

How can I help at home?

First of all encourage your child to hold their pen/pencil correctly; thumb and forefinger gripping the pencil and middle finger supporting.



Secondly make it **fun!** Below are examples of activities that you can do with your child as appropriate to their age and ability:

- ◆ Air writing (imaginary letters or words in the air)
- ◆ Writing on a partner's back (partner feels for the correct pattern in letters or words)
- ◆ Sand writing (letters or words in sand)
- ◆ Paint writing (on an easel or outside on fences or ground using water)
- ◆ Leaf writing (shuffle feet in fallen leaves to make letters or words)
- ◆ Chalk writing
- ◆ Tracing letters/words written on paper
- ◆ Copying letters/words written on paper.
- ◆ Writing on paper for a variety of purposes e.g. a letter, a set of instructions, a recipe, a card, postcard, shopping list, address on an envelope etc.



Thank you and have fun!

Thank you for joining us for our **Building Confidence in Writing Open** evening tonight and thank you for your continued support in your child's understanding of **Writing and Handwriting**. Remember to encourage a positive attitude towards and have fun with **Writing at home!** If you have any further questions / concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the class teacher or the school.

Thank you.



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Information for Parent / Carers

Building Confidence in Writing: Early Level



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What is the difference between gross and fine motor control?

Gross motor control is the term used to describe the development of controlled movements of the whole body, or limbs (arms or legs). Of particular importance in relation to handwriting is the development of good posture and balance. Activities such as dance, football, use of small apparatus, cycling, gripping climbing frames and building with large-scale construction kits all develop gross motor control.

Fine motor control is the term used to describe smaller movements, usually of the hand and fingers. Fine motor control is best developed through activities which involve small-scale movements.

Until children have gained reasonable fine motor control through art, mark making and other activities, formal handwriting worksheets are not appropriate.



Why is a good pencil grip important?

If children are to develop a fluent and fast handwriting style, they must learn to hold a pencil with a grip that is relaxed but allows for efficient control of the pencil. If children grip a pencil too tightly, they won't develop a free-flowing movement and they will tire very quickly. Children should be encouraged to hold the pencil between the thumb and forefinger with the pencil resting on the third finger. We call these 'Froggy Legs'. Commercial pencil grips, or triangular pencils, can be used to encourage this pencil hold.



Why is good posture important?

Developing a good posture is as important as developing a good pencil grip. Sitting in an awkward position can cause headaches, tiredness and pain in the shoulder, arm or hand. It can also slow down a child's writing. Children will be able to sustain writing for longer and develop a neat style of handwriting if they become used to sitting comfortably.

- ◆ Ensure that they have a good pencil grip.
- ◆ Check that the height of table your child is sitting at allows them to sit comfortably, with their feet flat on the floor.
- ◆ The lighting should be good, so that your child can see what they have written.
- ◆ Children should hold the page with the hand they are not writing with.
- ◆ The paper should be tilted slightly.

Left-handed children

At least ten per cent of the population is left-handed – a slightly higher proportion of these are males. There is no need for left-handed children to be disadvantaged when writing, if a few simple strategies are employed:

- ◆ Model letter formation, skywriting, etc. specifically for left-handed children, with your left hand.
- ◆ Put a mark at the left side of the page to indicate where writing begins, as some left-handed children mirror-write from the right.
- ◆ Left-handed children usually need to have the paper slightly to the left of the centre of their body and should be encouraged to tilt their work clockwise so they can see what they have written.
- ◆ Experiment with seat height – some left-handed children may need a higher seat to view their work clearly and to prevent the elbow locking into their side as they work across the paper.

Using 'shape families' to teach letter formation

- ◆ The letters of the alphabet can be sorted into four main shapes. These families are taught at the Early Stages in East End to help the pupils learn and remember how to form each letter correctly in a fun way:
- ◆ Small Guys—these letters only reach half way between two lines and sit on the bottom line (c, a, n)
- ◆ Tall Guys—these letters touch the top and the bottom lines (l, h, k),
- ◆ Fall Guys - these letters sit their tummies on the bottom line and have a tail that falls beneath the line (g, y, j)
- ◆ Odd Guys—letters that don't sit in just one group; for example, 'f' is a Tall and a Fall Guy or a 't' is the 'teenager' which is bigger than a Small Guy but not as big as a Tall Guy.

