



## Progression of skills: Construction



### Adult role:

- Model and encourage positional language: below, on top, behind, next to, under, besides, above, to the left of, to the right of.
- Listen and understand what children want to create before offering suggestions. Encourage talk about what they are doing.
- Provide enhancement e.g. loose parts, fabric, small world toys, post it notes, large paper.
- Use and encourage core vocabulary (see below).
- Help children to develop their pretend play and storylines.

### Key vocabulary:

Build, stack, join, tower, design, plan, create, bridge, row, passageway, enclosure, fence, wall, patterns, roof, levels, structure, buildings

### Possible skills progression:

Stack blocks in a tower and line them up  
Join simple construction toys together e.g. large duplo, train track  
Adapt designs and explain thinking  
Build enclosures, first a square, then other shapes  
Create constructions with repetitions  
Build simple bridges  
Build passageways  
Add a roof to constructions  
Use loose parts to add features  
Create construction with symmetry  
Name structures they have made  
Plan what they are going to make  
Talk about the function of structures  
Add more elaborate details  
Replicate a specific structure  
Draw a design of a structure and then build it

### Nursery resources:

Wooden blocks  
Large duplo  
Wooden train tracks  
Stickle bricks  
Large crates and blocks (outside)

### Reception resources:

Wooden blocks  
Lego  
Wooden train tracks  
K-nex  
Large crates and blocks (outside)



Progression of skills: Joining (Art and craft)



Adult role:

- Discuss and model a range of joining techniques
- Support and encourage children to ask for help with tricky parts
- Discuss which joining method would be best and why
- Encourage trial and error and problem solving
- Provide a range of resources
- Offer inspiration through images, objects and talking
- Encourage children to help each other through explanation and modelling

Key vocabulary:

Join, stick, spread, edges, corners, fix, tear, together, hole, narrow, wide, thread, staple, tabs, links, slot, construct, make, adapt, change, flange, l-brace

Possible skills progression:

Glue and tack

- Use blue tack to attach work to walls
- Use a wind-up glue stick
- Use a glue spreader to spread pva glue
- Choose appropriate glue for fixing

Tape

- Tear masking tape
- Pull tape from dispenser
- Stick an object to a piece of paper with tape
- Join 2 pieces of paper together with tape

Tools

- Use a hole punch to make holes
- Thread a pipe cleaner through holes to join 2 pieces of paper
- Use a treasury tag to join paper
- Push a split pin through holes to join paper
- Use string or ribbon to thread through holes and tie together to join

Paper engineering

- Create a flange to join
- Use an l-brace
- Use tabs to join

Nursery resources:

Glue sticks, pva glue, spreaders, brushes, masking tape, Sellotape, tape dispenser, small hole punchers, blue tack, pipe cleaners, string, treasury tags

Reception resources:

Glue sticks, pva glue, spreaders, brushes, masking tape, Sellotape, tape dispenser, small hole punchers, blue tack, pipe cleaners, string, treasury tags, split pins, thicker cardboard, patterned hole punchers

# CARDBOARD ATTACHMENTS



FLANGE



L-BRACE



SLOT



CUT

+



CUT

=



INSERT

TABS



TAB

+



SLOT

=



BRASS FASTENERS



HEY-IT MOVES!

HOLE PUNCH  
+  
WIRE



FOOT





Progression of skills:  
Malleable area.



Adult role:

- Model techniques
- Model correct use of vocabulary
- Provide different doughs – considering textures / scent / colours / firmness
- Model and support using tools – explaining how each one might be used and the effect they have on the dough
- Model and explain safety techniques
- Encourage children to review their progress
- Encourage children to plan ahead and talk about what they are going to do
- Encourage and talk about pretend play e.g. 'baking' cakes and selling them. Further enhancements such as price labels

Key vocabulary:

Push, pull, pinch, squeeze, flatten, twist, roll, sausage, ball, cut, spiral, print, pierce, sculpt, pattern, plait, decorate

Possible skills progression:

Push the dough  
Squeeze the dough  
Flatten the dough  
Twist the dough  
Pinch the dough  
Push dough with a masher  
Roll into a ball  
Roll into a cylinder  
Cut out with shape cutters  
Create indentations (printing)  
Add details such as mouth and eyes  
Squeeze dough with a garlic press or similar tool  
Roll out flat with a rolling pin  
Cut out dough with plastic scissors  
Cut out dough with class scissors  
Sculpt the dough into a chosen figure e.g. person, cat  
Create standing forms – pulling out from central ball  
Add detail to sculptures  
Use the dough in a role play situation  
Create plaits

Soft playdough  
Firmer playdough  
Plasticine

Nursery resources:

Boards  
Rolling pins  
Plastic knives and forks  
Spoons  
Potato mashers  
Shape cutters  
Object cutters  
Garlic press  
Loose parts for detail – big beads, pasta, pegs, larger natural resources (conkers)  
Cupcake cases  
Candles

Reception resources:

Boards  
Rolling pins  
Scissors – playdough and class ones  
Dough tools  
Garlic press – real and playdough tool  
Toothpicks  
Loose parts for detail – feathers, smaller beads, buttons, lollipop sticks, sequins, large and small natural resources (conkers, acorns, seeds)



## Progression of skills: Mark making



### Adult role:

- Provide a range of activities to support muscle development
  - Playdough – pinching, squeezing with thumb and forefinger, poking, rolling, dough disco
  - Threading – beads, pasta
  - Finger rhymes – stretching and curling fingers, moving them independently, finger puppets
  - Water play – spray bottles
  - Craft activities – cutting, scrunching paper, small parts
  - Gross motor strengthening activities – swinging, crawling through tunnels, grasping to climb
  - Stirring in an anticlockwise direction
  - Paint on easels, paving stones
  - Dance with ribbons and wands in the air
  - Draw in the sand
  - Make rubbings on rough surfaces or on trees
  - Draw in cornflour slime
  - Use a range of natural materials (moss, hessian, twigs, shells, leaves, pebbles, feathers)
  - Use tweezers to pick up small items
- Model and support pencil grips (See below for information)
- Provide a range of mark making tools – chunky chinks, paint brushes in a variety of sizes, crayons, pens, pencils, water
- Provide a range of mark making surfaces – easels, large paper on floor, range of paper sizes
- Provide opportunities for writing e.g. role play lists, menus, cards, messages
- Use LW ditties to support formation of letters
- Encourage a writing position at a table – feet flat, bottom at back of chair, chair tucked in
- Notice, talk about, encourage, praise and celebrate marks children are making

### Key vocabulary:

Circle, straight line, wavy line, pens, pencils, crayons, thumb, index finger (pointing finger) middle finger, tripod grip, pencil grip

Possible skills progression:

Spontaneous mark making:

'Scribbles' are often spontaneous, random, unplanned and made with little control.

Children are often absorbed in the physical act and sensations when creating (such as the feeling of the paint) rather than the marks themselves.

*Palmar grip (1 -2 years) Pencil held in palm of hand with a whole fist and all fingers and thumb are used. The movement comes from the child's shoulder. The elbow, wrists and fingers stay in a fixed position. Light marks are made with this grip.*

Exploratory mark making:

As well as being interested in the process of making marks, they also show interest and enjoyment in the marks they have made.

Children intentionally use different mark making tools to create marks, such as sticks in the mud.

Gross motor skills are developing, and they use large scale movements to create marks with mark making tools.

Children will explore and experiment with different types of marks they are able to create, such as straight, wavy and curved lines.

*Digital Pronate grasp (2-3 years) All fingers holding the pencil, but wrist is turned down. Movement comes mostly from the elbow and shoulder is now stabilised. Horizontal, vertical and circular lines are now able to be copied.*

Meaningful mark making:

Children will realise that they can use marks to communicate thoughts, feelings and ideas. They can tell someone about a mark they have made and what it means. This is a valuable and important stage of development, during which children's focus, concentration and imagination, as well as physical skills, develop.

A wide variety of marks can be made with control, such as simple enclosed shapes and lines. Children will consider and plan what they are going to 'draw' before making marks.

Children will recognise the difference between pictures and words. They show an interest in watching adults write. The motivation to write begins from wanting to copy the action of writing.

*Four finger grasp (3 – 4 years) Fingers are held on the pencil shaft opposite the thumb. Movement occurs from the wrist; hand and fingers move as a whole unit. Zig – zag lines, crossed lines and simple people can be drawn with this grip.*

*Tripod grip (4 – 6 years) A three finger grasp, where the thumb, index finger and middle finger work as one unit. Movement is usually from the wrist. Triangles, circles and squares can be copied with this grip.*

Emergent writing

Fine motor skills are further developed enabling children to use mark making tools to form the variety of shapes needed for letter formation such as clockwise and anticlockwise movements.

Initially a series of shapes may represent writing. Marks that are made will then begin to resemble letters, but letters will not all be correctly formed. Children will develop an understanding that words are made up of a group of letters, which are a collection of different shapes. Children will begin to identify sounds in words and then write the sound with the corresponding letter.

At this stage children need real purpose to write.

*Tripod grip (4 – 6 years) A three finger grasp, where the thumb, index finger and middle finger work as one unit. Movement is usually from the wrist. Triangles, circles and squares can be copied with this grip.*

# TYPICAL PENCIL GRASP DEVELOPMENT FOR HANDWRITING

10 Months  
Pincer Grasp



12-15 Months  
Palmar Supinate Grasp



2-3 Years  
Digital Pronate Grasp



3-4 Years  
Quadrupod Grasp



3-4 Years  
Static Tripod Grasp



5-6 Years  
Dynamic Tripod Grasp



## Nursery resources:

Chunky chalks, large paint brushes for outside (water), pens and pencils (triangular grip version), easels for painting, large and medium brushes, sticks with ribbons attached, large beads for threading, large hamma beads, playdough, salt dough, range of paper types and sizes, paper on floor, stuck on vertical surfaces, on tables.

## Reception resources:

Range of brushes including fine brushes, pens and pencils – triangular grip and thin version, chalks, small beads for threading, hamma beads (small), playdough, clay, plasticine, variety of sizes of paper including paper with lines, sound charts available for letter formation.



## Progression of skills: Sand



### Adult role:

- Model making sandcastles explaining the process
- Model, use and talk about the tools discussing which might be best for different purposes
- Discuss and remind about safety e.g. not throwing sand
- Explore and talk about measurements such as weight, capacity, length
- Listen and understand what children want to create before offering suggestions
- Talk about patterns and marks. Encourage children to make own marks – patterns, pictures, writing
- Provide enhancements such as shaving foam, shells, treasure and maps
- Help children to develop pretend play e.g. using diggers to fix a castle or making cakes to sell

### Key vocabulary:

Fill, empty, half full, long, short, more, less, same, equal, heavy, light, overflowing

### Possible skills progression:

#### Tools

Use a large scoop  
Use ladles and smaller spoons to scoop  
Use a small trowel to dig  
Use a spade to dig  
Use sieves with big and then small holes

#### Moulding and Filling

Fill a mould and create shape  
Fill a bucket, turn it over to create a shape  
Use a funnel to fill a container with dry sand  
Tip sand down a pipe

Tip sand down narrow pipes

#### Mark making and pattern

Use potato masher to make patterns  
Use rollers to make patterns  
Use a rolling pin to flatten sand  
Print in sand using textured shapes and tools  
Use a paint brush to make marks and draw pictures  
Use a paint brush to write numbers and letters

#### Exploring the nature of sand

Use dry sand  
Use wet sand  
Use appropriate amount of water to make dry sand wet enough to mould

### Nursery resources:

Different size buckets, beakers, measuring jugs, shape moulds, large rake, scoops, large brushes, rolling pins, potato masher, patterned rollers, sieves with different size holes, pipes, funnels, shells, small world toys

### Reception resources:

Cups, egg cups, beakers, measuring containers, spoons of different sizes, ladles, colander, patterned rolling pins, narrow pipes and guttering, small brushes, funnels, small world toys and loose parts



## Progression of skills: Scissors



### Adult role:

- Consider and support the following (through discussion and modelling)
  - Appropriate scissors
  - Appropriate resources to cut
  - Left/right-handed scissors
  - Space for arm and elbow without being knocked
  - Safety – keeping fingers out of the way of blades
  - Safe transporting of scissors
- Provide range of materials to cut
- Guide with hand over hand and gradually reduce to support independence
- Listen to children's ideas before offering suggestions

### Key vocabulary:

Snip, cut, open, close, straight, turn, blade, move, safely

### Possible skills progression:

Explore scissors using both hands to open and close blades

Use looped scissors to open and close blades in preferred hand

Use children's scissors in preferred hand

Use patterned scissors to create effects

### Cutting

Make snips in malleable materials (playdough, jelly, cooked pasta)

Make snips on edge of paper

Move scissors across the page

Move scissors in a straight line to cut paper

Use a 'helping' hand to turn paper while cutting

Cut out shapes with straight sides

Cut out shapes with curved edges

Cut out more complex shapes

### Nursery resources:

#### Scissors

Looped scissors

Spring loaded scissors

Children's scissors (left and right-handed)

Playdough scissors

#### Materials to cut:

Playdough

Soft materials – e.g. jelly, cooked spaghetti

Paper to snip

Grass and leaves

### Reception resources:

#### Scissors

Looped scissors

Scissors with large hole for all fingers

Children's scissors (left and right-handed)

Patterned craft scissors

#### Materials to cut:

(additions to Nursery provision)

Card

Wool / ribbon / string

Card

Fabric