


Handwriting Activities for Home

Handwriting is an important component of your child's early development and a key part of learning to read and communicate.

There are many steps before any child masters handwriting. First your child may scribble back and forth on a page. Then they might learn how to trace, imitate, copy and draw lines and shapes. It is important that your child explores and masters drawing lines and shapes as these are the building blocks for learning how to write letters and numbers.

Handwriting practice does not always have to be completed sitting at table. There are lots of fun ways to practice around the home.

AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT	HANDWRITING ACTIVITIES TO TRY AT HOME
<p>Pencil Grasp</p> <p><i>A comfortable and efficient pencil grip will make handwriting easier. A 'tripod' pencil grasp (pictured below) is the ideal position to work towards. However, it is important to recognise your child's developmental level.</i></p> 	<p><i>Handwriting is usually mastered through developing a range of pre handwriting skills, and many of them can be a lot of fun for you and your child.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage your child in activities that allow them to practice using a tripod grasp e.g. tweezer/tong games, plastic eyedroppers to squeeze coloured water onto art projects, small sponge to paint on art projects, small wind-up toys • Use thick pencils, crayons, markers or chalk to assist with a stable grasp • Snap thin pieces of chalk in half to prompt your child to use the tripod grasp • Pencil grips may assist with stability and grasp • Place work on a vertical surface or use a slanted work surface such as a three ring binder to get the fingers in a good writing position • Have your child hold a small coin, paper clip or other small object against the palm with the ring finger and pinky, leaving the other three fingers available for proper placement (tripod grasp) on the pencil/texta
<p>Bilateral Integration</p> <p><i>Bilateral Integration refers to the ability to use two sides of the body together in cooperation. Handwriting requires the use of two hands working together. One hand stabilizes the page so it doesn't move while the dominant hand draws and writes. The supporting hand is often called the 'helper hand'.</i></p>	<p><i>These activities encourage your child to learn how to use two hands at the same time in a coordinated manner.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place stencils on a vertical surface and have your child's 'helper hand' hold the stencil while the other hand draws • Have your child wear a sock on their 'helper hand' and use it as an eraser when drawing on a white board or chalkboard • Drawing around basic shapes or small household items such as milk bottle lids, blocks etc.

Handwriting continued.....

<p>Pre-writing Shapes</p> <p><i>After scribbling back and forth, the best sequence of pre-writing design is: I – O +. Children need to be able to form these shapes so they can correctly form all the letters of the alphabet.</i></p>	<p><i>These pre-handwriting tasks add to your child's range of skills on their way to mastering handwriting:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a 'Zoo' by drawing circles, squares or triangle shapes around animal stickers • Drawing shapes with finger in shaving cream, flour, sand and rice with index finger • Drawing large shapes in the air with index finger • Making shapes with a vibrating pen • Creating shapes with paddle pop sticks and tooth picks • Making shapes by rolling and designing with playdough • Chalk drawings on the pavement • Magna Doodle shape creations
<p>Directionality</p> <p><i>Directionality refers to your child's ability to know left from right, up from down and top from bottom. Directionality is important for your child to learn the proper direction of shapes, letters and numbers.</i></p>	<p><i>These activities will help your child to organise shapes, letters and numbers on a page:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create vertical and horizontal mazes on a large piece of paper. Dot-to-dots are also useful for directionality • Place two small stickers on your child's desk indicating the left and right side of the desk • Highlight the left and right margins of lined paper (green indicating 'GO' and red indicating 'STOP') • Games such as 'Hokey Pokey' and 'Simon Says' include directionality concepts • Have your child wear a bracelet on their dominant hand to remind them of left and right
<p>Letter Formation</p> <p><i>The best place to start with letter formation is for your child to write his/her name. Ensure they firstly recognize each letter in their name. Practice writing each letter using a variety of activities to allow for practice and repetition. Support your child in knowing where to start and stop the letters.</i></p>	<p><i>These activities start to incorporate the use of letters formed together into words:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tactile letter formation. Draw a letter on a page and allow your child to stick cotton wool balls, pasta, or stickers onto the letter; • Put paint in a zip lock bag and trace letters with your fingers; • Draw letters on the chalk board and get your child to trace over the letter with a wet finger; • Draw letters on a white board and get your child to trace over the letter with their finger. We call this the 'Magic Finger'; • Magic Markers where your child traces over letters and watches the colour change like magic; • Trace over dotted letters with a pencil/marker; • Talk about letters in your child's environment e.g. in books, cereal boxes, signs.

** These are examples only and do not replace professional advice, if you have concerns about your child's handwriting skills, it is important to consult an occupational therapist.