

Developing Strong Hands and Fingers: First Grade

Building strength in the hands and fingers will help your child to:

- Hold a pencil and write legibly
- Tie shoes independently
- Successfully hold and use scissors to cut along a line or to cut out small shapes



Ideas to try with your child:

- Tape paper to the wall or hang a white board for your child to practice drawing or writing on.
- Let your child squirt water from a spray bottle, pick up small items like cotton balls with tweezers, and play with small toys like beads and Legos.
- Have your child practice snapping snaps, buttoning and unbuttoning clothing, using large plastic needles to sew yarn, and popping packing bubbles.

If your child is struggling:

- Let your child draw large letters or words with chalk on the sidewalk.
- Using her pointer finger, have your child write letters in shaving cream or pudding that is spread on a cookie sheet.
- Trace straight lines, curvy lines, and zigzags on paper or cardboard for your child to practice cutting.

Going further:

- Have your child practice writing on lined paper to learn where letters fall on the lines and the difference between upper and lower-case letters.
- Mazes, dot-to-dots, and coloring inside the lines will help strengthen hand and finger muscles – you can print these off from websites or buy coloring/activity books.

<http://www.allkidsnetwork.com/mazes/>

The WA State Department of Early Learning and the Richland School District believes that parents, families, and caregivers are young children's best teachers. This resource guide, part of *Strong Foundations for School: Resource Guides for Parents of Young Children*, highlights a key developmental skill for **children in First Grade** that parents can help improve at home.

Adapted from *WA State Early Learning and Development Guidelines, 2012*: "Improve skills for moving the hands and fingers." *Touching, Seeing, Hearing, and Moving Around*, First Grade, pg. 100

