

Printing

Pre-Printing Skills

- Before children can begin printing the letters of the alphabet, they must first master basic shapes, such as vertical and horizontal lines, circles, “X’s”, and squares. All letters are formed by these basic shapes.

Preparation for Printing

- Posture
 - o the child should be sitting with his feet flat on the floor, his knees bent, and back resting on the back of the chair
- Paper placement
 - o for *right hand dominant* children, the paper should be placed to the right and slanted with the left corner nearest to the edge of the table.
 - o for *left hand dominant* children, the paper should be placed to the left and slanted with the right corner nearest to the edge of the table
- Helping hand
 - o the child should be using their non-dominant hand to stabilize the paper on the table
- Pencil grasp (see handout on grasp)
- Paper
 - o limit the variability of paper used to print since this will confuse the child i.e. make sure workbook and activity worksheets are as similar as possible so the child learns where to print his letters and how big



Writing Instrument

- The type of writing instrument you provide for your children can work to facilitate appropriate grasp and printing skills or inhibit them
- When it comes to writing instruments, the *smaller the better!* Try using broken crayons, golf-sized pencils, or thin, short markers. Smaller writing instruments force the child to use their fingers to hold on and encourage an open web space.

Printing

- The adult should always demonstrate the correct model of the letter and then the child should imitate the letter.
- Consistent verbal and visual cues should always be used

- When teaching children the letters, try to avoid dot-to-dot letters; use tracing instead.

E F L

- Capital letters should be taught first. Why?
 - o they are all the same height
 - o they all start at the top
 - o they are easy to recognize and identify
 - o they are frequently used in the community i.e. STOP, H (hospital), EXIT
- Although it makes sense for adults to teach the letters in alphabetical order, it is developmentally easier for children to learn the letters by the strokes needed to form them
 - o L F E H T I (*horizontal and vertical lines*)
 - o U C O Q G S J D P B (*curves*)
 - o R K A V M N W X Y Z (*diagonal lines*)
- Lower case letters should also be taught in groups of similar strokes. Why?
 - o When a child learns a specific stroke, several letters can be mastered using that stroke
 - o The child builds on what he has previously learned

Please refer to the handouts provided in the binder

References

Handwriting Without Tears. (2003). Handwriting without Tears: Guidelines for a 1-2 hour in-service.
Marnell, L. (2001). Handwriting Help for Kids. Retrieved from <http://www.handwritinghelpforkids.com>