

HOW YOU CAN HELP WITH EARLY WRITING

- * Encourage your child to help 'sign' any birthday, Get Well or Christmas cards you are sending. Make them proud to be able to write their name well!
- * Show them how to write the names of family members and pets.
- * Have some fun with letter formation: Give your child a paintbrush and a pot of water and let them practise letter shapes on the dry path outside.
- * If you have sand at home, encourage them to write letter shapes—mistakes can be easily smoothed over!
- * Use chalkboards and look out for washable paints and felt tips.
- * Let them see when you are writing, to know the relevance of it—shopping lists, addressing envelopes, etc.

Stow Primary School

Helping with Writing



Early Level Emergent Writing

Learning to control a pencil is really hard for young children. To do it, they need to develop hand-eye co-ordination and to build up the muscles and control in the hands. They also need to be able to co-ordinate their arms and shoulders. Lots of games help in this development—not only the more obvious ones such as bead-threading, bricks, jigsaws, but also throwing and catching games you can play together. Even letting them do up their own zips and buttons when dressing will improve their skills.

Learning Letter Formation

It is very important that a child holds their pencil in the correct way.



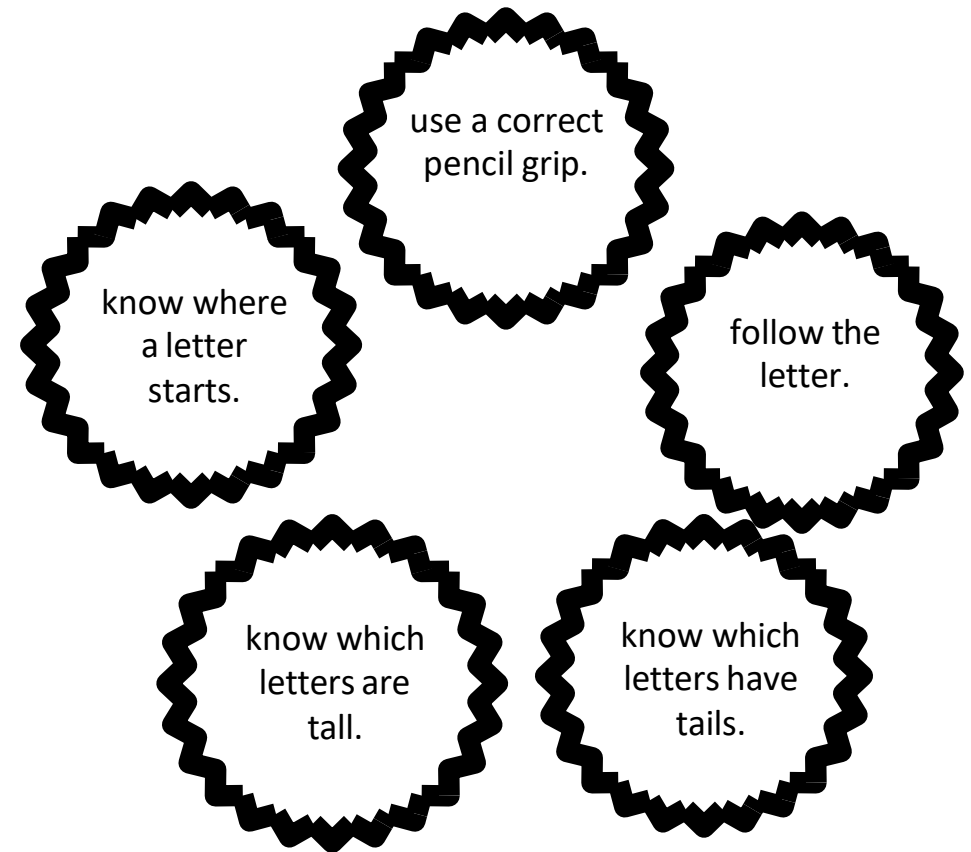
The pencil should be held in the 'tripod' grip between the thumb and first two fingers. The grip is the same for both left and right-handed children. If a child's hold starts incorrectly, it is very difficult to correct later on.

A child needs to form each letter the correct way. The letter *c* is introduced in the early stages as this forms the basic shape of some other letters, such as *d*.

Particular problems to look for are:

- * the *o* (the pencil stroke must be anti-clockwise, not clockwise),
- * *d* (the pencil starts in the middle, not the top),
- * *m* and *n* (there must be an initial downstroke, or the letter *m* looks like the McDonald's arches).

This is the script we use:



A few points to bear in mind:

Children have to rely on their memory to write letters. This means that nearly all children reverse letters at first, or miss letters out altogether. Also, it may look uneven or wobbly in the early months — this too is quite usual.

Children who are corrected too often and put under pressure often lose interest altogether.

Left handed children sometimes benefit from writing on a slight slope, and from the chance to work on a large scale.