

Why is handwriting important?

Handwriting helps improve your ability to read and communicate more effectively in schools. It also helps to develop fine motor skills, coordination and hand strength.

What is letter formation?

Letter formation is the process of forming letters in a legible and consistent manner. It involves writing the strokes appropriately with correct starting and finishing points.

Why is letter formation important?

- Appropriate letter formation helps when learning joined up handwriting.
- Effective letter formation makes handwriting more readable.
- Letter formation increases fluency, leading to academic success and confidence.

Benefits parents have on children's learning

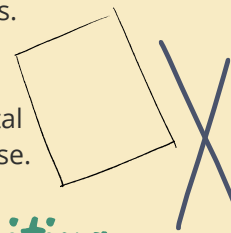
- Parents can demonstrate the value of school to children.
- Parents may provide support for children in their educational goals by teaching organisation skills and supporting homework.
- Children may feel motivated to learn if they notice their parents are motivated to teach.
- The quality of letters written by 5 year old children with the help of their parents are better compared to those without (Bindman et al. 2014).

Where is your child at?

Prewriting developmental milestones for 4-5 year olds

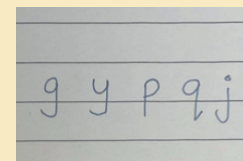
By the age of 5, children should be able to...

- To sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and appropriately with effective grip.
- To understand which letters belong to which handwriting families.
- To copy their own name.
- To copy intersecting lines and simple shapes (pre-writing shapes e.g. diagonal cross, square).
- To trace printed letters on papers.
- To show a preference for their dominant hand.
- To understand when to use capital letters and when to use lower case.



Harlyn's handwriting expectations

- Children will be taught how to print letters
- Handwriting teaching will be mainly focused on letter formation (where to start and finish each letter)
- Introducing children to letter sizing using letter groups e.g. "t,l,d" for tall letters, "v,n,c" for small letters, long letters below the line "g,y,p,q,j".



Prerequisites of handwriting skills



Ineffective posture



Effective posture

Your child will be able to progress their grasp from...



Fist grasp



Static tripod grasp

Skills behind the pencil grasp- fine motor skills

Fine motor skills involves coordinating small muscles to move your hands, fingers and eyes. This include:

- Squeezing ketchup bottles
- Using cutlery during meals
- Fastening buttons



**CHILDREN LEARN
BEST FROM PLAY!**



Family activities to improve letter formation

- Use household materials such as flour, lentils or sand etc. in a small pot and write letters into it with your finger (letter formation).



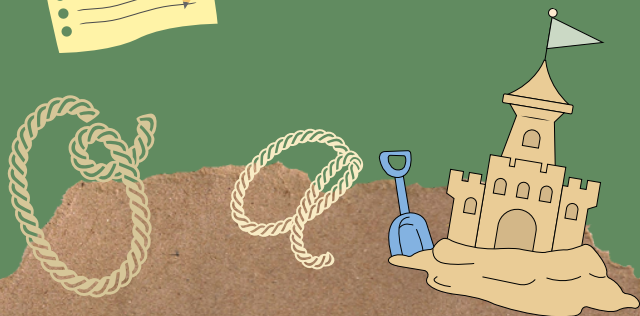
- Make the letters out of pipe cleaners, string, playdough (fine motor skills).



- Write letters or short words in the air, the child has to guess what they are and then, copy you.



- Give your child a small pencil and an A4 sized paper when writing.



For more information,
please refer to the following websites:

- Hillingdon Talk, Moves, Plays: Children's Integrated Therapy Services (CITS) for advice sheets

cnwl.nhs.uk/children-integrated-therapy-service

- National Handwriting Society website at:
nha-handwriting.org.uk

- Brunel KidSpace at:
www.brunel.ac.uk/kidspace

References:

Amundson, S. (2005). Prewriting and handwriting skills. In J. Case-Smith (Ed.), *Occupational therapy for children* (5th ed.). St Louis: Elsevier, Inc

Bindman, S.W., Skibbe, L.E., Hindman, A.H., Aram, D. and Morrison, F.J., 2014. Parental writing support and preschoolers' early literacy, language, and fine motor skills. *Early childhood research quarterly*, 29(4), pp.614-624.

Exner, c. (2005). Development of handwriting skills, in J. Case-Smith (ed.), *Occupational Therapy for Children* (5th ed.). St Louis: Elsevier, inc

James, K. and Berninger, V., 2019. Brain research shows why handwriting should be taught in the computer age. *Learning Difficulties Australia Bulletin*, 51(1), pp.25-30.

Prunty, M., & Barnett, A. L. (2020). Accuracy and consistency of letter formation in children with developmental coordination disorder. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 53(2), 120-130.

National Handwriting Society, (2023). Ages and Key Stages. Available at: <https://nha-handwriting.org.uk/handwriting/help-for-teachers/ages-and-key-stages/>.

All you need to know for ...

Your Child's Handwriting



In this leaflet, you will learn more about

- The importance of handwriting
- How your child will learn handwriting at Harlyn
- Prerequisites for good handwriting
- Family activities to improve letter formation

