

# HANDWRITING



# Strategies for Home

## What is it?

Handwriting is one of the most complex skills a child will use in school. It requires the development of a variety of skills including attention to task, sequencing, visual perception, visual motor integration, hand function, muscle tone and strength and stability in the tummy and shoulder areas.

Your child's handwriting skills will still be developing up until the age of 7 or 8 years so it's important to support them and help them practice.

## Children with poor handwriting skills may:

- Avoid writing tasks and be easily upset due to low self-esteem and motivation around drawing/writing
- Struggle to learn or remember letter formation
- Have difficulty holding their pencil
- Have difficulty sitting upright, will sit awkwardly or constantly change position
- Tire quickly and find it difficult to concentrate on homework
- Have difficulty with other literacy tasks including reading

**Children need to develop many other skills to help their handwriting; many of these can be achieved through play activities at home!**

## **Strong hands and fingers:**

Your child needs to be strong enough to hold and use their pencil for long periods of time, they need to be able to use the correct fingers to move their pencil.

- Construction games, e.g. Lego
- Arts and crafts
- Clothes pegs – let your child help with hanging the washing
- Play-doh – roll, cut, squeeze, pinch
- Baking – stirring mixture
- Squeezing all the water out of the sponge in the bath
- Tearing up the junk mail
- Finger football – flick small paper balls towards goals
- Warm up the hands and fingers before writing:



**Push palms together!**  
Elbows should be at right angles to wrists. Hold for a count of 10.



**Pull hands apart as hard as possible!**  
Pull for a count of 10.

## A strong and stable back, tummy and shoulders:

This helps your child to sit upright in a chair, and allows the movements of their hand for writing and colouring to be controlled and steady.

- Outdoor play – Play parks, climbing frames, trampolines
- Obstacle courses including crawling
- Lying on the floor to watch TV/ read a book
- Swimming, football and other active games

## Good hand-eye co-ordination:

This helps for copying, drawing and writing on the line (visual motor integration):

- Ball games including bat, throw, catch
- Bowling
- Swingball
- Balloon games

## Good visual perceptual skills:

Children need these skills to help them make sense of what they are seeing, this helps them to recognise and identify letters and find objects within pictures.

- Sorting games, matching socks
- Kim's game, Snap, Pairs
- Spot the difference, I Spy

## Sitting Posture

An appropriately sized table and chair will ensure that the child has a stable base of support for writing activities.

Teach the rhyme:

***Pull my chair in more  
Feet on the floor  
Back up straight  
My work will be great!***

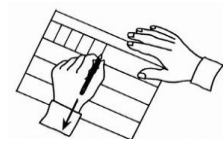
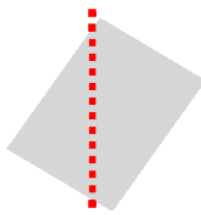
An angled lever arch file can help your child to sit with a more upright posture and improves positioning of the wrist for writing.

Remind your child to use their 'other' hand to keep their page steady.

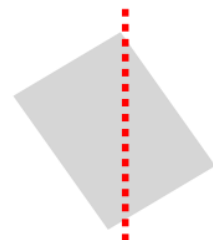
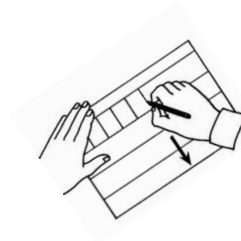


## Strategies for Home

- Have the child sit at a child size table and chair for homework time or if sitting at a kitchen table use a box or books under their feet to give them support
- Use visual supports including letter and number lines as prompts
- Use shorter pencils to encourage good pencil grasp
- Practice letter formation in a variety of ways – finger drawing in shaving foam, sand, on the carpet, make the shape from playdoh
- Allow rest breaks during homework tasks
- Encourage the child to angle their page in line with their writing hand and arm to allow them properly see what they are writing



Left Handed Writer Position



Right Handed Writer Position

- Practice these patterns to help develop the ease of movement and writing speed:

*m m m m*    *e e e e e e e e*    *u u u u*    *w w w w w w*    *c c c c c c c c*

*l l l l l l l l*    *o o o o o o o o*    *d d d d d d d d*    *r r r r r r r r*    *s s s s s s s s*