

# Handwriting Skills

## Strategies to try:

- Allow your child to choose which hand they want to hold a pencil in and don't try to influence them.
- How a child holds their pencil can vary. It may look awkward however if they are succeeding then allow them to experiment to find the most effective grasp for them. This may change over time.
- Start with chunky and short pencils and progress to thinner and longer pencils. Where possible offer a choice of writing implements.
- Encouraging a child to draw and write at a vertical surface can help reinforce a well balanced upright body posture and strengthen the extended wrist position that is needed for writing.
- Chalk and crayons are more resistive therefore giving more feedback to child's hand and arm.
- Good sitting forms the basis of good handwriting. Ensure feet are on the floor, bottom to back of chair, forearms resting on table.
- Don't expect your child to sit for too long, lots of short sessions are more helpful.

Writing is a complex skill for children to learn. There are lots of activities that you can do to support them in the early stages of writing. It is recommended that children do not concentrate on using a pencil in the early stages of mark making. Once your child is showing an interest and is ready to write you can introduce crayons/pencils/pens. Skills required for writing can still be encouraged without a pencil or crayon. Make writing fun!



### HANDWRITING WITHOUT WRITING

- Walk out shapes / letters on the floor, depending on the level your child is at.
- Make shapes / letters out of different materials, e.g. playdough, pipe cleaners, string or cardboard.
- Stencils – feel shapes with fingers, eyes open, then closed.



### WRITING WITHOUT A PEN / PENCIL

- Encourage your child to make letters or shapes in different materials with their index finger, e.g. foam, sand, with finger paints.
- Use water and brushes outdoors, on walls or the floor.
- Dot-to-dot activities and mazes encourage your child to plan in advance and to check their work.



### PEN/PENCIL IDEAS

- Play games that involve making marks on paper, e.g. spot the difference, noughts and crosses, keeping a tally of scores.
- Trace over shapes on sandpaper/blackboard, or use chalks/crayons on the pavement/brick walls.
- Use whiteboard markers or glass pens on windows, mirrors or bathroom tiles.



### HANDWRITING IDEAS

- Use novelty pens, e.g. ones that light up with pressure or vibrating pens. Drawing boards like magnadoodle or aquadraw are fun ways to practice.
- Lying or kneeling on the floor to draw on large sheets of paper.

