

Advice Sheet: Developing the skills for handwriting

The following activities will assist your child to develop the underlying skill areas that influence handwriting:

Pre-handwriting activities

- The child completes activities lying on their tummy and weight bearing through elbows e.g. watching television, reading a book, completing a puzzle.
- Place a firm elastic band around the tips of fingers and thumb. Open and close the elastic band 10 times with each hand.
- Play dough and plasticine – pinching, poking, squeezing.
- Playing with spinning tops, jacks, marbles and card games
- Posting coins or small objects into jars. Holding all items in your palm and post one by one
- Screw lids onto the jars.
- Picking up items with tongs / clothes pegs / hanging out laundry
- Threading beads to make jewellery
- Turning keys
- Walking fingers. Place a piece of tape along the table. 'Finger walk' index and middle fingers (ring and little fingers curled out of the way) along the tape. Change hands.
- Craft activities involving cutting, scrunching, gluing and ripping paper and bending pipe cleaners.
- DIY game – toy tools such as sawing, drilling, hammering, screws and bolts.
- Games involving flicking small objects e.g. flicking paper balls off a table into a 'goal'.
- Climbing, seesaw, tug of war and swing activities, with the child holding onto ropes.

Hand warm up

The following activities need to be carried out as a block of exercises together. They should be worked through before any written is to be carried out. Think effort: the more effort used to carry them out, the greater the feedback received.

- Start by making stars with both hands by stretching out the fingers wide. Now make a tight fist with both hands and stretch the fingers wide again.
- Put palms together and open and close fingers. While in that position, keep the tips of their fingers together and move their wrists apart. Make sure pressure is being put through the fingertips pushing each fingertip pair in turn.
- Chair push ups – sit on hands, palm side towards the floor or chair. Lift bottoms off the chair by extending elbows and pushing down. Repeat this pushing activity at least 10 times.
- Monkey grip – hook fingers together and pull with elbows extended away from the body.
- Wring hands as if it is a really cold day.
- Be creative and encourage the child to think of ideas that involve movements of the hands and fingers.

Poor sitting position

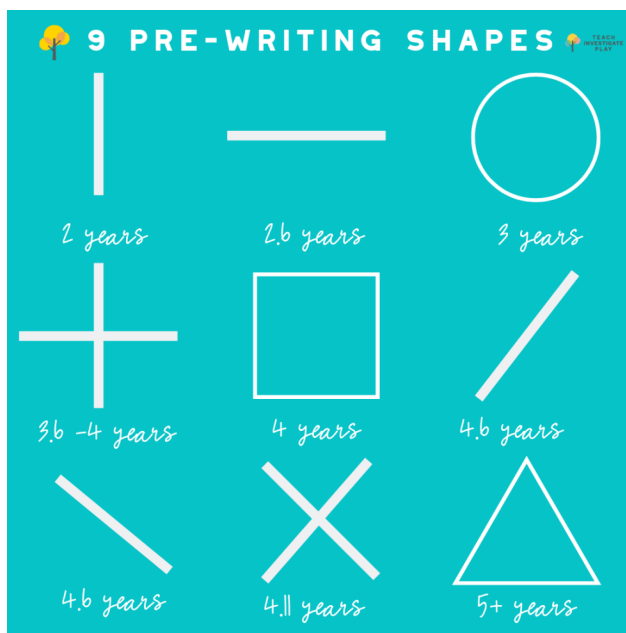
- Sitting in a good, comfortable position with a firm stable base will enhance your child's ability to control the pencil and allow them to concentrate on their writing skills.
- Make sure that the table and chairs are at the appropriate height for your child's size. This means

that when sitting, your child should be able to put their feet flat on the ground with their knees at right angles and the table should be at elbow height.

- Encourage them to “check” their posture before starting to write with bottom back as far as possible in the chair, chair pulled into the table, feet flat on a stable base.
- Incorporate positioning games before writing, for example, encourage funny looking postures in their chairs and then when you say “sitting”, they have to resume the correct position.
- An angled writing slope can also help to achieve a more upright sitting position.

Pre-writing shapes and fine- motor control

Ensure your child can draw the pre-writing shapes



Give plenty of practise of pencil control using mazes and dot to dots books

Dexterity handwriting app for tablets

Writing wizard app for tablets includes pre-writing and handwriting shapes.