Funky Fingers is a series of fun activities for children to help build up their finger/hand strength and control (fine motor skills). These activities will prepare them for writing.

There are so many easy ideas to help develop your child’s fine skills. These are just a few! If you would like a more comprehensive list please let Mrs Adams or Mrs Richards know and we will send it home. It’s a 34 page booklet so I have just tried summarised the ideas here...

Pre-writing and early writing activities:

- Finger Aerobics – finger warm ups
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3VpARNgbb8c
- Dough gym Disco – pinching, pressing, rolling, squeezing
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrBsNhwxzgc
- Place a firm elastic band around tips of fingers and thumb. Open and close it 10 times with each hand.
- Make shapes and letters in the sky using ribbons.
- Tummy Time! Complete activities whilst lying on their tummy, taking the weight through their elbows and wrists e.g. watching TV, reading a book, puzzles.
- Craft activities: cutting, scrunching, gluing and ripping paper and bending pipe cleaners.
- Tools such as sawing, drilling, hammering, screws and bolts (supervised of course!)
- Play games involving flicking small objects e.g. flicking balls of paper of a table into a ‘goal’.
- Hold a handful of items in their hand and post them into a jar one by one (buttons, coins)
- Pick up items with pegs, tongs and tweezers.
- Play Tiddlywinks.
- Making magic wands – twisting wool around sticks.
- Popping bubble wrap!
- Tying knots into string.
- Linking paperclips.
- Picking up sequins off a table or stickers off a sticker sheet
- Interlocking construction (lego etc...)
- Threading (use beads and string or even macaroni and pipe cleaners)
- Peeling fruit / vegetables (such as oranges / broad beans etc...)
- Leaf rubbings / stencil rubbings.
- Pegs and boards.
- Pegging out washing.
- Opening jars and lids.
- Cooking activities (stirring / sprinkling etc...)
- Playing cards to encourage picking up and turning over of cards.
- Sharpening pencils.
- Colouring in activities, staying inside the lines.
Early writing activities:

- Chalking letters unto the ground or wall.
- Using water and paintbrushes on the ground or wall.
- Dot to dot pictures and letters.
- Drawing letter shapes on our hands or on someone’s back and guessing which letter it is.
- Copying over letters (use highlighter pens).
- Drawing letters in sand, flour or shaving foam spread thinly on a table.
- Write letters with whiteboards and dry wipe pens.
- Write letters with finger paints.
- Painting letters using small paintbrushes or cotton bud sticks.
- Drawing or writing on vertical surfaces (chalkboard, whiteboard, tiles at bath time with bath pens) to encourage extension at the wrist.
- Free Pencil control and letter formation worksheets on Sparklebox:
  https://www.sparklebox.co.uk/4041-4050/sb4041.htm
  https://www.sparklebox.co.uk/literacy/writing/letter-formation/

Moving on to handwriting practice on paper and in books:

Before writing always remind children of correct pencil grip – see this website for demonstrations and the ‘pick and flick technique’:
https://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/handwriting-pencil-grip.html

Always practice writing on lines and talk about descending letters.

Practise writing groups of letters that are formed in a similar way...

Letter family groups:

- **Long ladder letters:**
  \( l, i, t, u, j, y \)

- **One arm robot letters:**
  \( r, b, n, h, m, k, p \)

- **Curly caterpillar letters:**
  \( c, a, d, o, s, g, q, e, f \)

- **Zig-zag monster letters:**
  \( z, v, w, x \)