Preparing Your Child for Handwriting

These play activities are designed to develop the underlying skills inherent in writing.

Pinching is encouraged in many activities. A “pinch” grasp creates an open “O” between the thumb and first finger as the tips come together. If your child is making a key grasp (thumb is flat against the side of the first finger) s/he must be corrected.

Squeeze, grasp, and pinch:
Draw with broken crayons or chalk (large diameter)
Use tweezers, strawberry huller, or clothespins
Unscrew / screw lids
Pick up coins, 1 at a time (no sliding)
Button / unbutton
Origami
Crumple newspaper into balls, shoot baskets
Tear bits of paper
Squirt bottle to mist plants or wash windows
Squirt guns aiming at a target
Form balls, coils, and pinch play dough
Seal zip lock bags
Fill and empty eye droppers (this can be done to water seedlings or perform color mixing, science experiments, and painting with color drops on paper.)

Refined hand movements require stability at the wrist, elbow, and shoulder.

Build upper body strength:
Animal walk on hands, try a bear walk, donkey kick, crab walk, wheel barrow walk.
Climb up the slide using two hands.
Swing by the arms at the playground
Rough house with an adult
Swim
Gymnastics
Jump rope, forward and backward

With the wrists and finger tips resting on the table top, try to:
Scrunch a paper towel under the palms using the fingers.
Cup hands to shake dice

Using only one hand, try to:
Move an object from the palm to the finger tips.
Move a coin between each of the fingers on one hand.
Hold two small objects in the palm, and then bring only one of them to the finger tips at a time.