

Helping your child with Handwriting

What is handwriting?

- The function of writing is to give **meaning**
- Handwriting is a complex skill
- It is a process
- It involves vision, visual memory, posture, body control, hand-eye co-ordination, pencil grip and letter formation
- It involves a child using co-ordination to hold crayon/pencil; keeping the paper still; and putting enough pressure to make a mark
- There are different stages that children pass through to becoming a writer
- **Children pass through these stages at different rates**

Emergent Writing

- Scribbling stage
- Making marks that may resemble letters
- Making marks that look like letters
- Using one letter to represent a word
- Using invented spelling
- Using conventional grammar, punctuation and spelling

What to do at home

- **Encourage** handwriting
- Provide different materials for writing
- Practise **fine motor skills**
- Be a helper **not** a teacher
- Practise basic movements (sand/ flour, etc.)
- **Take it slowly**
- **Demands / expectations** can cause undue tension

What makes handwriting difficult?

- Poor fine motor skills
- Incorrect pencil grip
- Uniformity of letter size
- Interspersion of upper & lower case letters
- Keeping letters on the line
- Directionality

Left Handed Children

- Write towards the body
- In order to avoid a 'hook'
 - They must hold pencil differently
 - They must position paper differently

Home / School

- Keep in touch with teacher
- Be familiar with how letters are to be formed
- Be familiar with the style of writing

Note:

- The more your child uses finger activities the sooner the required skills may be acquired.

Brendan Culligan (brencull@eircom.net)

Author of 'Improving Children's Spelling'
and '*Spelling and Handwriting*'