

Handwriting should be taught explicitly to children with letter orientation difficulties. The style used (cursive/semi-cursive/print) must be discussed with the teacher beforehand as it will need to follow the school handwriting policy. Handwriting is a complex process and difficulties in this area can be caused by numerous reasons i.e. posture, hand control, finger control, bilateral integration, visual perception, motor memory . There are many handwriting programmes on the market, however if you have used these and they are not having an impact then you may need to look at using a programme that develops the underlying foundation skills that support fine motor skills. More information regarding this is available on: <https://www.swft.nhs.uk/our-services/children-and-young-peoples-services/occupational-therapy/fine-motor-skills-information-schools>

Pupils who have difficulties in this area may:

- Find it hard to orientate letters
- Be unable to recall how to write letters even though they have been previously able to do it in class
- Handwriting is illegible/untidy and becomes worse the more they write.
- Often confuse b/d/p and similar looking letters
- Find the writing process difficult because the majority of working memory is taken up with trying to recall how to orientate letters and produce work.

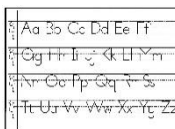
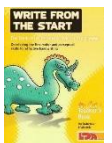
Resources to Improve Handwriting



HANDWRITING ACTIVITIES ARE BEST DONE LITTLE AND OFTEN - NOT JUST ONCE A WEEK FOR AN HOURLY SESSION.

Examples of Multi-sensory handwriting programmes are:

- Write from the Start - A fine motor skills programme but does not explicitly teach handwriting. It works on the foundation stages. Ion Theodorescue
- Speed Up - Speed Up!: a Kinaesthetic Programme to Develop Fluent Handwriting [Paperback] Lois Addy (Author), Robin Lawrie (Illustrator)
- South Warwickshire Occupational Therapy Programme <https://www.swft.nhs.uk/our-services/children-and-young-peoples-services/occupational-therapy/fine-motor-skills-information-schools>
- Support Pack for b-d-p Letter Confusion /Letter orientation (Hard Copy only available from SEN Service)
- Occupational Advice Sheet Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS :
- https://www.cht.nhs.uk/fileadmin/site_setup/contentUploads/Services/Clinical/Children_s_Therapy_s_ervices/Content_List_Updated.pdf
- A free multi- sensory handwriting activity is available on the Local Offer.



Top Tips



- If a child is reluctant to practise handwriting then this can be overcome by using different multi-sensory approaches that do not involve repeatedly having to write letters over and over.
- Apps can be useful to use however it is often better to start with a stylus pen as once children begin to use their fingers to write, it can be difficult to then get them to use a pencil. Stylus' are cheap to buy.
- If a student is struggling to develop a tripod grip and is holding the pencil too far up, trial making very short pencils that are an inch long .
- Youtube have some good clips on how teach a tripod pencil hold.
- If you are going to use pencil grips, watch the evaluation from before you buy <https://www.griffinot.com/pencil-grip-reviews/>
- Trial using a chalkboard instead of a whiteboard .
- Try to avoid using specialist handwriting paper, this can be very confusing for children with dyspraxia/visual processing difficulties.
- Handwriting can be practiced anywhere and should be fun! - In sand or flour, in the playground with squeezie bottles, in the air, chalkboards, on each other's back, hair gel in a Ziploc bag.
- Handwriting too big? Draw out some thick lines , cut out individual lines (include space for ascenders/descenders) and then laminate them. The pupil has to then make their writing smaller to fit it on the line. Decrease the size each time. Sparklebox have good resources for this.
- Try placing pencils in upright holders/blutac so that the pupil has to pinch the pencil in order to pick it up
- ALL ACTIVITIES MUST END WITH SUCCESS !