

Small Muscle Games



Make Handwriting FUN - Tips for Homeschooling
Moms

BJ's Homeschool

Are your little ones struggling with writing their letters? Do they have trouble holding their pencil comfortably, or grasp it very tightly? Or maybe you have a child who hates working in his handwriting book, like mine did.

How about taking a break and doing some fun small muscle games instead? When your child is struggling, let them play handwriting related GAMES instead to develop:

- **Hand Strength and Finger Coordination**
- **Developing a Mature Grasp**
- **Postural Control and Shoulder Strength**

1. Hand Strength and Finger Coordination

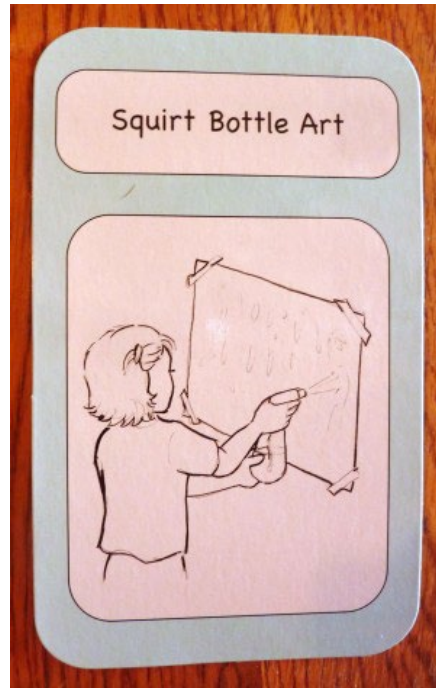


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Hand strength is easy to build with this fun activity, called **Squirt Bottle Art**. It builds wrist and finger strength. In Squirt Bottle Art, the child squirts colored water onto a sheet a paper that is taped to the fridge or on a wall.

Placing the paper high up places, the wrist in the right position for strength building. This is one of the activity cards from [Play Pack](#).

The Pizza Party

Pizza Party can be done using playdough or hand clay.

First, your child makes a pizza from play dough, or even biscuit dough, then cuts the pizza into slices with scissors. It's FUN and strengthening at the same time.

Add toppings to the pizza, etc. to provide even more small muscle and finger exercise. Have your child use the tips of his fingers to mold little, tiny balls of clay/dough.

Any activities such as cutting, drawing, finger painting, Lego building, playing jacks, and playdough are all great activities to develop the finger muscles and coordination.



2. Developing a Mature Grasp

Kids often start with this “palmar grip” pattern, which means holding the crayon in the palm of the hand, with the fingers wrapped around it. Below shows the kind of grasp that we want them to start to use.



Bubble Wrap Maze

Just get a piece of bubble wrap and let your kids pop the bubbles. Popping the bubbles with the thumb, index, and ring fingers, pressing together is great practice for your kids. Make it a game and pinch along a path on the bubble wrap!

3. Postural Control and Shoulder Strength

When our kids struggle with handwriting, we usually think about doing small muscle activities, but sometimes that is not really the problem.

But they also will need good postural control. That refers to strength in the core muscles of the trunk. Shoulder muscles are also important to handwriting. How can we help our kids develop these foundational skills when they don't have them?

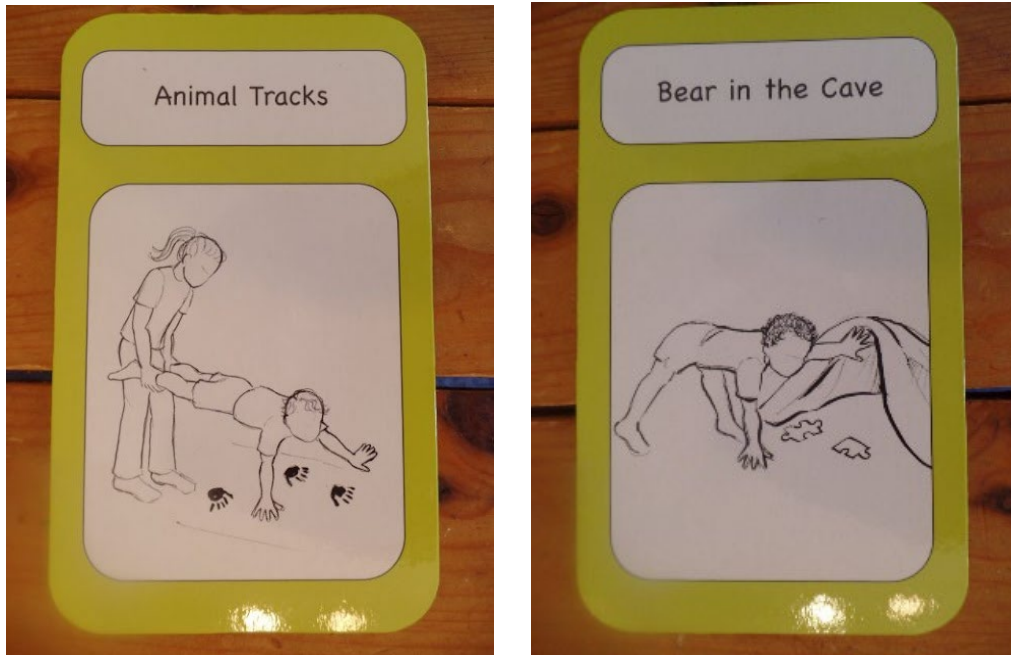


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Doing the **Animal Tracks** game above will help build up the shoulder and posture muscles.

In **Bear in a Cave** above, first place some puzzle pieces under a blanket. Then ask your child to pick them up while holding the blanket up with the other hand. So the bear is gathering his food.

Another simple way to build up the posture muscles is to lay on their tummy on the floor. Do this while watching a favorite television show, laying on their tummy while propping themselves up on their elbows, or upper arms.

Playing with small toys in this position is another great activity.

More handwriting games are on BJ's Homeschool at [Handwriting Helps](#), from Betsy, homeschool mom, veteran homeschool blogger and retired O.T.