

## How Printing Skills Develop Handwriting

Printing activities help your child to start to become aware of how to control the amount of pressure they use and the effect that this has on the quality of the work produced. Learning to control the amount of pressure exerted and how it feels can be very difficult for some children and it takes time and a range of experiences to develop these skills.

Handwriting requires a child to apply the right amount of pressure to get the pencil marks of the letters on to the page. Too little pressure and the writing is often faint and wiggly in appearance (like a spider has walked across the page). Too heavy and the marks are very dark and can tear the paper; often the writing looks big, angular and laboured. Not being able to apply the correct pressure also affects how a child holds the pencil, which can cause the hand and fingers to tire more quickly, making writing tasks challenging.

Hand and finger printing can be a fun way of getting your child used to touching and using different textured mediums. The creative element can help some children to cope with and learn to overcome some sensory tactile defence difficulties. Being happy holding objects allows them to hold a pencil comfortably, leading to better handwriting.

Printing art work can be used to make cards, wrapping paper, gift tags and pictures which family and friends will always be pleased to receive.

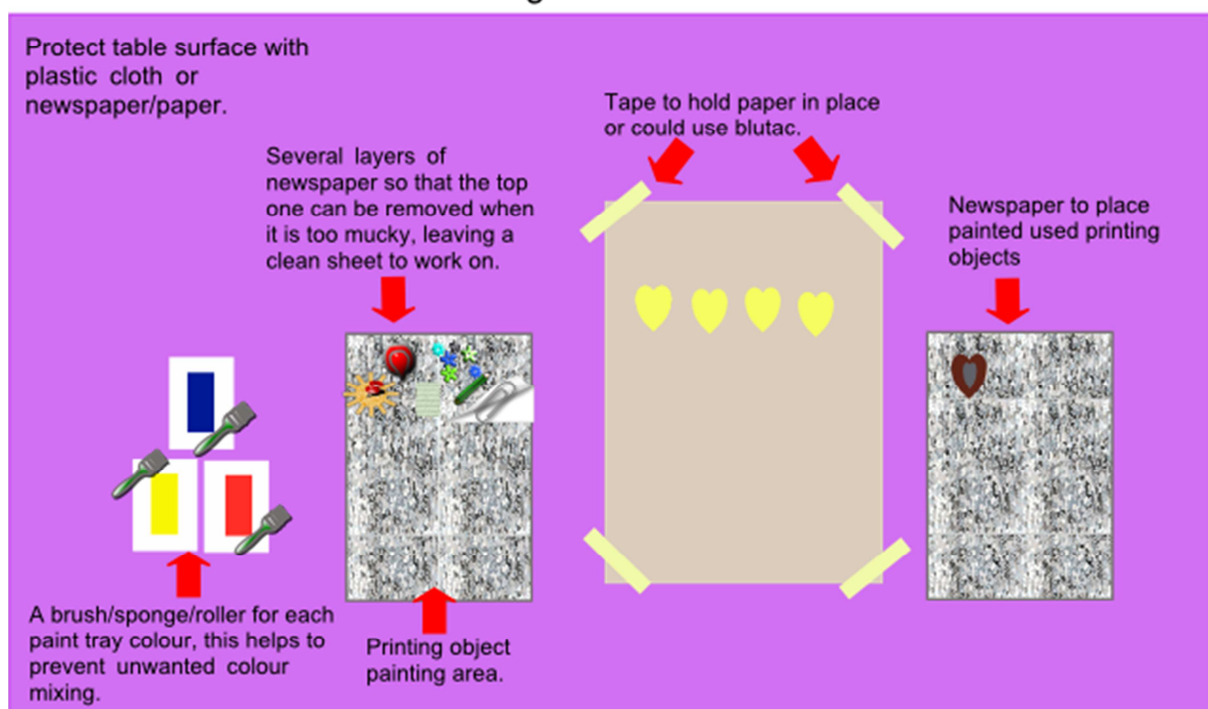
## Printing Work Station

Printing is great fun and doesn't require any specialist tools or paints. Yes, it can get a bit messy!

To help keep the mess to a minimum set up a printing work station:

### How to set up a printing work station:

#### Printing Work Station



The newspaper layers next to the paints can be very useful in stopping the spread of paint all over the table, but not guaranteed the child. Often when children use a brush or roller they forget to put it back with the paint and put it down where they have been applying the paint to the object they are going to print with. Which means this area gets very messy and a greater chance of the paints mixing when it is not wanted. When the top newspaper sheet has got too mucky it can be easily removed leaving clean area again.

You may find your child prefers the paints and printing objects on the other side of the paper to be printed on, which is fine. The table layout should be the one your child finds most comfortable.

### **Other Useful Tips:**

- It is important to have enough paint on the stamp, however if it is too thick it will not give a good print and become a little splodged.
- Use a brush/sponge/roller to put paint on to the printing object/stamp to get a more even paint coverage.
- Paint can be squeezed on to a double folded piece of newspaper. Then spread with a spoon to give an even thickness of paint in which to press the stamp ready for printing.
- Another way to get an even paint coverage on the print object is to spread the paint onto a damp sponge cloth, then press the stamp firmly into the sponge.
- Try not to wriggle the stamp around while it is on the paper as this will smudge the print.
- When lifting the stamp up off the paper the paper can sometimes lift as well, try taping or blue-tacing the corners down to help prevent this.
- If you are going to stamp or draw on detail over the top of a paint print then it is best to let the first layer dry.
- If you are going to use the same print object/stamp with a different colour for best results make sure the previous colour has been wiped before using in the new colour paint.
- Great pictures and effects can be made using hand and finger prints. Set up a wash station close to the printing work station. A bowl of water and an old towel (as children very rarely get off all the paint before drying their hands!). Wet wipes or old piece of rag work just as well to get rid of excess paint until the printing has finished and can be less messy than water.