

Develop your Child's Handwriting Skills

Handwriting skills are crucial to a successful and satisfying educational experience. Whether forming numbers in math class or writing an essay, handwriting skills will serve your child immeasurably in school and beyond.

Handwriting is a basic, vital skill that can be overlooked in school much more easily than you might imagine. Sometimes a child's handwriting is all but ignored, unless it's completely illegible. But good handwriting can be a real asset in the adult world. If your child has really messy handwriting, or if it's not bad but you'd like to see it improve, here are some fun ways to get your child to practice handwriting and provide a sense of comfort and familiarity with letters.

The Chalkboard

Make a chalkboard at home. You can buy special paint so you can paint one right on the wall. Give your child some chalk and encourage him to use letters in his drawings. Using the home chalkboard will give him a positive association with the one in his classroom.

Finger painting

Handwriting with a fixed number of letters that need to be formed in a certain way can be confining. An outlet for free form exploration of shapes and colors is important. Finger painting is fun, therapeutic and a chance to be messy!

Sculpture

Fitting letters inside the lines involves special relationship skills. Sculpture will help your child explore representation in 3-D. This can be helpful in developing a sense of space and how it can be used.

The Jungle Gym

Writing involves a certain amount of hand strength and grasping techniques. Hanging and swinging are natural, fun ways to develop these capacities. The finger coordination necessary to hold a pencil is easier when foundational strength and dexterity is well developed.

Trace It!

Following lines or connecting dots is a great way to strengthen the basic motor skills present in handwriting. Have your child trace shapes from a book. Have your child close his eyes, grasp an object in his hands, then try to draw it on paper without ever seeing it.

Rhythmic writing

A great exercise for practicing cursive letters one at a time. Using your home chalkboard, have your child write the cursive letter 'e' connected continuously. He should keep his feet firmly planted and write the letters from as far as he can reach on the left to as far as he can reach on the right. Then, on the next line, give him another letter. In time you can give him multiple letter turns and eventually whole words.

The Constant Slant

It's better to incorporate the actual slant into the writing style right from the beginning. If your child gets what that letter should look like but has trouble with the cursive slant, get some cursive practice paper with the slant indicated by faint diagonal lines. You can find it in the store or you can make it yourself (just make one original and then photocopy it).