

HANDWRITING

ACTIVITIES TO ASSIST THE DEVELOPMENT OF BODY IMAGE, LATERALITY, DIRECTIONALITY SKILLS

1. Play Simon Says.
2. Have student trace their hands & label left & right.
3. Have students work in pairs & trace each other's body onto paper. Label.
4. Use a mirror to point out body parts.
5. Give specific instructions eg roll the ball with your left hand, pick it up with your right hand.
6. Put green dots on the left hand side of the page.
7. Use readiness activities where the student is asked to draw lines from left to right and top to bottom. Extend activity with drawing shapes and writing letters with similar stroke movements.

RATING SCALE FOR EXAMINING HANDWRITING

1 – good 2 – average 3 – fair 4 – poor

		February	April	June	August	October
1.	Neatness					
	a) Appearance					
	b) Cleanliness					
	c) Margins					
2.	Legibility					
	a) Size					
	b) Slant					
	c) Form					
	d) Spacing					
	• Letters within words					
	• Between words & sentences					
	• Paragraphs					
e) Line quality						
f) Alignment						
3.	Rate of Writing					
	Slow (s)					
	Fast (f)					
4.	Writing position					
	a) Posture					
	b) Pencil grip					
	c) Slant of paper					

HANDWRITING INVENTORY

Write your name _____

Fill in the missing letters –

a _ c d _ f g _ i j k _ m _ o p _ r _ t _ v _ x _ z

Print the capital letter that goes with each small letter.

a _ b _ g _ f _ r _ e _

Copy this sentence in your best printing:

Foxes and rabbits are quick, but turtles are slow.

Write the letters of the alphabet in linked script.

Write the following words in linked script.

Dog _____ like _____ and _____ the _____

Write this sentence in your best linked script.

At the zoo you can see lions and tigers, elephants, bears and monkeys.

HANDWRITING

- Does the student indicate a liking for writing? Yes/No
 How do you know? _____
 What indicators? _____
- Is writing better when a pencil, pen, magic marker or pencil grip is used? _____
 Which? _____
- Which is easier for the student? Printing? Yes/No
 Linked Script? Yes/No
- Does he/she usually print Yes/No or do linked script Yes/No
- Writing is easier to read if printed Yes/No written in linked script Yes/No
- Is the writing usually legible? Yes/No
- Can the student read his/her own writing? Yes/No
- Is the letter formation correct? Yes/No If not, which letters? _____
- Are the letters written backwards, upside down or reversed? _____
- Are capital letters sometimes written in the middle of the word? Yes/No
- Is less written because of poor spelling? Yes/No
- Does the student's hand hurt when writing? Yes/No
- Can the student write on lines? Yes/No
- Is the work neat? Yes/No
- Is there correct spacing between words? Yes/No
- Does the student think faster than his/her hand can write? Yes/No
- Can more work be produced if a computer is used? Yes/No
- Does the student have difficulty copying from:
 - Another piece of paper Yes/No
 - A book Yes/No
 - The chalkboard Yes/No
 - The whiteboard Yes/No
- Is the student able to keep up with written tasks? Yes/No

ESTABLISHING PREFERRED HAND

- Observe student's manipulative skills & hand/eye coordination in both writing & non-writing contexts.

Test

Ensure that the student is in a position such that either hand may be used easily.

Record responses.

- Cut out a circle with each hand.
- Throw an object to the teacher.
- Catch an object from the teacher.
- Reach for something high
- Clean the whiteboard.
- String beads.
- Put marbles in a jar one at a time.
- Write their name with each hand (note ease, speed, legibility)

Have student draw crosses on a piece of paper as quickly as possible. Time them for 30, 45 & 60 seconds.

Then-

- Have student do the same with the other hand.
- Repeat the process twice with both hands.
- Count crosses.

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF WRITING

1. Single marks on paper
2. Circles
3. Curved lines
4. Horizontal lines
5. Vertical lines
6. Oblique lines
7. Rhythmic patterns
8. Mixture of lines curved & straight copying
9. Copying shape onto paper or a whiteboard
10. Writing on a line
11. Drawing shapes of different sizes
12. Writing letters



COMPLIMENTARY ACTIVITIES FOR EARLY HANDWRITING DEVELOPMENT

ACTIVITY	SKILLS	CONCEPTS
Finger painting	Motor control Hand-eye coordination	Left, right, top, bottom
Brush painting	Hand-eye coordination Motor control Instrument hold	Oval, slope, up, down, over, above, under, in, out
Drawing pencil, textas, crayon, chalk	Hand-eye coordination Muscular control Fine motor movement Instrument hold	Alignment Proportion, spatial Relationships
Measuring and pouring water & sand	Fine motor control	
Screwing and unscrewing	Fine motor control	Size, shape, direction of rotation
Modelling in sand, clay, playdough	Fine motor control Manipulative skill	Under, over, above, beside
Paper tearing and folding	Fine motor control Manipulative skill	In, out, along, straight, beginning, end
Block building	Fine motor control	On top of, high, low, beside, above
Construction toys	Hand-eye coordination Manipulative skills Perceptual discrimination	Spatial relationships
Pasting	Fine motor control Hand-eye coordination	Spatial relationships
Cutting	Fine motor control Hand-eye coordination	Sharp, blunt, thick, thin
Pattern making	Fine motor control Hand-eye coordination Instrument hold	Sequence-between, before, after, next, oval, slope, straight, up, down, left, right, top, bottom
Mazes	Hand-eye coordination	Start, finish, direction
Jigsaws	Visual memory	Spatial relationships
Sorting Object Shapes	Perceptual discrimination	Big, little, as large as, the same as, oval
Matching Objects, shapes, pictures, words, letters	Perceptual discrimination	One-to-one relationships
Threading	Fine motor control Hand-eye coordination	In, on, next, before, after, size
Finding differences Objects, pictures, shapes, words, letters	Perceptual discrimination	Verbal expression of perceived differences
Sewing, lacing, buttoning, buckling and tying laces	Fine motor control Hand-eye coordination	Sequence-in, out, top, bottom, through, next, after

ADVANTAGES OF TEACHING JOINED HANDWRITING

1. Students don't have to move from print to joined writing when they reach the age of 8-9 years
2. It avoids the notion of "low status" with some students in class who haven't started joined writing (ie don't have pen licence).
3. From the beginning words are separate. This helps students acquire the concept of a word from the early stages of writing.
4. Ensures correct letter formation because of teacher guidance.
5. Helps prevent mixed upper case & lower case letters.
6. It assists spelling as letter strings are connected when writing a word.

Preschool students do a great deal of scribble & invented writing & we can encourage them to move onto letter shapes & movements in these scribble patterns.

Can children read it? Students need to be able to read all forms of writing.

- Students don't need to copy letter forms they read in readers.
- Look what they do with community words.

Teach printing within the context of art at ages 8-9 years.

ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP SMALL HAND MOVEMENTS

Extension

Rolling out plasticine/playdough
Activities with tweezers
Rubber bands around fingers
Using a hole punch
Pinching fingers to pick up things
Using clothes pegs
Fringing paper

Grasp

Squeezing out sponges
Crumpling paper
Turning door knobs
Winding wool/string

Abduction (finger spreading)

Finger painting
Hand puppets
Learn sign language
Typing
Rubber band around fingers
Twisting pipe cleaners into shapes
Play finger shapes

Opposition

Pinching sausages out of clay/playdough
Picking up flat objects – buttons, coins, paper clips, counters
Threading beads
Lacing
Rotating balls of playdough with finger tips
Screwing/unscrewing bottle tops
Do up buttons

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHING MATERIALS AND MOTOR SKILLS

Activities

<i>Skills</i>	<i>Parquetry</i>	<i>Block design</i>	<i>Peg Board</i>	<i>Sorting</i>	<i>Matching</i>	<i>Sequence Patterns</i>	<i>Stencils</i>	<i>Cutting</i>	<i>Pasting</i>	<i>Colouring</i>	<i>Geometric form coping</i>	<i>Puzzles</i>
Eye-hand coordination	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Fine muscle development		x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	
Concept of spatial relationships	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Left-to-right progression		x	x		x	x					x	
Laterality							x	x				
Directionality				x	x	x		x			x	x

HANDWRITING AND PRESENTATION OBSERVATIONS

Date / /.....

1. Right-handed Left-handed
2. Nature of the writing task
 - a) _____
 - b) Usual Best Fastest

Conventions and Style

3. Left to Right
4. Consistent style
5. Sustains horizontal line
6. Uses upper and lower case correctly
7. Maintains correct size
8. Maintains appropriate spacing between words
9. Maintains appropriate letter spacing within words
10. Correct letter formation

Management of Space

11. Can write between lines
12. Can write without lines
13. Accurately judges available writing space
14. Can fit writing within available space
15. Can sustain neat presentation

Posture, Hold and fluidly

16. Has comfortable postural position
17. Arm and hand movements appropriate
18. Holding writing tool comfortably
19. Positions paper comfortably
20. Can sustain fluent, legible writing according to speed required.

HANDWRITING

RULE 1

Start and finish each letter in the correct place.

- a) Write 2 lines of writing on the board
- b) Label one (a) and the other (b)
- c) When writing line (a), start the letters in the wrong place. Show how hard it is to join letters.
- d) On line (b) form the letters correctly.

RULE 2

Each family of letters should be the same height.

- a) Write two lines of writing on the board.
- b) Label one (a) and the other (b).
- c) Make the letters in (a) all different sizes.

- a) _____
- b) _____

RULE 3

All downstrokes should be parallel.

- a) Write two lines of writing on the board.
- b) Label one (a) and the (b).
- c) Write letter in (a) higgledy piggeldy.

- a) _____
- b) _____

LEFT HANDED WRITERS

Left handed writers push their pen.

Seating

- To left of a right handed student.
- At own desk on the right hand side.
- May need a higher chair to prevent elbow locking into side of body.
- Need light over left hand shoulder.

Pencil grip

- Hold pencil 3cms from tip and pointing back up arm to left shoulder

Paper Position

- Turn book to a slightly clockwise direction or the lower right hand corner points to the navel
- Use a left handed parent, teacher, peer to model.

MULTI-SENSORY APPROACH FOR TEACHING HANDWRITING

1. Teacher shows letter to be written.
2. Teacher says aloud the letter name and stroke direction eg first we go up...
3. Student traces model with finger and talks it through.
4. Student traces letter model with pencil.
5. Student copies letter onto paper.



ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP HANDWRITING SKILLS

There are significant prerequisites for printing skills that begin in infancy and continue to emerge through the preschool years. The following activities support and promote fine motor and visual motor development:

Body Stability

The joints of the body need to be stable before the hands can be free to focus on specific fine motor tasks.

- Wheelbarrow walking, crab walking, and wall push-ups.
- Toys: Orbiter, scooter boards, silly putty and monkey bars on the playground.



Fine Motor Skills

When a certain amount of body stability has developed, the hands and fingers begin to work on movements of dexterity and isolation as well as different kinds of grasps. Children will develop fine motor skills best when they work on a vertical or near vertical surface as much as possible. In particular, the wrist must be in extension. (Bent back in the direction of the hand)

- Attach a large piece of drawing paper to the wall. Have the child use a large marker and try the following exercises to develop visual motor skills: Make an outline of a figure eight one at a time. Have the child trace over your line from left to right, or from top to bottom. Trace each figure at least 10 times, and then have the child draw the figure next to your model several times.
- Play Connect the Dots. Again make sure the child's strokes connect dots from left to right and from top to bottom.
- Trace around stencils - the non-dominant hand should hold the stencil flat and stable against the paper, while the dominant hand pushes the pencil firmly against the edge of the stencil. The stencil must be held firmly.
- Attach a large piece of felt to the wall, or use a felt board. The child can use felt shapes to make pictures. Magnetic boards can be used the same way.
- Have the child work on a chalkboard, using chalk instead of a marker. Do the same kinds of tracing and modelling activities as suggested above.
- Paint at an easel. Some of the modelling activities as suggested above can be done at the easel.
- Magna Doodle. Experiment making vertical, horizontal, and parallel lines.



Ocular Motor Control

This refers to the ability of the eyes to work together to follow and hold an object in the line of vision as needed.

- Use a flashlight against the ceiling. Have the child lie on his/her back or tummy and visually follow the moving light from left to right, top to bottom, and diagonally.
- Find hidden pictures in books. (there are special books for this)
- Maze activities.



Eye-hand Coordination

This involves accuracy in placement, direction, and spatial awareness.

- Throw bean bags/koosh balls into a hula hoop placed flat on the floor. Gradually increase the distance.
- Play throw and catch with a ball. Start with a large ball and work toward a smaller ball. (Koosh balls are easier to catch than a tennis ball.)
- Practice hitting bowling pins with a ball. (You can purchase these games or make your own with softdrink bottles and a small ball.)
- Play "Hit the Balloon" with a medium-sized balloon.

