

# Handwriting Progression

Our handwriting progression aims for children to develop good handwriting style in which they can write **legibly** and with **automaticity**. This means that they can produce and maintain a good speed, have a fluid hand movement that is comfortable, letters are of a consistent and appropriate size and it can be read easily by others.

Adults support children to move through the progression at their own pace and meet them where they are. Expectations for where *most* children should be at the end of a key stage are outlined where appropriate.

## Prewriting Skills

In order for the fine motor movements needed for handwriting to develop, a child needs to have a solid base of support: strong gross motor skills, fine motor skills and movements.

### **What this leads to:**

- *A strong core to help them sit upright*
- *A strong neck in order to keep their head upright*
- *Strong shoulders in order to facilitate arm and wrist movements*
- *Strong fingers in order to grasp objects*

### **How to develop these skills:**

**Gross motor and bilateral co-ordination** –climbing, hanging, carrying heavy objects and crawling etc.

**Fine motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination** — using tweezers, scissors, pin boards, building using small construction and bead threading. These can also developed further through creative development, such as sticking, ripping, painting and manipulating Play Doh.

# Pencil Grip Development

There are 5 stages of pencil grip development as outlined below. Children progress through these at their own pace when they are developmentally ready. At the end of the year, this information is passed onto the next teacher to ensure that children are given the correct support.

## Stage 1:

### The Palmer-Supinate Grasp

Holds the crayon/pencil in fist (whole hand) like a dagger. They use whole arm movements from the shoulder to mark-make. Due to this whole arm movement, they prefer to work on a vertical surface.



## Stage 2:

### The Palmer or Digital-Pronate Grasp

Holds a crayon/pencil with the palm of the hand facing down towards the paper. The crayon/pencil is held by all the fingers and the thumb. The movement comes from the shoulder and elbow. Again, due to the way the arm moves, a vertical surface is preferred.



## Stage 3:

### Four Finger and Thumb Grip

Holds the crayon/pencil between the thumb and four fingers with the crayon/pencil in a nearly vertical, upright position. Movement comes from the elbow and wrist.



## Stage 4:

### Tripod Grip

Holds the pencil in very nearly the correct position however the web space is narrower than it would be if held in a mature tripod grip. This means that movement is coming from the wrist and larger finger movements.



## Stage 5:

### Dynamic Tripod Grip

This is traditionally considered the most appropriate handwriting pencil grip for both left and right-handed writers. Holds the pencil between the thumb and index finger with pencil supported on the middle finger. The ring and little fingers are gently curled inwards. This gives an open wide web space which means the movement comes from the fingers.

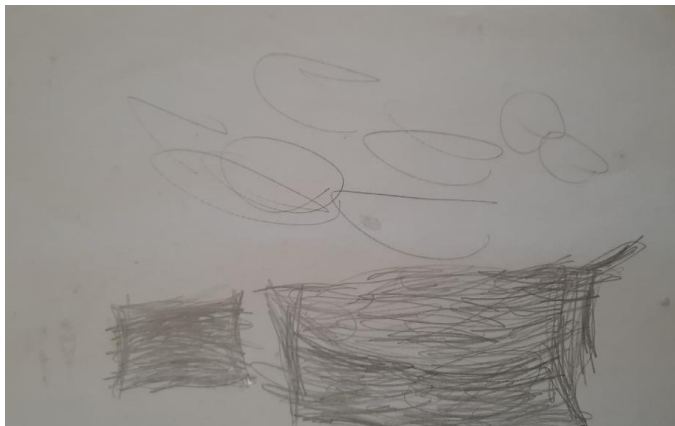


# **Mark Making**

Initially, the marks children make will be big and uncontrolled. As their fine and gross motor skills develop, their movements become smaller and more controlled.

As a child's mark making progresses they will:

- Explore different materials, such as paint and crayons.
- Give meaning to the marks they make when drawing, painting or writing.
- Use mark-making tools with control.
- Draw lines and circles using large scale movements.



**Finger gym fun.**



## Handwriting through Phonics

Letter formation is introduced to children through their daily phonics lessons. As each new sound is taught, the correct letter formation is modelled and the children practise it by writing it in the air with their fingers. They begin to learn which handwriting family each letter comes into:

The Curly 'C' Family - c, a, o, d, g, q, e, s, f

The 'R' Family - r, b, n, h, m, k, p

The Ladder Letters - l, i, t, u, j, y

The Zig Zag Family- v, w, x, z

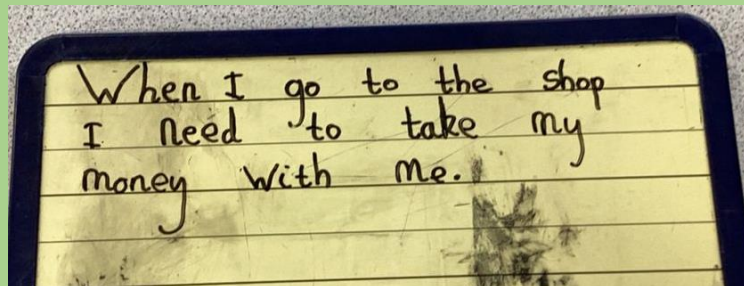
Depending on their stage of pencil grip development, children should be encouraged to write the letter as an enhancement in continuous provision/COOL time in any context, such as the sand tray, with a paint brush or on the chalkboards. They start to form letters correctly using mark making equipment.

## Writing Words and Sentences

As children's formation of letters is becoming secure, they are taught the necessary skills to write short, simple sentences that can be read by others. These continue to be linked with their phonics lessons and are consistently reinforced.

***Most children should be able to do the following by the end of year 2:***

- use finger spaces between words that reflects the size of the letters.
- form capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters.



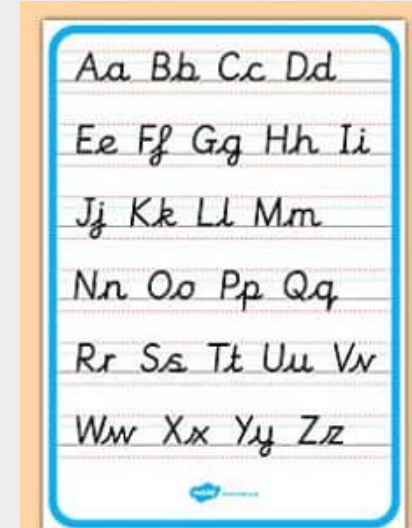
## Joining

Once they are secure with the above, children develop **stamina**, **automaticity** and **legibility** by learning how and when to join.\*

Children will:

- Learn the diagonal and horizontal strokes that will be needed to join each letter.
- Progress to use these strokes to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another are best left unjoined.
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting (for example, by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant, and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders do not touch).

In addition, children should be allowed to begin developing their own style and explore different writing implements through a range of writing opportunities.



*\*For children with dyslexic tendencies, cursive writing is not appropriate. They should continue to practice correct formation, orientation, sizing and spacing without the need to join.*

## Automaticity and Legibility

By the end of Year 6, children should make choices about what they write with and adapt their handwriting style for the task at hand. For example, the handwriting for a published piece of work will be more polished than a drafted piece.

Most children will be able to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:

- Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices
- Deciding whether or not to join specific letters
- Maintain legibility in joined handwriting when writing at speed
- Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task