

Writing and Drawing

Letter Formation

When a child first learns to draw letters, it can be helpful to adopt a multi-sensory approach. These activities have been put together to practice and improve letter formation. They can be carried out in any order and should ideally be practised about three times a week for 15 minutes.

Firstly, talk to your child's school and check what handwriting approach and letter formation they use so that you can support your child at home using the same approach. For example, if your child's school teaches joined letter formation from reception, you should use the same at home.

- Drawing the shape on different surfaces e.g. whiteboards, blackboards, sandpaper
- Drawing the shape in different mediums e.g. in a tray of shaving foam or lentils
- Making the shape in different mediums e.g. out of clay/sticks/beads
- Drawing the shape really big e.g. in chalk on the playground, on the whiteboard
- Using clear and consistent verbal cues such as up, down, across, around. Encourage the child to sound these out as they complete the strokes
- Teach letter formation in letter groups based on similar formation - see below.
- Try letter formation apps for use on tablets which can be very engaging for children
- Complete dot-to-dot and mazes of letters

Letter Groups:

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

'Anti-clockwise' letters or 'Magic C' letters (all begin with a "c" stroke which helps create a stronger visual memory of the letters)



a c d e f g o q s

'Bouncy Ball' letters



b h k m n p r

'Long ladder' letters



'Diagonal' letters



Other Tips:

- Record the letters that your child frequently has difficulties forming and work on these letters daily
- Sometimes children may have difficulty with reversals and inversions. The letters b and d are commonly found difficult. Especially if the child starts both from the top. To promote correct formation, trace the letters that the child is finding difficult
- Help your child establish a visual memory or "picture" of each letter, along with the letter name and sound. Children who exhibit reversals frequently confuse reversible letters such as b and d because they have trouble pulling them from memory. Play "Memory" or "Go Fish" using the letters the child tends to reverse. Have them do a letter search by circling all of the letters your child has difficulty with ('b's, 'd's, etc.) within an article, or have them match pictures to the letters the picture starts with
- Focus on learning one correct letter or number formation at a time, so that lots of correct repetitions of practice are possible. For instance, have your child write as many words as possible beginning with the letter or number you are working on. Another option is to roll dice and write the letter the same number of times the dice says. This activity is also a great way to work on number identification and addition skills. A third idea is to play Tic-Tac-Toe using the letters or numbers that are challenging for your child
- Some children may have difficulty with not closing their letters:
 - o can look like u
 - g can look like y
 - d can look like cl
- To assist a line can be drawn through the gap in the letter and it can be reinforced that it must be 'closed and watertight'