

## Development of handwriting through the Early Years

### Steps for writing readiness

**Hand and finger strength:** Play dough, squeezing tweezers and pegs are good for developing strength. Children can be turned off writing because it can be tiring and therefore it is important to develop hand and finger strength.

**Crossing the midline:** This is being comfortable to reach across to the other side of your body. Children who switch writing hands or kick a ball with both feet rather than showing one foot/hand dominance need to develop crossing the midline. This can be done through; dancing where arms and legs cross the body or painting at an easel using only one hand.

**Pencil grasp:** needs to be correct. Children need to hold the pencil using the tripod grip.

**Hand eye coordination:** where your eyes and hands work together to accomplish a task such as catching a ball or jumping to touch bubbles that are being blown.

**Bilateral integration:** using two hands together where one hand is the lead and the other helps. For example, opening a jar, sharpening a pencil or cutting paper.

**Upper body strength and postural control:** A child's neck and trunk need to be stable to support the other limbs and prevent fatigue.

**Object manipulation:** Children need to be able to effectively use their toothbrush, hair brush, crayons, spoon and fork. Encouraging independence will give kids a lot more practice at using their hands with growing efficiency.

**Visual perception:** the brain needs to interpret what our eyes see.

**Hand dominance:** the development of a preferred hand for most activities such as drawing or cutting.

**Hand division:** this is when children only use their thumb, index and middle fingers to manipulate something, and keep fingers 4 and 5 curled up within the hand. Activities such as sorting marbles, buttons or small shells into groups by colour or size. This is clearly a precursor to learning to hold a pencil!

**Spacial and temporal vocabulary:** words that are often used when children are learning to write letters, such as top, go up to, go down to, around...

### Developing handwriting in Nursery

| Term    | Writing focus  | Resources/ Activities  |                   |                  |   |   |         |          |         |            |   |   |   |   |   |         |          |          |                   |                  |
|---------|--|--|-------------------|------------------|---|---|---------|----------|---------|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---------|----------|----------|-------------------|------------------|
| Autumn  | Gross motor development<br><br>Pre-handwriting skills<br><br>Fine motor development  | Physical activities- jumping/ ball games/ rolling/ shuffling/ dancing/ dressing and undressing/ climbing/ jumping/ running/ bike riding/ using knife and fork correctly/ Write Dance<br><br>Practice sensory play in a variety of tactile media such as noodles, pudding, finger paints, cotton balls<br><br><a href="http://www.theottoolbox.com/2016/09/gross-motor-core-strengthening-group-activity.html">http://www.theottoolbox.com/2016/09/gross-motor-core-strengthening-group-activity.html</a><br><br><a href="http://www.learnplayimagine.com/2013/04/gross-motor-games-100-days-of-play.html">http://www.learnplayimagine.com/2013/04/gross-motor-games-100-days-of-play.html</a><br><br><a href="https://www.yourtherapysource.com/blog1/2016/09/27/5-gross-motor-activities-help-dressing-skills/">https://www.yourtherapysource.com/blog1/2016/09/27/5-gross-motor-activities-help-dressing-skills/</a>   |                   |                  |   |   |         |          |         |            |   |   |   |   |   |         |          |          |                   |                  |
| Spring  | Pre-handwriting skills<br><br>Fine motor development<br><br>Line writing development | Jigsaws /construction/ blocks/ multi-sensory activities focusing on mark making/ threading/ using scissors/ finger gym activities/ painting/ Write Dance/ drawing straight lines/ curved lines/ wavy lines/ zig zag lines/<br><br><div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <h3 style="margin: 0;">PRE-WRITING SHAPES</h3> <p style="margin: 0;">Children should be able to form these 9 pre-writing strokes before asking them to write.</p> <table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;"> </td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">—</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">○</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">+</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">2 years</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">2½ years</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">3 years</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">3½-4 years</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">□</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">/</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">\</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">X</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">△</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">4 years</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">4½ years</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">4½ years</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">4 years 11 months</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">5 years 3 months</td> </tr> </table> <p style="margin: 0;">Children who can adequately draw the oblique cross can copy a significantly higher number of letters than little ones who cannot.</p> </div><br><a href="https://funlearningideas.com/fine-motor-games-for-pencil-grasp-development/">https://funlearningideas.com/fine-motor-games-for-pencil-grasp-development/</a><br><br><a href="https://www.pinterest.com/tesearlyyears/mark-making-made-magic/">https://www.pinterest.com/tesearlyyears/mark-making-made-magic/</a><br><br><a href="https://theinspiredtreehouse.com/therapy-thursday-fine-motor-coordination-activities-for-kids/">https://theinspiredtreehouse.com/therapy-thursday-fine-motor-coordination-activities-for-kids/</a><br><br><a href="#">Fine-Motor-Skills-Checklist-Packet.pdf</a><br><br><a href="http://mamaot.com/category/fine-motor-posts/">http://mamaot.com/category/fine-motor-posts/</a><br><br><a href="https://www.growinghandsonkids.com/basics-pre-writing-activities-skills-kids">https://www.growinghandsonkids.com/basics-pre-writing-activities-skills-kids</a> |                   | —                | ○ | + | 2 years | 2½ years | 3 years | 3½-4 years | □ | / | \ | X | △ | 4 years | 4½ years | 4½ years | 4 years 11 months | 5 years 3 months |
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| □       | /  | \  | X                 | △                |   |   |         |          |         |            |   |   |   |   |   |         |          |          |                   |                  |
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<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/23292123052549455/>

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/710161434963272790/>



Summer

Handwriting using the multi-sensory approach.

**It is imperative that children are taught how to form letters correctly from the beginning.**

Introduce letter sounds set 1 sounds- taught in small groups (maximum 4 children) focusing on:

- phoneme/ grapheme correspondance
- correct letter formation focusing on start and end points
- correct orientation.

Continue with multi-sensory mark making activities and fine motor activities to develop hand strength.



<https://www.growinghandsonkids.com/basics-pre-writing-activities-skills-kids>

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<https://www.growinghandsonkids.com/activities-to-practice-handwriting-skills-at-home.htm>

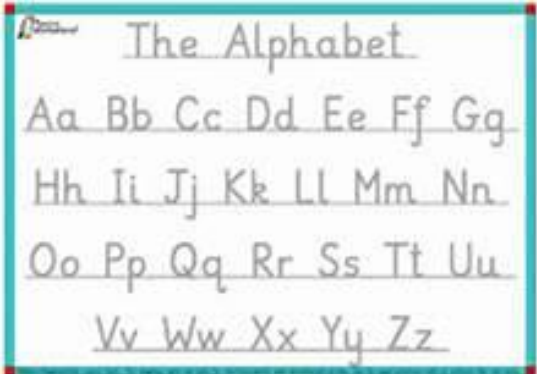
**By the end of Nursery children must be able to: -**

**I**

- Touch the tip of each finger to their thumb
- Fasten and unfasten large buttons
- Form pre-writing shapes correctly
- Hold a pair of scissors correctly
- Cut a paper in half
- Hold pencil near point between first two fingers and thumb and uses it with good control.
- Use anticlockwise movements and retraces vertical lines.
- Form set 1 sounds correctly using correct starting and ending points- m a s d l n p g o c k u b f e l h s h r j v y w z ch qu x

**Developing handwriting in Reception**

| Term   | Writing focus  | Resources/ Activities  |
|--------|--|--|
| Autumn | <p>Fine motor development</p> <p>Line writing development</p> <p>Handwriting using the multi-sensory approach.</p> <p><b>It is imperative that children are taught how to form letters correctly from the beginning.</b></p> | <p>Physical activities- jumping/ ball games/ rolling/ shuffling/ dancing/ dressing and undressing/ climbing/ jumping/ running/ Write Dance/ name writing</p> <p>Jigsaws /construction/ blocks/ multi-sensory activities focusing on mark making/ threading/ using scissors/ finger gym activities/ painting/ Write Dance/ drawing straight lines/ curved lines/ wavy lines/ zig zag lines/</p> <p>Teach set 1 sounds- taught in small groups (maximum 6 children) focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sitting position when writing</li> <li>• Correct pencil grip</li> <li>• phoneme/ grapheme correspondence (use handwriting phrases)</li> <li>• correct letter formation focusing on start and end points</li> <li>• correct orientation.</li> <li>• Size of letters</li> </ul> <p>Continue with multi-sensory mark making activities and fine motor activities to develop hand strength.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> </div> <p><a href="https://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/pencil-grip-tripod-guide-forming-handwriting.html">https://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/pencil-grip-tripod-guide-forming-handwriting.html</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.theottoolbox.com/2016/09/gross-motor-core-strengthening-group-activity.html">http://www.theottoolbox.com/2016/09/gross-motor-core-strengthening-group-activity.html</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.learnplayimagine.com/2013/04/gross-motor-games-100-days-of-play.html">http://www.learnplayimagine.com/2013/04/gross-motor-games-100-days-of-play.html</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.yourtherapysource.com/blog1/2016/09/27/5-gross-motor-activities-help-dressing-skills/">https://www.yourtherapysource.com/blog1/2016/09/27/5-gross-motor-activities-help-dressing-skills/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/early-years-writing-and-letter-formation">https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/early-years-writing-and-letter-formation</a></p> |
| Spring | Fine motor development   | <p>Continue with fine motor development activities</p> <p>Continue with handwriting sessions focusing on</p>   |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|   | <p>Correct Letter formation</p> <p>Position of letters on a line</p>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sitting position when writing</li> <li>• Correct pencil grip phoneme/ grapheme correspondence (use handwriting phrases)</li> <li>• correct letter formation focusing on start and end points</li> <li>• correct orientation.</li> <li>• Size of letters</li> <li>• Position of letters on a line – ascenders and descenders</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Summer</p>   | <p>Fine motor development</p> <p>Correct Letter formation</p> <p>Position of letters on a line</p> | <p>Continue with advanced fine motor development activities</p> <p>Continue with handwriting sessions focusing on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sitting position when writing</li> <li>• Correct pencil grip</li> <li>• correct letter formation of lower case and capital letters focusing on start and end points</li> <li>• Size of letters</li> <li>• Position of letters on a line – ascenders and descenders</li> <li>• Letter families</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/more-activities-help-develop-handwriting-skills.html">https://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/more-activities-help-develop-handwriting-skills.html</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Gateway-to-Writing-Developing-handwriting.pdf">https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Gateway-to-Writing-Developing-handwriting.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.whatdowedoallday.com/fun-handwriting-activities-for-kids/">https://www.whatdowedoallday.com/fun-handwriting-activities-for-kids/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/early-years-writing-and-letter-formation">https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/early-years-writing-and-letter-formation</a></p> |
| <p><b>By the end of Reception children must be able to: -</b></p> <p>Cut a wavy line using scissors</p> <p>Cut around a shape using scissors</p> <p>Use a tripod grip when using a pencil</p> <p>Use the correct sitting position when writing</p> <p>Form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place</p> <p>Form capital letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place</p> <p>Form letters correctly on a line thinking about size and position. Having a clear understanding of ascenders and descenders</p> <p>Form digits 0-9</p> |  |   |