



Cuyahoga County
Public Library



TIPS FOR SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY HANDWRITING

Here are some ways to build the muscles, grasp and arching of the hand (all needed to write!):

Give kids lots of experience with play dough, clay, Silly Putty or salt dough (this builds finger muscles and arching of the palm).

Have kids use a clean spray bottle and fill it with water to “paint” a brick wall or a sidewalk, to play in the tub or to have a squirt fight. In the winter, fill it with water and food coloring to paint snow. This helps with moving fingers laterally and building strength.

Play games or do chores using clothespins.

Use kid scissors to help build a good grasp (thumbs up!), eye hand coordination and finger strength. Your child can cut paper, coupons from ads, magazine photos, string, play dough, even cooked spaghetti!

Help children arch their hand by playing games that require them to hold as many items as they can in their palm (i.e. How many Skittles or Fish crackers can you hold in one hand? then eat them!, old fashioned games like marbles, jacks, dice, pick up sticks are great too).

Give kids lots of experience with using their fingers to put together small things (i.e. building with Legos, stringing beads or Fruit Loops to make a necklace, loading and pouring beans/sand/rice into various size containers, completing puzzles, paperclip chains and more!)

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See reverse.

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Tips for kids who HATE writing! (or who just want to have fun):

Writing is easier on a vertical plan (think easel, chalkboard). You can use shaving cream on a shower wall to create a writing space that washes away clean, or tape a big piece of paper to your fridge.

Help children “feel” what they are doing. Put salt in a baking tray and have your child trace or practice letters or draw. You can also cut letters out of sand paper for tracing, write in sand at the beach, write with shaving cream on a smooth surface.

Try using a Magnadoodle, Boogie Board or Etch a Sketch to make writing more fun.

Make letters out of yarn, craft sticks, curvy and straight letters or sticks and pebbles.

Tips for working on writing of first and last name (and beyond!):

Small or broken crayons or golf pencils are best to force a more mature grasp.

Write child’s name in highlighter and have them trace over your letters (Capital first, rest lowercase) or make dots for letters and have your child connect the dots.

Write your child’s name (or other words) and have them copy it from your example.

Use verbal cues to help your child remember how a letter is formed (i.e. N “first go up the ladder, down the slide, then back up the ladder, H looks like a ladder).

Practice, Practice! Make it meaningful by writing on art work, sending cards, post-it notes to label items.

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