Handwriting Information for Parents:

Is my child ready to write?

1. Does my child use a dominant hand? This is the hand that they favour when they pick up objects.

2. Does my child show an interest in drawing / colouring?

3. Does my child pretend that they are writing?

4. Can my child recognise their written name?

5. Is my child starting to draw representations of people – families, themselves?

6. Has my child been playing with toys and blocks – can they build with blocks – pull blocks apart?

7. Can my child balance one item on another to build a tower?

8. Can my child pick up large and small objects easily?
The skill of handwriting is developmental it is related to your child’s gross and fine motor skills, cognitive development and physical/muscular maturation.

Handwriting involves the child’s dominate hand - the hand they use the most – left or right.

The development of fine motor skills is a result of all of the daily physical activities that the child has experienced before they come to school such as crawling, walking, holding objects, climbing, picking up food, using play dough, making things, playing in the sand, holding hands, painting, puzzles, lego, cooking, picking up a variety of different objects. Everything that a child does as they grow and mature has an impact on their overall motor skill development.

Handwriting involves motor movements – letter strokes, pressure, directionality (positional language) and the physical manipulation of the pencil or writing implement (pencil hold).

Handwriting involves visual memory and cognitive patterning - how some letters have similar patterns and movements

Handwriting involves understanding positional language – top, bottom, left, right, up, down, around and so on.

Handwriting starts with holding and using a writing implement

Handwriting skills can be related to drawing ability and the amount of detail a child puts into their drawing

Handwriting starts with scribble patterns and experimentation.

Handwriting skills develop over time and need constant reviewing and modelling especially how they hold the pencil and the pressure that they place on their pencil and their book.
Preparing to Write

Formal writing involves the development of muscle strength of the hands and forearms as well as co-ordination, visual memory and cognition.

The development of these skills commences as soon as your child is born as they reach out, stretch or hold your finger as a reflex action.

Natural Development includes but is not exhaustive of:

- Start holding parents fingers as a reflex action soon after birth
- Developing body awareness – feet – hands – arms (baby)
- Holding onto objects and pulling themselves up – balancing
- Manipulating objects – exploring their environment

Parent Assisted Development – not an exhaustive list

- Playing with your child – physical contact
- Lego and building activities are excellent
- Helping with cooking – mixing, making scones, biscuit dough, spooning mixture, rolling, and placement of choc chips etc.
- Setting the table, emptying the dishwasher
- Playing with kinetic sand – ordinary sand at the beach
- Drawing, painting, creating, collaging.
- Turning the pages of a book
- Cutting
- Playing with trucks and cars
- Dressing and undressing dolls – doing up buttons / zips
- Finger activities

Written and presented by Jon Readshaw
How to hold a pencil -

The tripod hold is the recommended hold.

The pencil is a car:

- You have the engine at the front of the car
- Then you have the driver, next after the engine
- Then you have a passenger in the front seat
- Then the children are in the back seat.

Common Issues:

- The driver sits on the engine
- The passenger sits on the driver
- The children want to drive the car
- The driver sits in the back seat or the boot of the car
- The driver presses too hard and will get stuck
- The driver is too soft and won't go

The Pencil can also be a wriggly worm and the hand is the bird.
Incorrect penholds for either hand
Watch for these penholds, and correct immediately.

middle finger resting on pencil barrel

predominant thumb

fingers tightly curled
Visual memory and understanding the
Directionality of the letters is very important.
Basic Directional Movements in Handwriting

1. Top to bottom (straight down) / / / /
2. Top to Bottom with a slant / / / /
3. Start at the Left move to the right ➞ ➞
4. Join the dots left to right
5. Scribble circles in an anti-clockwise direction ceee
6. Circle patterns in an anti-clockwise direction 0000
7. Waves left to right
8. Zig zags left to right
9. Mountains m m m m
10. Swinging movements w w

Written and presented by Jon Readshaw
The Directionality of Letters (basic Shapes)

Letters are grouped according to certain shapes of the letters.

Across, down, swing up, up, down, down, give it a tail

coagdqf

The jumping letters — Down, jump up half way, down, slid in, kick out or flick

nmrhbkp

The swinging letters — down, swing up, down (flick or give it a tail)

uvwy

The straight down letters — straight down, down, give it a dot, a cross or a tail.

LItj

The tricky letters —
S — slide down
X — The cross letter — down and down
Z — Across the top, down, across the bottom
E — Starts in the air goes up around down and up again

the only letter that starts in the middle

Written and presented by Jon Readshaw
NOTES

- Finger rhymes –
  - Ten little Indians
  - 1,2,3,4,5 Once I caught a fish alive
  - Incy Wincy spider
  - Little peter rabbit
  - Five Fat Peas
  - Two little Dicky Birds
  - Head, shoulders, knees and toes
  - Open, shut them –to name a few

- Finger Activities:
  - Playing the piano in the air,
  - squeeze let go (one hand and two hands),
  - jumping spiders,
  - climbing up the rope (reach up and pull down),
  - fingertip touching,
  - fingers in and fingers out in a fan motion.
  - Hands — moving over and under each other

- Simon says – for positioning language

- Arm Activities
  - Crawling
  - Climbing
  - Throwing and catching balls
  - Swinging
  - swimming

GOOGLE FINGER RHYMES FOR MORE IDEAS

Written and presented by Jon Readshaw