



WHY FINGER GYM?

We can prepare children's hands for learning to write long before they have to pick up writing tools. When children start writing and drawing, their fingers and hands have to work as hard as a marathon runner's legs. No one tries to run a marathon without doing some training first. Finger Gym can provide that training.

So why not have some fun getting those little fingers into training? Take your children to the Finger Gym and help their fingers and hands get ready for writing.

WHAT IS FINGER GYM?

Finger Gym is a comprehensive programme of developmental games, stories, rhymes and activities to improve fine motor skills, language and handwriting.

It helps to develop strong, flexible fingers, hands and arms. It promotes better hand-eye coordination, differentiated movement and manual dexterity. It fosters children's use and understanding of spoken language. It builds cognitive abilities and provides opportunities to practise self-regulation.

The time spent enjoying the games and activities in this book will help children to build the secure foundation required for the acquisition of legible, rapid and fluent handwriting. The charm of the programme is underpinned by sound pedagogical theory.

The Finger Gym programme provides experiences and activities that are challenging, achievable and above all fun!

WHAT ARE THE TOP 25 BENEFITS OF FINGER GYM?

- Boosts communication, language and literacy
- Builds a secure foundation for fast, fluent handwriting
- Enriches language and expands vocabulary
- Promotes self-regulation, focussed attention and deliberate memory
- Fosters social and communication skills
- Improves hand eye co-ordination
- Helps children to gain and retain manual dexterity
- Improves pincer and tripod grip, promoting better pencil and pen control
- Strengthens postural and upper body muscles in the shoulders and neck
- Develops wrist strength, extension and stability
- Fosters fine motor control and differentiated finger movements
- Improves ability to isolate and move each finger independently
- Promotes spatial awareness and develops spatial orientation
- Helps to relieve tension and relax tense finger muscles
- Develops the ability to follow verbal instructions
- Encourages precise imitation of physical actions
- Improves sequential memory
- Promotes attentive listening and active participation
- Reinforces the child's sense of rhythm and beat
- Promotes development of clear articulation and expressive speech
- Fosters response to story and verse through gesture and movement
- Boosts self-confidence and self-esteem

- Stimulates creativity and imagination
- Offers joyous experiential learning
- Fosters positive bonding, co-operation and a sense of belonging

WHAT DOES THE PROGRAMME INCLUDE?

- A comprehensive manual with detailed verbal instructions
- An illustrated list of Finger Gym “equipment”
- More than 320 illustrated classroom-friendly activities to develop better handwriting, fine motor skills and language
- Easy to follow colourful pictures
- Clear, step-by-step black and white drawings to demonstrate the sequence of actions for each Finger Gym exercise
- A short poem or song to accompany each Finger Gym exercise
- "Does the Hand Hear the Eye?" – A School Readiness Assessment Battery that includes photocopiable assessment and activity sheets

WHO IS THIS RESOURCE FOR?

Finger Gym is an invaluable resource for teachers, classrooms assistants, Early Years practitioners, teachers of English as a foreign or additional language, SEN coordinators, speech therapists, occupational therapists and parents of young children. It can be used at home. It can be used in the classroom, the corridor or the playground. It can be used with individuals, small groups or whole classes.

WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM FINGER GYM?

- All children from 9 months to 9 years
- Older children with special educational needs, e.g. speech, language and communication difficulties, difficulties with gross and fine motor control
- Gifted and talented children with poor handwriting
- Children learning English as an additional or foreign language
- Children and adults who are learning to play a musical instrument
- Adults with impaired fine motor or language skills, e.g. after a stroke

WHY IS FINGER GYM USEFUL FOR STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH?

The process of successfully learning a foreign language replicates in many ways the process by which a child first learns the mother tongue. Essential for both processes is a rich linguistic environment that reflects the culture.

Nursery rhymes, songs, nonsense verses and other verbal rituals are more than amusements for young ears. They provide practise in getting our tongues round strange sounds. They help to provide basic linguistic structures, a skeleton upon which the learners can build their language proficiency. The pleasure of interaction, communication, shared laughter, rhyme and rhythm ensure that we rapidly build our linguistic competence effortlessly and unconsciously.

When we use rhymes accompanied by actions, children will at first concentrate on getting the action right, but in time they will also be able to recite the rhyme as they move their fingers, and in the process they will eventually internalise the pronunciation and the meaning of the words.

HOW CAN YOU FIND TIME FOR FINGER GYM IN A CROWDED CURRICULUM?

You can do Finger Gym anywhere and anytime. All you need is your hands.

Finger Gym activities can be used by teachers or by parents and carers whenever children have to wait: on journeys by public transport; during fire drills; in queues; in doctors' waiting rooms, etc.

At school you can make a few minutes every day - at carpet time, to start circle time, before an assembly, etc.

Whenever children work with pens and pencils their fingers become very tense and lose flexibility. Finger Gym activities are therefore ideal for use as warm ups before writing or for short breaks during academic activities. Short warming up exercises will help to prepare the hand and finger muscles for writing and drawing. Brief Finger Gym breaks during and after writing and drawing tasks will help to take away tension, allowing tired fingers to relax, rest and become re-energised.

Ideally, of course, regular Finger Gym sessions will be of the most benefit. It's in your hands.

We hope you and your children will enjoy Finger Gym together!

Are you ready? Let's start!

Have fun and move your fingers!

