

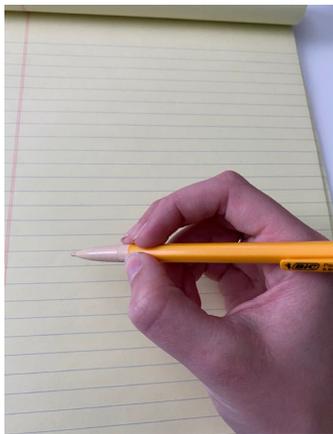
Tips and Tricks to Handwriting!

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Handwriting is an important skill that can quickly become frustrating to your child if they are having difficulty learning these skills. Here are 8 quick tips to work on improving your child's handwriting skills:



1. **Use a visual:** provide a visual example of each of the letters to help with letter formation
2. **Position, position, position:** Try your best to have the child sitting in a 90-90-90 position. This means that the child's hips, knees, and ankles should all be bent at 90 degrees.
3. **Pencil Grasp:** Try to facilitate a tripod grasp on the pencil (see picture below). If your child has difficulty using a tripod grasp, have them hold a pom pom or cotton ball between their 4th and 5th fingers and their palm.



(Tripod Grasp)



(Pom pom to assist with grasp)



(Pom pom while writing)

4. **Size of utensil:** check the size of the utensil the child is writing with. A smaller utensil (e.g. golf pencil or broken crayon) encourage a better grasp.
5. **Using too much or not enough force?:** Use a mechanical pencil! The lead will break if the child is using too much force when writing and will appear too light if the child is not

using enough pressure when writing. The mechanical pencil will reinforce writing with the correct amount of pressure.

6. **Use a sloped or vertical surface:** Having your child write on a vertical surface such as paper taped onto the wall, will oftentimes improve a child's handwriting by assisting with posture, paper positioning, and improving motor control of the writing utensil.

7. **Writing HUGE or tiny letters?** Provide visual boundaries such as drawing a small rectangular box for each letter or using *Wikki Stix* to make a raised line. These additional cues help the child to visualize the size of each letter and feel where the lines on the paper are.

8. **Trouble holding the pencil?** If your child is having difficulty holding onto the writing utensil, you may need to work on increasing hand strength to improve their ability to grasp the writing utensil. Here are some things to try:
 - Pop bubble wrap
 - Squeezing spray bottles
 - Hole punch crafts
 - Tongs/tweezers to pick up small items
 - Play with playdoh

#1 Read at a slow and steady pace: We can often start reading very fast without even realizing it. Make sure you are reading at a pace at which your child can hear each word being said to allow enough processing time.

#2 Have your child point to various items in the pictures: Having the child point to pictures encourages the child to look over the entire page, supports vocabulary development, and builds awareness of items related to the story: Example: "Show me the house.", "Where is the rabbit?", "Point to the baby".

#3 Expand on what your child says relating to the book: Expanding a child's utterance helps the child learn how to produce longer utterances and provide models of sentence structures. Example: (Child says: "bird fly") (Adult would say: "The bird is flying in the sky").

#4 Use descriptors to talk about pictures: Descriptors aid in building vocabulary and understanding basic concepts: Example: name objects/items (house, car), actions (wave, leap, skip), locations (above, next to, under), functions (A stove is used for cooking), emotion ("She looks angry."), and time (early/late).

#5 Re-read books: Children will continue to learn new things or gain further understanding from reading the same book multiple times. Some children get to a point of memorization of books that they will pretend to be reading while saying the story from memory. This supports pre-reading skills!

#6 Trace under the words with your finger: Tracing under the words builds awareness that there is a word for everything you are saying. This also builds understanding that text is read left to right and top to bottom.

#7 Ask questions while reading: Asking questions will help engage the child in the text and aid in comprehension of the story: yes/no, who?, what?, where?, when?, why?, which?, and how?

#8 Make predictions: Ask your child what they think is going to happen next, this builds reasoning skills and awareness of story sequences (beginning, middle, end).

#9 Talk about the story after you are done reading: Have child share opinion (like/dislike/etc.), talk about the characters/setting/problem/solution to build understanding of story structures.

#10 Reference the book in daily life: Help your child make personal connections to the story.

References:

Handwriting for Kids: Tips and Strategies (n.d.) Retrieved on April 28, 2020 from <https://theinspiredtreehouse.com/>

Handwriting (n.d.) Retrieved on April 28, 2020 from <https://www.toolstogrowot.com/>