



Supporting with Writing at home

Writing is part of every aspect of your child's life and while children do lots of literacy based activities at school (e.g. English, Handwriting, Phonics), there are lots of ways that you can support your child at home. Here are a few ideas for making writing fun and meaningful at home and improving achievement levels at school.

1. Talking

The basis of all good writing is knowing lots of words and being able to join them together in interesting ways. If children are not able to form clear, interesting sentences in conversation then they are unable to write them.

Engage in conversation with your child, encourage them to:

- Explain a game or activity that they are doing,
- Describe a person, place, picture or thing they can see
- Retell stories you have read together or that they have read at school
- Talk about things they have done e.g. visits, day at school - encourage them to add detail and explain particular points
- Predict what might happen next in a story they are reading or program they are watching
- Use an increasing range of words e.g. If your child describes something as 'big' you can reply with "Yes, you are right that is *ginormous!*"

3. Be a role writing role model

Ensure that your child sees you writing for real purposes and encourage them to write alongside you e.g. Shopping lists, calendars, birthday cards, postcards.

Have an exciting selection of writing materials available e.g. a range of pencils, pens, coloured crayons, notebooks and papers.

Praise your child for trying and don't dwell on mistakes. Focus on content and enjoyment of writing for fun and for purpose.

Encourage children to look at print around them; on road signs, food packets, in books, magazines and catalogues as this helps them to understand the purpose of writing.

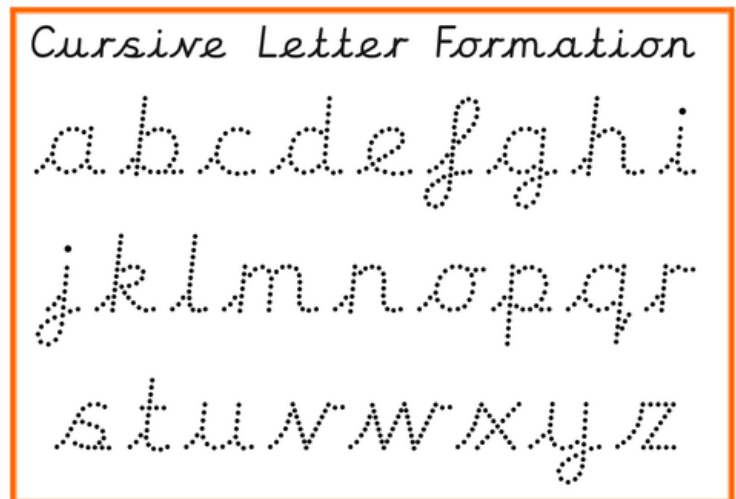
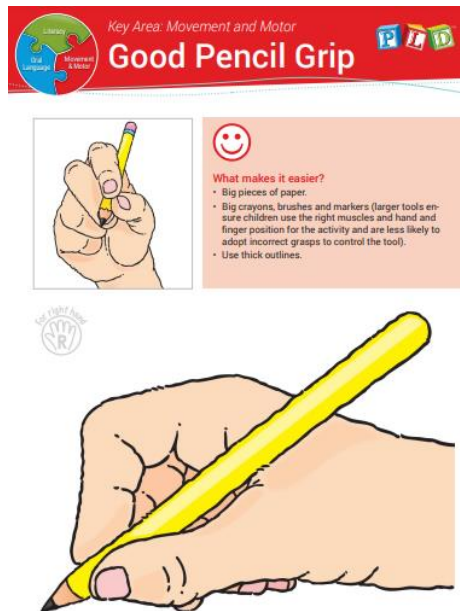
4. Handwriting

Handwriting is a crucial part of writing as it is important that others are able to read what we have written.

Before being able to confidently write using a pencil children need to first develop their fine and gross motor skills. In order to support your child in developing their gross motor skills (control and strength in large body movements) you can encourage them in activities such as **throwing and catching soft balls or beanbags, chalking or water painting on walls outside, climbing on a climbing frame, digging or swinging from monkey bars**. To develop their fine motor skills (control and strength in

smaller body movements) you can support your child by providing activities such as **threading, playdough, Lego/Duplo, colouring and using scissors as well as fastening buttons and zips.**

When children are competent in holding writing tools comfortably and effectively they need to practise forming letters correctly, this is important as it ensures their writing is readable and that they are able to write longer pieces comfortably as they become older. At school we use cursive script for handwriting. Encourage your child to form letters correctly when they write and to use lower case print unless starting a sentence or writing the initial letter of a name.



5. Become an author

Why not have some storytelling fun and encourage your child by inventing stories together and supporting them to write them down.

A good way to begin is by orally telling '**Five sentence stories**' simply complete the five sentences:

Once upon a time.....
One Day.....
Suddenly.....
Luckily.....
Finally.....

This helps children to think of and say their sentence before they write it down and can be developed by adding more detail and description as children become more confident.