

Integrated Community Paediatric Services
Paediatric Occupational Therapy Service

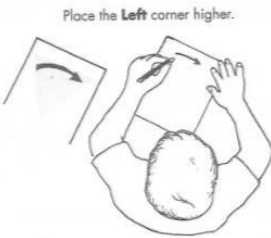
Worksheet G

Handwriting

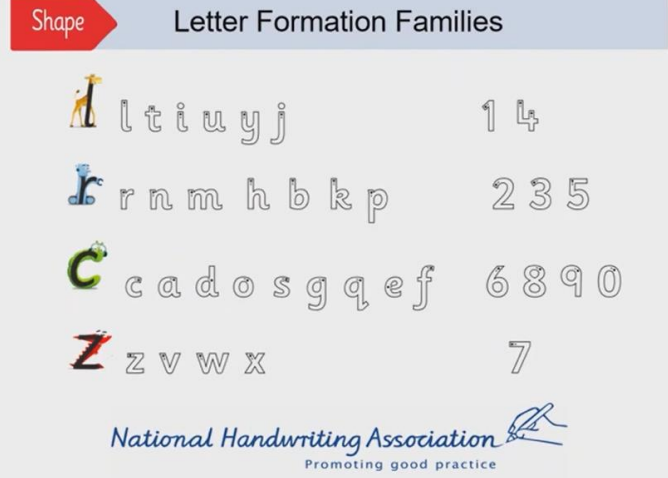
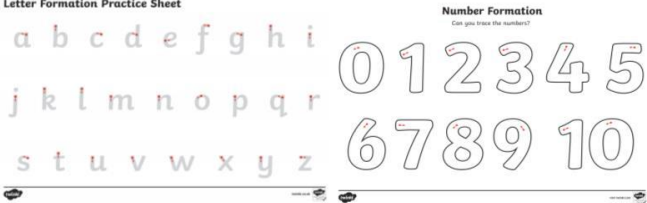
Handwriting is one of the most complex skills we have to learn. It involves linguistic, cognitive, perceptual and motor components, all of which have to be integrated. Before children can hold a pencil, they need to be able to sit up and move their arm independently of their body. They need to be able to isolate their fingers to hold their pencil. To write, they first need to visually understand the difference between letters. They need to have success with pre-writing shapes. And, then they need to remember how to form the letters.

<https://www.griffnot.com/motor-skills-for-handwriting/>

The relevant handwriting activities for the child's area of difficulty should be completed for 5-10mins a day at home/school.

| Area of Difficulty | Strategy | Tick when strategy has been tried and add comments. |
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| Child is left handed | Check the child's pencil grasp. Holding the pencil at least 3cm from the point may help to see what is being written. | |
| | Offer fast drying/non-smudging pens (e.g. Jetstream Uniball) | |
| | Left handers should always sit on the left hand side of a right hander; this will avoid their arms colliding. | |
| | Paper Position: a. Paper should be tilted a maximum of 45 degrees. b. The paper should be principally on the same side of the body as the writing hand. c. The best writing position is when the forearm is supported. The child should be encouraged to move the paper up rather than his/her arm down. e. Once a good paper position has been found this angle can be marked on the desk with tape. |  |
| Child has difficulty writing | Practise one letter family at a time. This will help reinforce the correct starting points and movement patterns. | |

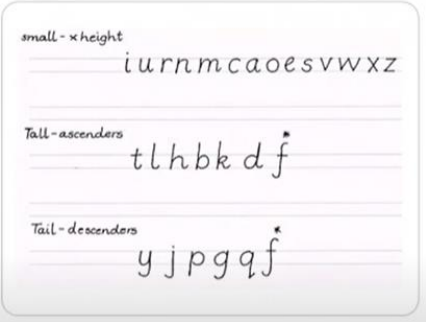
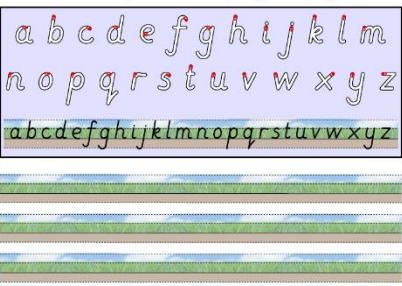


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| <p>legible letters and numbers</p> |  | |
| | <p>Position work on a vertical surface (paper on the wall, chalk/white board or easel) to help them realise that top means top, and not further away from the body when on a horizontal surface.</p> | |
| | <p>There are a number of printable 'tracing and copying' resources available online or dry wipe books can be purchased from shops.</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - https://teachhandwriting.co.uk/ - https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/literacy/handwriting-and-letter-formation-english-key-stage-1/literacy-handwriting - https://www.education.com/worksheets/handwriting/ - https://www.jellyandbean.co.uk/free-resources <p>It is important to be aware however that learning the correct movement of the letters and numbers is often not achieved from just copying/tracing.</p> | |
| | <p>Multi-sensory strategies can be used to help reinforce correct movement patterns e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Writing with finger or stick in a tray of sand/shaving foam/mixture of cornflour and water - Paint brush dipped in bucket of water- painting on walls/patio/fence - Air drawing/sky writing/ - the child uses their arm to draw the letter in the air - Torch directed onto the wall/Jedi writing using a lightsabre/ribbon waved in the air | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chalk/crayon on an easel or paper on the wall <p>https://nha-handwriting.org.uk/handwriting/help-for-parents/a-motivational-fun-approach-to-developing-handwriting-skills/</p> | |
| | <p>Letter Formation Apps which can be used in combination with the above multisensory techniques. It is advised that the child uses a stylus instead of their finger to trace the screen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wet, Dry, Try - Letter school - Writing Wizard - Letter Quiz - Little Writer - Ready to Print- Essare LLC (only available on a tablet not a phone) <p>Apps and Tips for Teaching or Helping with Handwriting (nha-handwriting.org.uk)</p> | |
| | <p>Always have an example of letters and numbers on the table in front of the child to copy rather than have to remember the letter shape and formation pattern from memory. Alphabet and number strips can be downloaded online and it is important to ensure that parents are aware of the schools handwriting scheme i.e. is the child expected to be writing cursive letters.</p> <div data-bbox="389 1205 1037 1317" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p style="text-align: center;">My alphabet strip SparkleBox</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-family: cursive;">abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz</p> </div> <p style="font-family: cursive; margin-top: 10px;">abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz</p> | |
| <p>Child is struggling with continuous cursive letter shapes</p> | <p>To better understand the arguments for and against teaching continuous cursive, the National Handwriting Association has 2 useful articles on their website</p> <p>https://nha-handwriting.org.uk/handwriting/articles/continuous-cursive-cure-or-curse/</p> <p>Teaching Fully Cursive Writing in Reception (nha-handwriting.org.uk)</p> <p>The Department for Education has recently updated (25 November 2021) their guidance on the <i>Validation of systematic synthetic phonics programmes</i>. Within this they state that “Note 3- At first, children should not be taught to join letters or to start every letter ‘on the line’ with a ‘lead-in’, because these practices cause unnecessary difficulty for beginners. Children may be taught to join the letters in digraphs, but this is optional.</p> | |

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| | <p>(All resources designed for children to read should be in print)". Validation of systematic synthetic phonics programmes: supporting documentation - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> | |
| <p>Child has difficulty sizing their letters and orientating letters to the line</p> | <p>Provide a clear and easy to use 2 lined handwriting paper. This could be laminated to use with a whiteboard pen.</p> <p>It is important that the lines reflect the natural size of the child's writing.</p> <p>https://nha-handwriting.org.uk/shop/printable-line-guides/</p> |  |
| | <p>Try a 4 lined handwriting paper e.g. Sky, Grass and Ground paper. The benefit of this particular type of paper is that you can give clear verbal instructions e.g. "start in the sky".</p> |  |
| <p>Child has difficulty orientating their writing on the paper and/or spacing letters and words</p> | <p>Use green tape/stickers or highlight on left hand side of the paper to show starting point and use red to show stopping point on the right hand side.</p> <p>Try using graph paper or squared paper in various sizes. Instruct the child to put one letter in each box and leave one box free as a space between words. Start with large boxes and progress to smaller boxes.</p> | |
| | <p>Encourage the child to place a 'finger space' between each word. A lolly stick or visual prompt (see below) can act as a reminder if they struggle to remember.</p> |  |
| <p>Child complains of pain and/or fatigue when writing</p> | <p>Try chunky pencils, easy flow roller ball pens, soft foam pencil grips with the aim of making their pencil grasp more comfortable.</p> |  |

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| | Break the writing task down into more manageable chunks allowing for regular rest breaks in between. | |
| | Encourage the child to practice some handwriting warm ups (see advice sheet for details). These ideas can also be used during rest breaks to stretch the fingers. 1. Handwriting Warm Ups-Penpals (Cambridge University Press) can be found on YouTube | |
| Child has lots of great ideas but struggles to record them legibly on paper | Trial allowing the child to verbalise their ideas to an adult to scribe. The child can then copy the sentence which reduces the complexity of the task and allows them to focus on just the physical elements of writing. | |
| | Consider allowing the child to utilise ICT as an additional means of recording their work in order for them to be able to demonstrate their true potential. Refer to 'Using IT to Write' advice sheet for more details. | |
| Child is reluctant/lacks motivation to write | Refer to 'Reluctant Writer' advice sheet | |

Handwriting Programmes that can be followed as part of small group interventions or additional practise at home:

- **'Getting Ready to Write'- Alistair Bryce Clegg.** This book takes practitioners through the developmental stages, looks at gender differences in mark making and then provides some innovative ideas for intervention such as Dough Gym and writing like a Jedi
- **'Start Write Stay Write'** addresses the environmental, postural and physical elements required for effective and automatic writing. Available from <https://www.tts-group.co.uk/>
- **'Write from the Start'** contains over 400 graded activities that develop the intrinsic muscles of the hand and help develop perceptual skills required to orientate letters and organise the page. Suitable for children aged 4-6 (or older with additional needs).
- **Speed up!** specifically for children aged eight to 13 years to develop speed and fluency.
- **Penpals for Handwriting** is produced by Cambridge University Press and provides an easy to follow programme/whole school scheme for primary aged children aligned with national curriculum standards. It includes lesson plans, photocopiable worksheets, interactive videos, small group activities, homework activities. There are YouTube videos to explain about the content if you are considering purchasing this for your school.