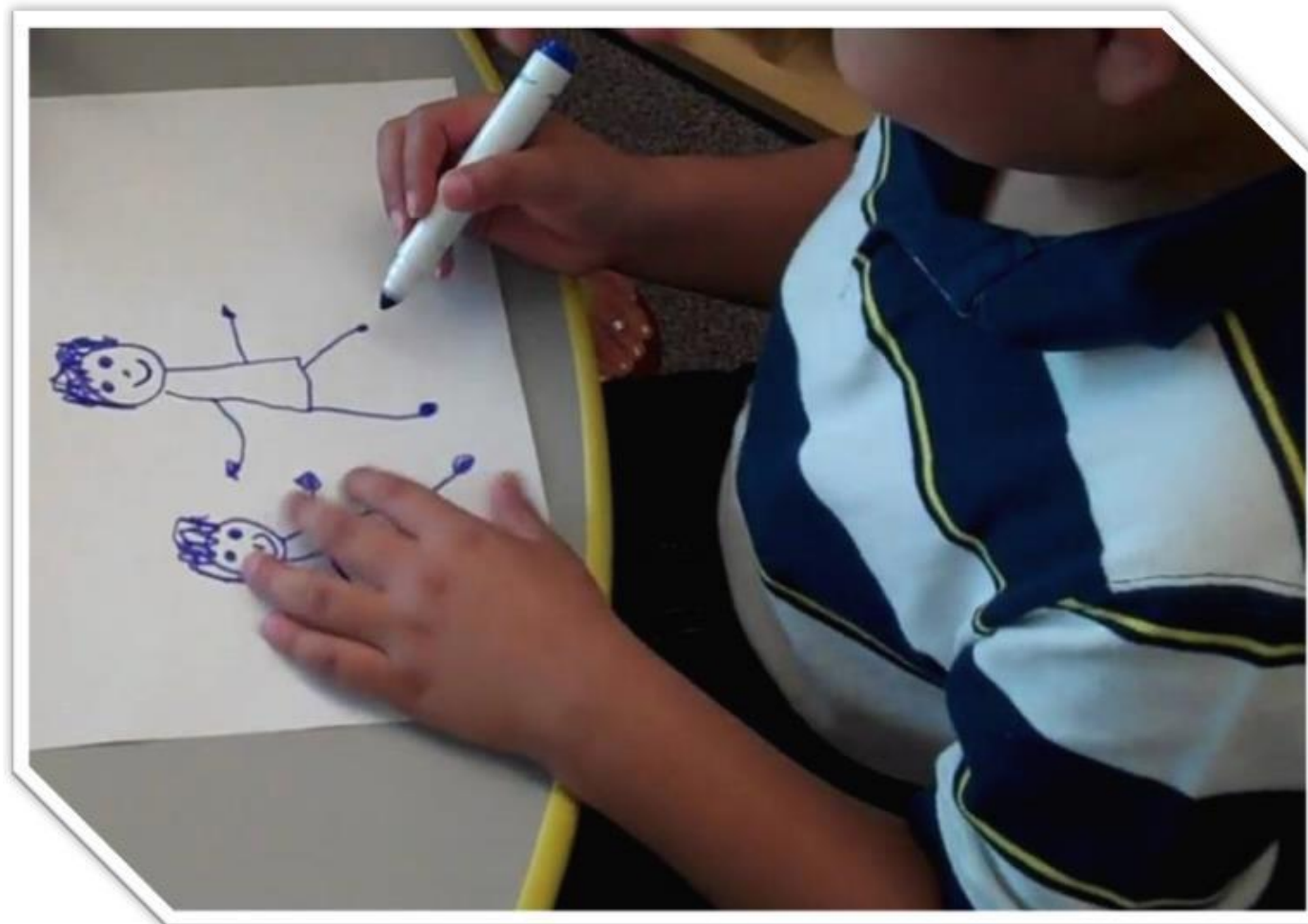
# It's just about holding a pencil, right?

- Arms and hands contain a series of pivotal joints which develop from largest to smallest (shoulder, elbow, wrist, fingers).
- The end of the pivot 'journey' is the smallest set of pivots: the very ends of our fingers. When a child can hold tools using this grip comfortably, they are ready to write for life!

General starting point (Nursery/beginning of Reception)



Funky Fingers gets us to here...



Try it yourself!





We need to work on our writing muscles...



...just like any other muscle!



## DOUGH DISCO!



# Dough Disco is...

- Fast paced, GREAT fun and done in time to music.
- Led by an adult who calls out instructions for the children to follow.
- Based on assessment and linked to specific physical development.
- Developing more than just muscles and joints. Proprioception (the knowledge of how different muscles relate to each other) and balance are developed.

**\*\*\*This is why children should always stand up to use dough\*\*\***

After Dough Disco, it's time to get funky...

Here comes the science bit..





## Funky Fingers

- **Pincer grasp or grip**
- **Palm arches**
- **In-hand manipulation**
- **Thumb opposition**
- **Finger isolation**
- **Knuckle, PIP and DIP joints**
- **Bilateral co-ordination**
- **Hand/eye co-ordination**



# Funky Fingers...

- Generally, children work in small groups on one, targeted activity for the length of a song.
- Funky Fingers activities remain for a week and are ONLY used at Funky Fingers time. This helps us to monitor how the children are using them to make sure that they have the ultimate impact. It also helps to stop children getting bored!
- As children become more proficient in the skills, we increase the dexterity challenge in the activities. We record the progress to show evidence of how environment, planning and intervention is having a direct impact on attainment and progress.

How we target Funky Fingers activities:

**Grip 1**



**Grip 3**



**Grip 2**



**Grip 4**





# Pivot and Grip

- Each pencil grip is closely linked to their pivotal stage. A child at grip stage 1 will still be operating from the shoulder and will still be doing activities in Funky Fingers that promote strengthening the elbow and moving onto grip stage 2.

## Grip 1



# Funky Fingers

Bilateral co-ordination



Hand/eye co-ordination



Pincer grip



## Palm strength



## Knuckle, PIP and DIP joints



# Useful Links

Many of our fine and gross motor activity ideas come from Pinterest. Just type 'fine motor activities' or 'Funky Fingers activities' into the search box.

<https://www.pinterest.com>

The man behind Dough Gym and the Funky Fingers concept is an early years consultant called Alistair Bryce Clegg. He inspires much of our practice within the early years and his approach is one we all aspire to. You can find out more about Alistair and his approach at:

<http://www.abcdoes.com>

<https://youtu.be/ylA50F9JWJ8>

[https://youtu.be/w0sL\\_5Mzx-Q](https://youtu.be/w0sL_5Mzx-Q)



[https://youtu.be/f3xUNNE\\_fEw](https://youtu.be/f3xUNNE_fEw)

