

Guidelines

This screen has been designed to support teachers in identifying children's strengths and gaps in the pencil control skills which underpin the teaching of handwriting. Teachers can use the information gained from the screen to plan for children's secure pencil control development. The screen can be administered as individual sections or as a whole.

The screen assesses the following skills:

1. Shape formation
2. Shape manipulation
3. Directionality
4. Fluidity of movement
5. Fine motor skills
6. Pressure control
7. Pencil grip.

The first five skills above have suggested tasks within the screen. Some of the tasks are thinking-looking-doing tasks, and some tasks use a pencil. Pressure control and pencil grip are observational aspects which should be observed alongside the first four skills. There is a script to support you when using the screen. The resources needed for the screen are listed below; this includes the accompanying picture book.

Whilst the outcome of the screen will provide teachers with information about children's strengths and gaps in pencil control skills, it is recommended that children also have the opportunity to consolidate all pencil control skills as part of formal handwriting instruction.

You will need:

- ❖ The accompanying picture book which includes various activities
- ❖ Photocopy of pg.6 and pg.7 from the accompanying picture book for each child
- ❖ A pencil
- ❖ A4 blank paper
- ❖ 4 pipe cleaners/ straws (Q1a)
- ❖ 2 triangles and 1 square photocopied and cut out from picture book (Q2a – pg.2)
- ❖ 2 circles and 1 rectangle photocopied and cut out from picture book (Q2b – pg.2)
- ❖ Cut out car map from picture book (Q3a – pg.5)
- ❖ Toy car (Q3a)
- ❖ 1 counter (Q3b)
- ❖ 10 coins and a coin box (Q5a)

Pencil Control Skills Screen for school-aged children

Name:		Stage:		Date:	
Score					
Section 1: Shape Formation	Section 2: Shape Manipulation	Section 3: Directionality	Section 4: Fluidity of Movement	Section 5: Fine Motor Skills	Section 6: Pressure Control
Section 7: Pencil Grip					
/4	/4	/4	/6	/1	/1

Section 1: Forming Shapes

Part 1: Thinking – Looking – Doing:

1a) Show the child a picture of a triangle (accompanying picture book pg.3) and provide them with the four pipe cleaners or straws.

“(pointing to the triangle) This is a triangle. Here are some pipe cleaners/ straws. I would like you to make a triangle, like the one in the picture.”

If they can do this, score 1

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1b) Provide the child with four pipe cleaners or straws.

“I would like you to make a different shape this time. This time I would like you to use the pipe cleaners/ straws to make a square.”

If they can do this, score 1

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Part 2: With a pencil:

1c) The child will need a photocopied strip of the blank boxes (accompanying picture book pg.6) and a pencil.

“(pointing to the cross in picture book) This is a cross. I would like you to draw a cross inside this box (pointing to the first box).”

If they can do this, score 1

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Also see section 6 and 7 for observational checklist for pressure control and pencil grip.

1d) The child will need a pencil.

“(pointing to the second blank box) Draw a circle inside this box.”

If they can do this, score 1

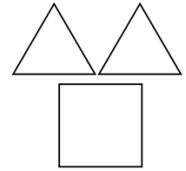
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Also see section 6 and 7 for observational checklist for pressure control and pencil grip.

Section 2: Shape Manipulation

Part 1: Thinking – Looking – Doing:

2a) You will need to photocopy the two triangles and the square from the picture book (pg.2). The child will need these and the shape outline from Q2a (pg.3) of the picture book. Lay out the cut shapes with the square on the bottom and the two triangles above pointing upwards.

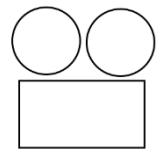


“(pointing to the cut out shapes) You have two triangles and a square. (pointing at the black shape outline in the picture book) Here you have a shape which has been made by putting these shapes together. I would like you to put the triangles and the square together to make the shape.”

If they can do this, score 1

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2b) You will need to photocopy the two circles and the rectangle from the picture book (pg.2). The child will need these and the shape outline from Q2b (pg.3) of the picture book. Lay out the shapes with the rectangle on the bottom and the two circles above.



“(pointing to the cut out shapes) You have two circles and a rectangle. (pointing at the black shape outline in the picture book) Here you have a shape which has been made by putting these shapes together. I would like you to put the circles and the rectangle together to make the shape.”

If they can do this, score 1

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Part 2: With a pencil:

2c) The child will need a sheet of blank A4 paper and a pencil. The children will draw four rectangles, one inside the other.

“I would like you to draw a big rectangle on this piece of paper with your pencil. (Pointing to the first rectangle): I would like you to draw another rectangle inside this rectangle. (Pointing to the second rectangle): I would like you to draw one more rectangle inside this rectangle. (Pointing to the third rectangle): I would like you to draw one last rectangle inside this rectangle.”

If they can do this, score 1

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Also see section 6 and 7 for observational checklist for pressure control and pencil grip.

2d) The child should use the reverse side of the paper they used for Q2c. They will also need a pencil. You are going to ask the child to draw a circle and ask them to stop half way through. You are assessing whether or not they are able to stop.

“I would like you to draw a circle slowly (when they’re half way through)... and stop”

If they can do this, score 1

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Also see section 6 and 7 for observational checklist for pressure control and pencil grip.

Section 3: Directionality

Part 1: Thinking – Looking – Doing:

3a) The child will need the road map from the picture book (pg.5) and a small toy car.

“You have a map and a toy car. I’m going to ask you to drive the car around the map.

“(pointing to the bottom right hand corner) I would like you to start here. Drive the car up the road past all of the buildings. (Stop) Now drive to the see saw in the park”.

“(pointing to the centre of the roundabout) This park is in the middle of a roundabout. I would like you to drive the car around the roundabout. (Stop) Now drive the other way.

“(pointing to the top left hand corner) I would like you to start here. Drive the car down the road, past the farm and keep driving straight across to the end of the road.”

If they can do all three, score 1 ☐

3b) The child will need the page from the picture book with the bold line (pg.4) and a counter.

“Put the counter at the top of the page.”

“Put the counter at the bottom of the page.”

“Put the counter on the line.”

“Put the counter somewhere below the line.”

“Put the counter somewhere above the line.”

If they can do all five, score 1 ☐

Part 2: With a pencil:

3c) The child will need a copy of the maze from the picture book (Q3c – pg.6) and a pencil.

"I am going to give you instructions to help you get from the triangle to the circle in this maze."

“(point to the triangle at the top left) Start here. Draw a line down. (Ask them to stop just before they get to the end.”

“Draw a line along to the right. (*Ask them to stop just before the first turn.*)

“Draw a line up.” (*Ask them to stop just before they hit the edge*)

“Draw a line along to the left.” (*Ask them to stop just before they hit the edge*)

"Draw a line down." (*Ask them to stop just before they hit the edge.*)

“Draw one more line along to the right”. (*Ask them to stop as they reach the circle*).

If they can do this, score 1

Also see section 6 and 7 for observational checklist for pressure control and pencil grip.

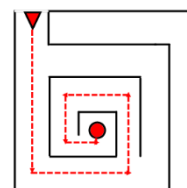
3d) The child will need a copy of the maze from the picture book (Q3d – pg.6) and a pencil.

“Start here. *(point to the smiley face.)* Complete the maze by following the arrows to get you to the circle.”

If they can do this. score 1

If they can do this, score 1

Also see section 6 and 7 for observational checklist for pressure control and pencil grip.



Section 4: Fluidity of Movement

Part 1: Thinking – Looking – Doing:

4a) The child will need the printed out zig-zag pattern from the picture book (Q4a – pg.7).

“Start here (*point at the left hand side of the zig-zag*). I would like you to use your finger to follow the zig-zag pattern between the two zig-zagged lines, from this side across to the other side.”

If they can do this, score 1

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4b) The child will need the printed out loop pattern from the picture book (Q4b – pg.7).

“Start here (*point at the left hand side of the loop*). I would like you to use your finger to follow the loop pattern between the two loops, from this side across to the other side.”

If they can do this, score 1

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4c) The child will need the printed out infinity (figure of 8) pattern from the picture book (Q4c – pg.7).

“Start here (*point to the square*). Use your finger to go up the hill towards the triangle and follow the loop pattern. Keep going until I say stop. (*Stop the child after they’ve done it a few times*)”

“Start here (*point to the triangle*). Use your finger to go down the hill towards the square and follow the loop pattern. Keep going until I say stop. (*Stop the child after they’ve done it a few times*)”

If they can do this, score 1

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Part 2: With a pencil – In each of the tasks below, the adult should observe the following:

- Is the child able to do the task without stopping?
- Is the child able to complete the pattern, staying between the two lines?
- Is the child writing with a dynamic grasp, i.e. small movements using the fingers, as opposed to whole arm movements?

4d) The child will need the printed out zig-zag pattern from the picture book (Q4d) and a pencil.

“Start here (*point at the left hand side of the zig-zag*). Use the pencil to draw a line between the two zig-zag lines. I want to see if you can do it without stopping.”

If they can do this, score 1

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Also see section 6 and 7 for observational checklist for pressure control and pencil grip.

4e) The child will need the printed out loop pattern from the picture book (Q4e) and a pencil.

“Start here (*point at the left hand side of the loop*). Use the pencil to draw a line between the two loops. I want to see if you can do it without stopping.”

If they can do this, score 1

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Also see section 6 and 7 for observational checklist for pressure control and pencil grip.

4f) The child will need the printed out infinity pattern from the picture book (Q4f) and a pencil.

“Start here (*point to the square*). Use your pencil to draw a line, going up the hill towards the triangle and keep going until you get back to the square.”

“Start here (*point to the triangle*). Use your pencil to draw a line, going down the hill towards the square and keep going until you get back to the triangle.”

If they can do this, score 1

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Also see section 6 and 7 for observational checklist for pressure control and pencil grip.

Section 5: Fine Motor Skills

Part 1: Thinking – Looking – Doing:

5a) The child will need ten coins and a money box.

Lay the coins out on a table in a line.

“I would like you to post the coins into the money box one at a time.”

- Is the child using their tripod grasp (thumb, forefinger and middle finger) to pick up and post the coins?
- Do they manipulate the coin in their fingers to get it at the right angle for posting?

If they can do this, score 1

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Section 6: Pressure Control

During the “with a pencil” aspects in sections 1 – 4, reflect on the following:

Does the child use an appropriate level of pressure when writing (not too light or not too heavy)?	Section 1 Shape Formation	Section 2 Shape Manipulation	Section 3 Directionality	Section 4 Fluidity of Movement

If they demonstrate appropriate pressure in all four sections, score 1

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Section 7: Pencil Grip

During the “with a pencil” aspects in sections 1 – 4, reflect on the following:

	Section 1 Shape Formation	Section 2 Shape Manipulation	Section 3 Directionality	Section 4 Fluidity of Movement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A grip which is comfortable / relaxed looking. A dynamic grasp where the pencil is controlled by the fingers with small movements. <i>(It does not have to be a tripod grasp, but it should not be a “fist” grasp or a fingertip grasp.)</i> Smooth, controlled movements. 				

If they demonstrate an efficient pencil grip in all four sections, score 1

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