

Parent Workshop

Developing Handwriting



Aims of the workshop

To know about:

- pre writing experience
- letter formation
- letter positioning
- joining
- fluency
- 'S' rules

Fine Motor Skill Development

- 3 months- hands close reflexively when touched in the palm
- 5 months- grasps and holds onto a rattle
- 6 months- brings objects to mouth
- 8 months- transfers objects from hand to hand
- 10 months- able to drop objects
- 12 months- neat pincer grip
- 13 months- holds a crayon with the whole hand, thumb up
- 2 years- holds a crayon with thumb and all fingers, thumb pointed down
- 3 years- holds crayon with fingers
- 4 years- uses a pencil with a static tripod grip
- 5 years- able to copy a triangle

Pre-Writing Experience

- Gross motor control- crawling, ball skills, hopping, and jumping
- Fine motor skills- cutting, threading, modelling, pattern making and sticking.
- Perceptual skills- using shapes of different sizes and sorting
- Examples on tables

Getting Ready to Write

- Handwriting exercises

Writing Grip

- Children should be encouraged to use a tripod grip
- Other forms of pencil grip may limit the range of movement and fine motor control
- Other grips may also lead to fatigue or discomfort when needed to write for a long time.
- Use a moulded pencil, pen or grip to aid the correct grip.

Letter Formation

- A visual image and verbal description helps the child to remember the movements necessary to form letters
- Schemes have their own set of conventions to follow, it is important to be consistent throughout the school.
- See example
- The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Letter Positioning

- Giving children lined handwriting paper with a solid line for the letters to sit on and a coloured line to mark the tops of the small letters is always recommended.
- Spacing- need to understand letters in a word should be evenly spaced and also be sufficient space between each word and the next.
- When spacing, leave enough space for the letter o or a finger space

Joining

3 methods of joining

- Basic joins- diagonal- cu, il
- Horizontal- ou, wh
- Joins to 'curly' letters- uc, nd

Fluency

- Children are expected to write more quantity and at a greater speed.
- Fluency can be developed by:
- Using joined handwriting in all situations, using handwriting patterns, helping children to monitor their progress.

Speed

- Children need to understand that different tasks require different levels of speed and legibility.
- E.g. for personal notes speed is usually important and legibility less so
- Work for display needs a high level of legibility and neatness but speed is less important

Practical aspects of handwriting

- Ensure we give children optimum conditions for handwriting.
- Use lined paper
- Use well sharpened HB pencils
- Consider triangular pencils, grips, size of pencils

‘S’ Rules for Quick Assessment

- Size- are letters the correct size?
- Shape- are letters formed correctly?
- Sitting- do all letters sit on the writing line?
- Spacing- is the space between words consistent?
- Slant- is it consistent?
- Sequence- is it consistently joined?
- Speed- is the writing fast enough to be functional?

Children who may experience difficulty

- Is s/he developmentally ready to write?
- Does the child sit correctly for writing?
- Does the child hold the pencil efficiently?
- Can the child see what is being written?

The Nelson Font Scheme

- Interactive whiteboard CD
- Action rhymes and warm up activity videos
- Animated letter formations in the Nelson font with phonic letter sounds
- Interactive activities and games with links to spelling
- Printable worksheets for support and extension

Key points to remember for handwriting.

Context

- Handwriting is an integral part of all literacy work

Direct teaching

- Handwriting is taught through a balance of whole class and small group work

Practice

- Children are given specific opportunities in school to practise and reinforce good handwriting habits.

Application

- The skills are applied in class.

Display

- Line guides are used for display work

