

## Developing Gross Motor Control in Year 1

### 1. Air drawing

Let children copy the teacher's movements as they draw shapes in the air. They can draw circles, going round and round, make curves, spring up and slide down, make long, slow movements or quick, jumpy movements.

- Teacher should remember to complete shapes in the opposite direction as children 'mirror' the teacher's actions.

Encourage children to complete the movements with both hands - one at a time, or together.

\* 'Crossover' movements where the children take their hand(s) across their body to the other side are particularly good for brain development.

### 2. Back Drawing

Let the children draw the shapes on the backs of the children in front of them. Children enjoy the sensation on the soft touch on their back as well as gently touching their friends' backs.

### 3. Body Shapes

In a suitable area, such as a hall or music room, let children try to make their body into a particular shape. Children can also work with a partner or group to create a shape.

### 4. Ribbons and Props

In an arts session, let the children attach ribbons or paper streamers to the end of a stick / pencil / or straw and make large movements holding the streamers.

### 5. Rhythm and Movement

Play some music that the children enjoy and get them to practise the shapes for their letters. Aim for fluency of movement - a series of swirling movements, or up and down movements - and rhythmic shapes.

### 6. Eyes Closed

Let the children practise the movements with their eyes closed, once they are familiar with the teacher's pattern so that they can listen confidently to instructions.

### 7. Water Painting

If you can get hold of paint brushes (or paste brushes) for your children, let them practise their letter shapes by drawing with water on cement floors and outside walls. The water makes clear marks, and soon dries out and disappears.

### 8. Sound Effects

Let the children invent 'sounds' to make as they draw their patterns, for example a bouncing sound (maybe 'boing! boing!') as they bounce up from the one-armed robot's feet, a buzzing sound as you draw anticlockwise spirals, a 'shsh!' sound as you make wave patterns, etc.

### LETTER SHAPES to practise:

It is important for children to practise letter shapes in the correct direction, for example:

- Downward strokes - always start at the top and stroke down - for letters like 'l'. and others with a tall stick. (This is sometimes referred to as 'the long ladder'.) Letters: i, j, l, t, u
- Curly strokes, anti-clockwise for letters c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f, s. (This is sometimes referred to as 'the curly caterpillar').
- Linked strokes such as 'r' (down, retrace up, and then off to the right), letters: b, h, k, m, n, p, r. (This is sometimes referred to as 'the one-armed robot')