

Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	4
SERIES OVERVIEW.....	6
USING THE BOOK.....	8
USING THE CD-ROM	9
RIGHT-HANDED WRITERS	10
LEFT-HANDED WRITERS	12
JOINING.....	14

Chapter 2

Patterning

INTRODUCTION	25
STRAIGHT DOWN SHAPES	26
DOWN, UP AND OVER SHAPES.....	30
UP, BACKWARDS AND AROUND SHAPES ...	34
ZOOMING SHAPES	38

Chapter 4

Capitals and numbers

INTRODUCTION	84
CAPITALS 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D'	85
CAPITALS 'E', 'F', 'G', 'H'	91
CAPITALS 'I', 'J', 'K', 'L'	97
CAPITALS 'M', 'N', 'O', 'P'	103
CAPITALS 'Q', 'R', 'S', 'T'	109
CAPITALS 'U', 'V', 'W', 'X'	115
CAPITALS 'Y', 'Z'.....	121
NUMBERS 1-10.....	125

Chapter 1

Motor skills

INTRODUCTION	16
GROSS MOTOR SKILLS AND CROSSING THE MIDLINE	17
PROPRIOCEPTION	18
VISUAL PERCEPTION	19
FINE MOTOR PRACTICAL EXERCISES.....	21
FINE MOTOR PAPER EXERCISES.....	22
GENERAL FINE MOTOR PATTERNING EXERCISES.....	23
WARM-UP EXERCISES	24

Chapter 3

Introducing letters

INTRODUCTION	42
INTRODUCING THE LETTER STORIES.....	43
LETTERS 's', 'a', 't', 'p'	46
LETTERS 'i', 'n', 'm', 'd'	52
LETTERS 'g', 'o', 'c', 'k'.....	58
LETTERS 'e', 'u', 'r', 'h'.....	64
LETTERS 'b', 'f', 'l', 'j', 'q'.....	70
LETTERS 'v', 'w', 'x', 'y', 'z'.....	77

Chapter 5

Joining

INTRODUCTION	137
ALTERNATIVE FORMS.....	138
END-LOW DIAGONAL JOINS	140
END-LOW DROP-ON JOINS	151
END-HIGH HORIZONTAL JOINS	156
END-HIGH DIAGONAL JOINS	160
END-HIGH DROP-ON JOINS	164
END-HIGH TO 'e'.....	168
TRICKY JOINS.....	171

Chapter 1

Motor skills

Introduction

Handwriting is a form of communicating verbal language which others can understand by means of permanent, visible marks, produced using an instrument controlled by motor skill.

Not all children will be ready to write when you first meet them. To become ready, children need good cognitive, linguistic, perceptual, proprioceptive motor skills (see page 18) and the ability to cross the midline of their bodies. Weaknesses in any of these may inhibit fluency, cause heavy pressure and reduce speed.

Children utilise their whole bodies when writing and they need to use both gross and fine motor skills. Along with coordinated movements of finger, thumb, wrist and elbow, children need to develop stabilisation of hip, trunk, shoulder girdle and neck. A stable hip and trunk, along with strong core muscles, enables children to sit up straight; a stable shoulder girdle supports efficient hand movements; good neck stability promotes easy copying from the board; strong arm muscles support the wrist and, lastly, strong finger and thumb muscles support easy, pain-free manipulation of the pencil.

This chapter addresses the above perceptual, proprioceptive, motor and midline skills that children need to develop to achieve handwriting fluency. It provides assessment guidelines and different activities covering all of the above skills. You start these activities before the children begin to write, and spend approximately 20 minutes a day on them during their initial writing development. There is no prescribed order through this chapter, you should assess the children's needs and focus on particular areas that they need to develop.

Warm-up exercises, that you can use prior to the handwriting activities set out later in this book, are suggested on page 24.

In this chapter

Gross motor skills and crossing the midline page 17	Activities to promote whole body strength and crossing the midline of the body.
Proprioception page 18	Activities to promote the sense of the orientation of one's limbs in space.
Visual perception page 19	Activities to promote good visual discrimination.
Fine motor practical exercises page 21	Activities to promote finger strength.
Fine motor paper exercises page 22	Activities to promote finger strength.
General fine motor patterning exercises page 23	Activities to promote finger strength.
Warm-up exercises page 24	Activities to warm up fingers and hands before writing.

Gross motor skills and crossing the midline

Background knowledge

Whole body (gross motor) strength is required in the production of effortless, speedy handwriting as well as the ability to pass the pencil from left to right over the page (crossing the midline). The midline is an imaginary line dividing the left and right side of the body. Being able to cross it, with one hand only, is integral to the development of fluency, speed and ability to position letters on the writing line.

Instability in:

- the trunk of the body (core) may result in pain in shoulders and neck (by leaning too far forwards).
- the shoulder girdle may result in messy writing.
- the hip may result in difficulty in sitting still.
- the neck may result in difficulties copying from the board.
- the wrist may result in hooking when writing and the whole hand being used, which affects speed and could cause pain.

Use attainment in PE lessons as part of your gross motor assessments. Can children can run, jump, skip and hop to age-appropriate levels?

Children who have difficulty with crossing the midline of their body may experience difficulties writing across the page from left to right and keeping on the line at the same time. Ask the children to draw a large body-sized 'lazy eight' (a figure eight on its side) on the playground wall or whiteboard to assess if they have difficulty with crossing their midline.

If the children display any gross or midline-crossing difficulties, choose from the following activities and aim to do at least one from each section a day.

Activities

- **Art:** Large sweeping strokes when painting will help to build core muscle, arm strength and stabilise shoulder girdle. Using a hammer, mallet or sawing will also help.
- **Music:** Practise playing instruments such as drums, xylophone or piano (which will also develop fine motor skills).

Shoulder and/or wrist activities

- 'Donkey kicks' – kneel on all fours and kick one leg backwards at a time.
- Press-ups against a wall.
- Pouring from one cup to another.
- Egg and spoon races.
- Any activity where the wrist is in contact with a surface when fingers are active.
- Wheelbarrow walking – one child supports another child's legs while they walk on their hands.
- Push-ups.
- Lift weights when on all fours.

Hip activities

- Kicking a ball.
- Jumping and hopping.
- Wheelbarrow races.
- Crab walking.

Whole-body activities

- Running.
- Climbing on frames, swinging on monkey bars.
- Racket and ball games.
- Throwing and catching.
- Swimming.
- Rowing.
- Skipping.
- Hopscotch.
- Movements in dance and drama.
- Playing on a see-saw.
- Tug of war.
- Using dance streamers.

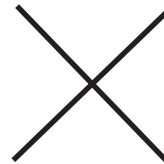
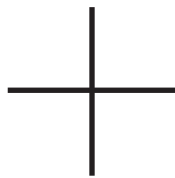
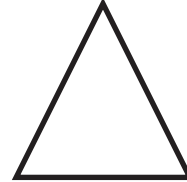
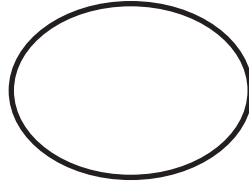
- Using cheerleader pompoms.
- Keeping a large balloon in the air.
- Parachute activities.
- Opening jars or boxes.
- Pumping up balloons.

Midline activities

- Target throwing at objects placed to right or left (keeping feet still).
- The game of 'Twister'®.
- Large drawings that encourage the hand to sweep across the body (on the floor, walls, desk, blackboard, whiteboard or easel).
- 'Simon says' using actions that cross the midline such as right hand to left ear.
- Clapping hands – diagonal clapping, crossing arms, changing sequence.
- Turning book pages.
- Tying shoelaces, putting on socks (crossing midline, so on the juxtaposed foot).
- Getting dressed using right hand to put on left sleeve and vice versa.
- Using one hand to reach for objects positioned on the other side of the body midline.

Motor skills**Shape tracking**

- Copy these shapes in the spaces underneath.



- Do not move the worksheet and keep your pencil on the paper when you copy these shapes.

