

How Can I Help My Child to Print?

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Learning objectives

Participants will:

- Develop an understanding of pre-printing strokes and how they may impact a child's print
- Develop an understanding of what proper letter formation is and how to encourage successful development in children
- Become more familiar with pencil grasp strategies that can help promote a functional grasp



Teaching Letter Formations

What is your main focus with letters?

Full Alphabet?

Name?



Teaching Letter Formations

BUT FIRST: Pre-printing strokes



Precursor to forming letters. It is typically not until a child can consistently copy a triangle that they will have success with learning to print all of their letters.



Teaching Letter Formations

Shape	Imitate (Age norm)	Copy (Age norm)
I	2.0	2. 10
—	2.6	3.0
○	2.9	3.0
+	3.3	4.1
/	-----	4.4
□	-----	4.6
\	-----	4.7
×	-----	4.11
Δ	-----	5.3

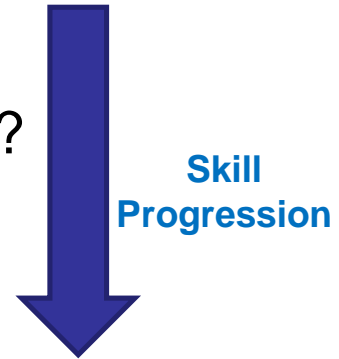


Teaching Letter Formations



See how many pre-printing strokes your child can make.

- If you model how to draw them, can they imitate?
- If they have one shape in front of them, can they copy it?
- If you said the name of a shape, can they draw it independently?



*It is typically not until a child can **consistently copy a triangle** that they will have **success** with learning to print all of their letters.*

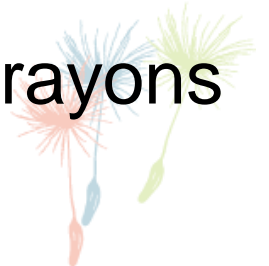


Teaching Letter Formations



How to encourage:

- Teach/demonstrate how to draw them
- Multisensory
 - i.e. draw shapes in sand, salt, shaving cream etc.
- Trace shapes
 - Solid line that children trace over with crayons



Teaching Letter Formations

- Correct letter formations matter! Sometimes we can get excited when a child forms a letter and not pay attention to *how* they formed it.
- Letters that are not correctly formed can lead to future difficulties with legibility



Teaching Letter Formations

Memory

Orientation

Start

Sequence



Primary

Control

Spacing

Placement

Size



Secondary



Teaching Letter Formations

What is easier to learn, capitals or lower case letters?

Capitals!

- Developmental principals



- Capital letters are easy
- Lowercase letters are more difficult



Teaching Letter Formations

- When children learn capitals first, they have many advantages:
 - They avoid capital/lowercase confusion
 - They learn lowercase letters more easily because **c o s v w x y z** are the same as their capitals; **j k t p** and **u** are also similar to their capitals.
 - If capitals are taught correctly, children will be skilled with all capitals and nearly half of the lower case alphabet!!



Teaching Letter Formations

- **Capital Letters are Easier**

- All start at the top
- All are the same height
- All occupy the same vertical space
- All are easy to recognize and identify

(Compare A B D G P Q with a b d g p q)

- Capitals are big, bold and familiar

- **Lower Case Letters are more Difficult**

- Start in four different places (a, b, e, f)
- Not the same size
- Occupy three different vertical positions (small, tall, descending)
- Difficult to recognize because of subtle differences (a b d g p q)

Teaching Letter Formations

Why Do You Start Your Letters at the Top?

- Developing good starting habits for printing is essential to success
- There are no capital or lower case letters that start from the bottom
- Children who start from the bottom are usually slow or sloppy
- Starting from the top can encourage both speed and neatness



Teaching Letter Formations

Vocabulary you use to teach each letter:

BE CONSISTENT

Capital letter vocabulary as per Handwriting without Tears:

Uses 4 different shapes to build all of the letters

Big line

Little line

Big curve

Little curve

“D”: Big line down, big curve

OR/ Big line down, frog jump up! Big curve to bottom



Teaching Letter Formations

- **Tips on teaching:**
 - Model the letter for them
 - Sit across from them
 - Say the vocabulary while modeling the letter formation
 - Have your child imitate you
 - Ask them to say the vocabulary while making the letter
 - Use solid lines vs. dotted lines if tracing

No matter the letter activity you do with them, remember to be consistent on how you are teaching them by using the above strategies!



Teaching Letter Formations

Letter Play!!!

- A multisensory approach to learning letters
- Great for children of all skill levels
 - Even if a child is not ready to use a pencil, this can be an effective way to teach them stroke patterns of letters



Teaching Letter Formations- Letter Play

- Bin or tray filled with dry materials
 - Sand, salt, beans, rice, pasta, etc...
- Bin or tray filled with wet materials
 - Whip cream, pudding, oatmeal, etc...
- Tactile letters (sand, pipe cleaners, etc...)
- Drawing in the air
- Door drawing



Teaching Letter Formations- Letter Play

Wood Piece Play

- Wood pieces are apart of the Handwriting without Tears multi-sensory play for learning **capital** letters.

**you can make your own wood pieces with the HWT template available on their website*

- Build each capital letter by using the wood pieces (minus J & U)
- Follow a letter card template or use a mat.

**Both have a smiley face in the top left corner for a visual cue*



Teaching Letter Formations- Letter Play

- Roadway letters with cars!



<https://www.giftofcuriosity.com/free-road-letters-printable-for-learning-the-alphabet-101-ways-to-teach-the-alphabet/>



Teaching Letter Formations- Letter Play

DOUGH LETTERS with MATS

- Roll big dough snakes! Those snakes will be Big Line or Big Curves for letters. Little snakes will be Little Lines or Little Curves.
- YOU help the child roll the dough and make the letters step by step
- TIP: if making the snakes becomes too distracting for your child, YOU build all of them and your child places them correctly on the mat(s).
- After the snakes are correctly on the letter mat, have your child use their pointer finger to squish them as you go through the correct stroke sequence again with them!



Teaching Letter Formations- Letter Play

Wet Dry Try with a chalkboard

**technique from HWT*

1. YOU write the letter in chalk
2. Child uses a wet sponge to erase the letter (in correct stroke sequence)
3. Child uses a dry sponge to erase letter (in correct stroke sequence)
4. Child then attempts the letter with the chalk (and uses the visible erase outlines to help guide them)

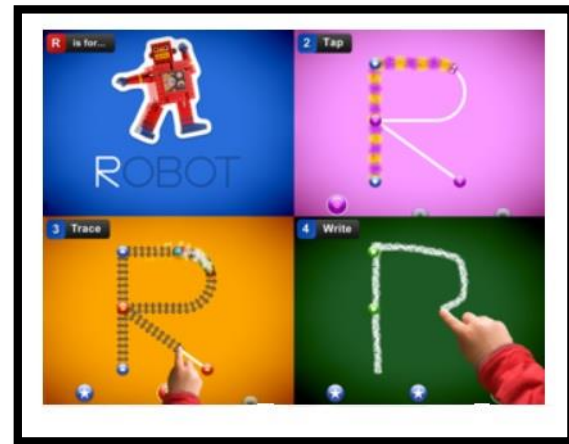


Teaching Letter Formations- Letter play

- Letter Formation Apps
 - Wet- Dry- Try
 - Letter School



Wet Dry Try



Letter School



Teaching Name

Commonly asked questions:

- *Can I teach my child to print their name in capitals?*
- *What if they can't transition to a lower case name?*

Capital letters are prevalent in our communities:

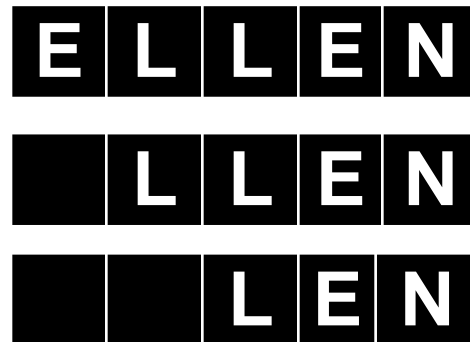
- » STOP
 - » EXIT
 - » SCHOOL BUS
 - » WASHROOMS
- When first teaching, try to show their names around the house/classroom in capitals too!
 - You can also show them that there are two different ways their name can look (capital and title case).



Teaching Name

Sequencing the letters of their name correctly (spelling)

- Have loose letters to match the template



Make the activity harder by removing one letter of the template at a time. Now they have to remember where that letter goes without a visual cue. Keep removing letters one at a time until they can sequence their name independently.



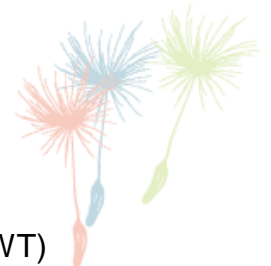
Teaching Name

Demonstration and imitation activities

When you feel your child is ready to use a writing tool:

Use a name strip. Put your strip above your child's strip.

Demonstrate each letter on your strip and wait for your child to imitate you. Do this letter by letter.



Teaching Name

Printing = using a writing tool

Crayons, crayons and more crayons!!

- there is a natural resistance to them
- helps build strength in hands
- Helps promote an efficient pencil grasp with preschoolers

Small tools for small hands!!

- Break crayons into small pieces 1-2 inches. Use golf sized pencils/pencil crayons OR shorter! The less they have to hold, the less likely an awkward grasp



Pencil grasp

Developmental
Progression

* Whole Hand Grasp

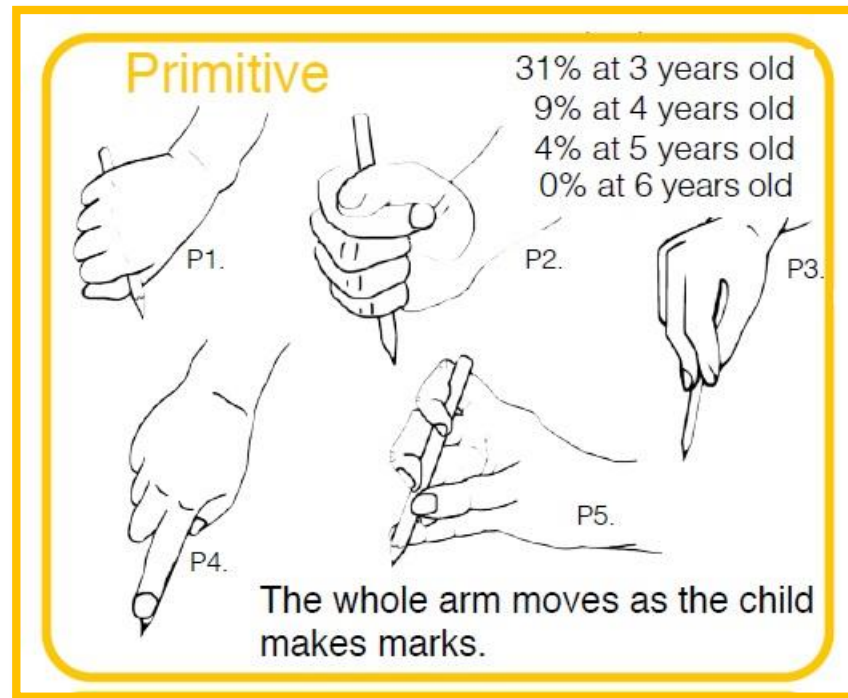


Figure 1: Primitive Grasps (Print Path, 2017)



Pencil grasp

Developmental
Progression

* Transitional Grasp

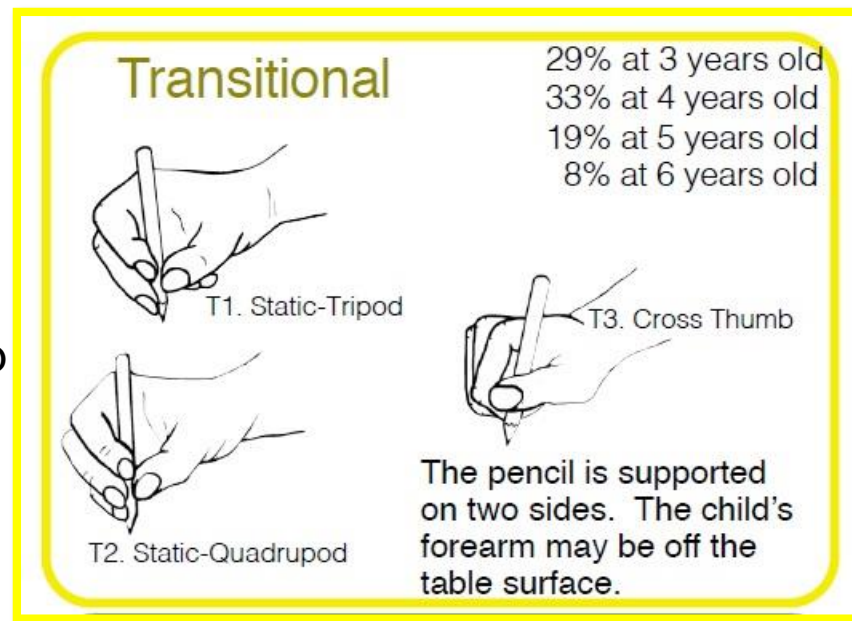


Figure 2: Transitional Grasps (Print Path, 2017)



Pencil grasp

Developmental
Progression

* Functional Grasp

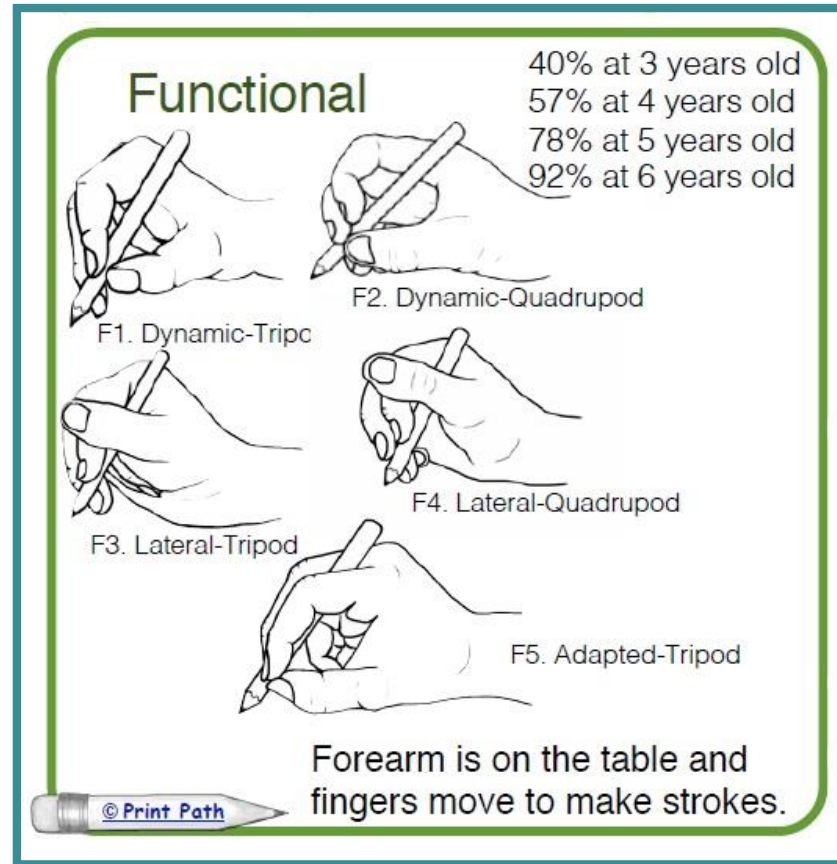


Figure 3: Functional Grasps (Print Path, 2017) & (Schwellnus et.al, 2012)



Pencil grasp

- A number of studies have indicated that grasp patterns do not actually have a significant influence on handwriting performance
- The focus for the pencil grasp is on the functional implications. A pencil grasp can become a problem if a child has difficulty with legibility, speed or complains of a sore or tired hand.

Pencil Grasp – Grips?

Potential Benefits:

- Provides tactile feedback
- Reduces pain/fatigue
- Guides fingers to proper positioning

Potential Drawbacks:

- Easy to put it on wrong
- Easy to hold wrong
- Losing it!
- Consistently taking it on/off
- Continue to require supervision while using

Great resource from FDMT that helps determine the correct pencil grip you may require and precautions

https://www.fdmf.ca/img/product/description/Aide%20%C3%A0%20l'%C3%A9criture_ENG1.pdf



QUESTIONS?



THANK YOU!

Don't hesitate to contact me 😊

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/functionaltherapyfun/



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