

HANDWRITING AND LETTER FORMATION

Handwriting is crucial to children's academic success. With the advent of standards, there is an increased emphasis on writing, especially note-taking, in Grades K-5. For our young learners, this means that the earlier they master the skill of handwriting, the more likely they are to succeed with the writing-related tasks and activities they will be expected to complete later on.

For young students, even in this technological age, it is important to devote time to practicing the formation of letters because children see letters as they read, no matter if they are reading on paper or on a screen. Research shows that children who have time to practice letter formation actually read and spell better too! This makes sense because children are more actively familiar with the way letters look and the way they are formed. There are many ways to make practicing handwriting fun and engaging for children.

A multi-sensory approach to handwriting will be appealing to any child and make practice time more fun! Try using a tray or pan filled with sand, sugar, or even shaving cream as a slate. Children can practice forming their letters and numbers using their index fingers.

Students can create flashcards with raised letters.

Have students use glue to write the letters, and then stick materials such as rice, seeds or fabric onto the glue in order to create the raised letter card. Students then can trace the letters with their fingers.

Another important aspect of letter formation is letter recognition. **Children can practice letter recognition by participating in a 'treasure hunt' for one specific letter when reading a story or passage.** As the children recognize the letters, they will start to remember what each letter is supposed to look like.

Practicing writing with different colored pencils is also a great way to get children writing and to help them develop the correct grip. When students write, they build their hand-eye coordination and also develop muscle memory for letters. Activities that help strengthen the child's grip (such as building with blocks and playing with beads) will also help the child develop grip strength for writing.

Children often write letters backwards in the early stages of the letter formation practice. **An icon such as a smiley face or star in the top left corner of a box will help children remember to form their letters and numbers from top to bottom and from left to right.** Writing letters within a box will also help children develop a feel for the sizes of letters and the difference between upper and lower case letters.

When children start writing on lines, using paper that has different colored top and bottom lines may also help children remember to start writing from the top of the sheet.

Children can make their own spacers by decorating popsicle sticks, which they can then use to be sure they have adequate spaces between each word.





Name _____

Date _____

Write the first letter of your name below

Write the third letter of your name below

Write your entire name below

Now write your name using an uppercase first letter and all other lowercase letters and decorate it however you like. Make it special!