

Handwriting

Here are some suggestions for ways to help your child improve his/her handwriting.

Make sure your child:

- is sitting at a chair and table of the correct height. A cushion could be used on a chair at the dining room table.
- has enough light.
- keeps the book or paper in the correct position - 45 degrees the left for right-handed children and to the right for left-handed children. Ensure that the non-writing hand steadies the page.
- holds the sharpened pencil or pen between the thumb and first finger, resting on the middle finger (tripod grip).
- does not hold the pencil or pen too firmly or press too hard.

Some children find it easier to write on a sloping surface. The outside of a 3-ring binder is a good DIY way of doing this. Encourage correctly formed letters and practice by tracing them in sand or in the air.

Assist with regular spacing of words.

Pay attention to your child's pencil grasp. The image below shows the proper pencil grasp.

There are a variety of pencil grips available for purchase that can also improve pencil grasp.

Watch your child as he/she practices letter formation. Intervene quickly if your child is not using proper letter formation, such as starting at the bottom or "drawing" the letters with a variety of lines.

Say, "Let me show you a faster way to make that letter."

Use a highlighter to write letters and have the child trace the highlighted letters, again, paying close attention to letter formation. You can mark the starting point with a green dot. Eventually only the green dot for the starting point.

There are a number of iPad apps that are free or inexpensive that offer another way to practice handwriting skills.

Letter School (\$2.99);

abc pocket phonics:

letter sounds and writing (\$6.99);

IWriteWords (\$2.99);

Little Skywriters (\$1.99);

Letter School Lite (free);

Little Writer Pro (\$1.99);

Letter Workbook (free);

ABC Letters Toy - Letters and Numbers Handwriting (free);

Writing Wizard - Kids Learn to Write (\$2.99)

Practice writing letters with similar strokes

- i, l, t, j, k
- r, n, m, h, p, b
- c, a, d, g, s, o, q, f, e
- u, w
- v, w, x, y
- z

For Reversals

- b and d reversals are the most common, but these strategies can be modified for other reversal issues
- teach the proper letter formation for each letter; the starting point for these letters is different and should help the child distinguish how to form the letter
 - For the letter b, start at the top of the straight line and use the saying “bat, bounce, ball, bottom”.
 - For the letter d, start at the midline by making the letter c and use the saying “doorknob, door, down”.
- sort b and d letter cards (create a set of 12 - 20 cards with b’s and d’s on them - you can write them or you can print them in a variety of fonts)
- using the letter cards, lay them out and have the child pick up only the b’s or only the d’s
- when saying or writing the letter b or the sound /b/, you close your lips to create a straight line, this is a kinesthetic way to help the writer know to begin writing a b or /b/ with the straight line
- when saying or writing the letter d or the sound /d/, you curl your tongue and touch the roof of your mouth, this is a kinesthetic way to help the writer know to begin writing with the curved part of the d
- when reading or writing we move from left to right
 - b = take the bat to hit the ball (the bat is the straight line and the ball is the curve)
 - d = grab the door knob to open the door (the door knob is round and the door is straight)
- if the child is writing words from right to left, use a green dot on the left side of the page to mark the starting point and a red dot on the right side of the page to mark the stopping point