

Fine Motor & Handwriting Workshop

November 2018





Why is handwriting important?



- Despite advances in technology, there are still many situations where the written word is either necessary or more appropriate.
- A good handwriting style makes writing easier to read.
- A fluent handwriting style makes writing quicker and less tiring.
- Legible writing that can be produced comfortably, at speed and with little conscious effort allows a child to attend to the higher-level aspects of writing composition and content.
- Cursive handwriting can help with spelling.

‘Handwriting is a very complex skill to master, one which involves linguistic, cognitive, perceptual and motor components, all of which have to be coordinated into an integrated fashion.’

National Handwriting Association



Handwriting is a very complex task involving:

- Understanding and planning each letter
- Motor planning to translate the thought (picture or letter) onto the page
- Execution of the planned motor sequence using muscle contraction, joint movements and finger isolation

Occupational Therapy Plus

Development of Motor Skills

- Children develop motor skills in a head to toe direction.



- Children achieve control of joints closest to the body first



- Control and stability of joints closest to the body is essential to allow

Controlled hand movements.



To be ready to write children need to develop:

- General body strength in order to be able to sit still and balanced at a table.



- Shoulder stability to support and control the arm.



- Wrist stability to support the hand.

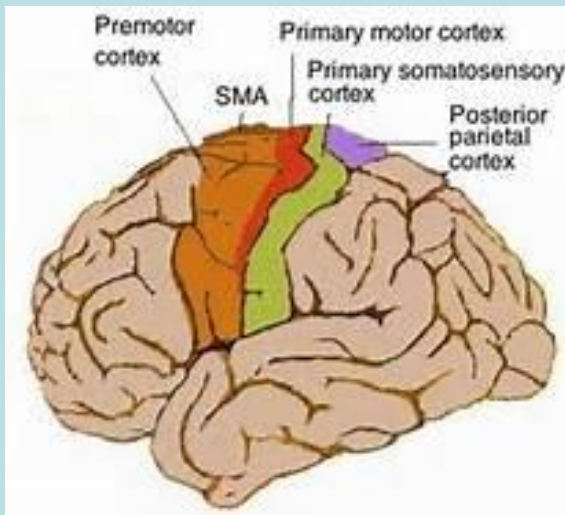


- Fine motor skills to develop an effective pencil grip and manipulate the pencil to produce smaller and more consistently sized letters.



‘About a quarter of the motor cortex in the human brain (the part of the brain which controls all movement in the body) is devoted to the muscles of the hands.’

Occupational Therapy Plus



- When first grasping objects children will use the whole hand, all fingers are doing the same thing at the same time.



- With practice children will develop the ability to use the thumb separately and in opposition to the fingers.
- Further development produces individual finger movements for more refined, precise grasping.



In addition to providing a range of activities around the classroom which involve the use of fine motor skills, we also have specific sessions which we call 'Funky Fingers' which help to develop hand, wrist and finger strength.



Also important are:

- Hand eye coordination



- Ability to cross the midline to develop hand dominance and directionality



Pencil Grip

Why does Pencil Grip Matter?

- Influences amount of finger movement available
- Determines amount of tension generated in the hand
- Fatigue of the hand
- Pain and Discomfort
- Speed and legibility of handwriting



Developmental Stages of Pencil Grips

Fisted grasp



Palmar grasp



Five fingered grasp



Tripod grasp



Common problems with pencil grip



Correcting a poor pencil grip

- Fine motor activities to develop the muscles needed to hold the pencil correctly
- Give your child something to hold with their ring finger and little finger.
- Use a chunky pencil and / or a commercial pencil grip



Letter Formation






- When children begin to write they will often choose the simplest way of forming letters.
- Incorrect formation can then become a habit which is hard to break.
- Balance between encouraging early writing attempts and teaching correct letter formation.
- Read Write Inc Letter Formation Rhymes



- Letter formation could be practised separately in fun ways and which should then transfer to writing in context when established – sometimes with gentle reminders. Start BIG.
- Multi-sensory activities help children to remember letter formation patterns. VAC – visual, auditory & kinaesthetic.
- See www.doorwayonline.org.uk/letterformation & http://www.ictgames.com/sky_writing.html for demonstrations of letter formation.
- Try to avoid teaching children to write in capitals except for the initial letter of their names as this can again become a habit that is hard to break.

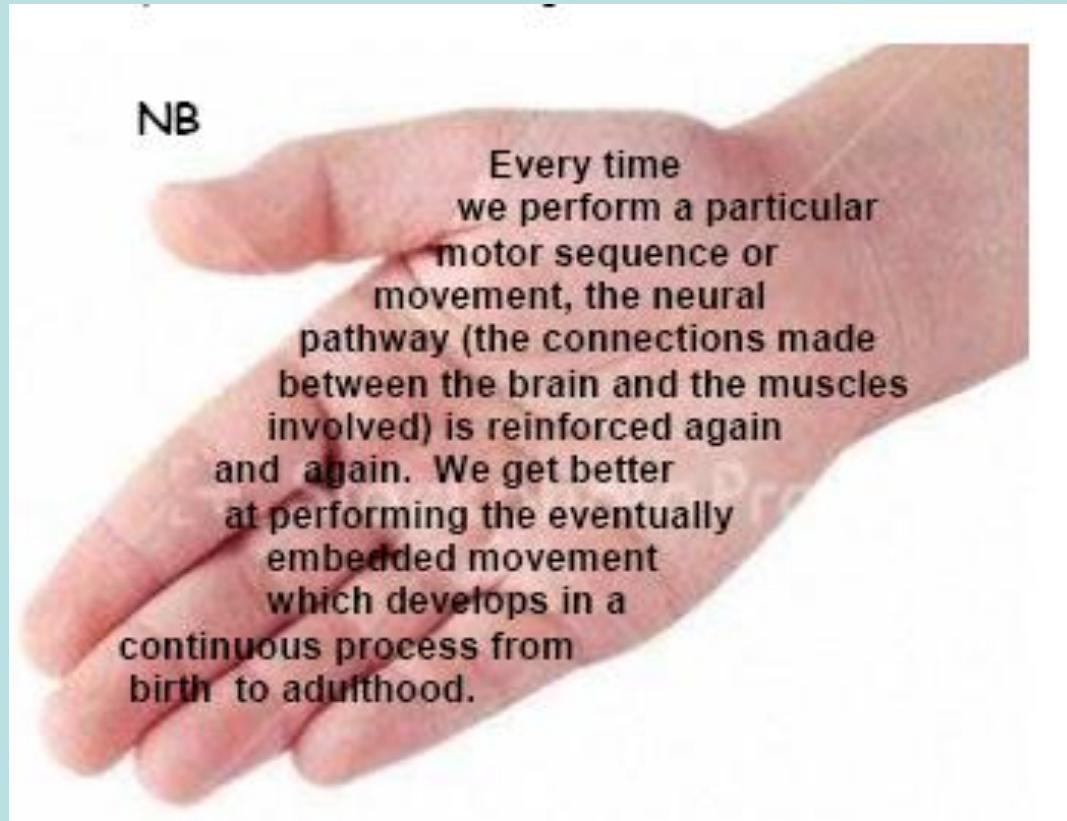
Groups of letters have similar formation and can therefore be taught together to reinforce the pattern.

My Alphabet Writing Mat

i	l	t	j	u	y	 Long Ladders	
c	o	a	d	g	q	e	 Curly Caterpillars
h	n	m	r	b	p	k	 One-armed Robots
v	w	x	z	 Zigzag Monsters	f	s	 Curly Caterpillars

SparkleBox © Copyright 2009, SparkleBox Teacher Resources (www.sparklebox.co.uk)

Practise makes perfect!



Quote taken from
Ready, Steady, Write Buckingham Healthcare Trust

- Thank you for coming. We hope you enjoy some of the activities set up in the classroom.
- Please feel free to ask members of staff any questions during the session and they will do their best to answer them or find the information for you.
- Sheets are available with other suggested activities you could try at home if you would like one.
- We would welcome your feedback. Comment slips will be available in the classroom.
- We may use photographs from the workshop on our school website or Tapestry. Please let a member of staff know if you would prefer not to be in these.