Handwriting Practice

* **Posture** – Sit correctly with feet flat on the floor and bottom to the back of the chair. Hips, knees and feet at 90 degree angle. Use prompt card.
* **Paper/book position** – Angled at 20-45 degrees slightly offset to the midline (To right for right-handers). Are shoulders relaxed with forearms resting on the table? Move paper/book up as you write rather than arm. Rest non-writing hand on edge of paper to stabilise.
* **Pencil grip** – Hold with tripod grip. No need to change an unusual pencil grasp if it is effective, consistent and comfortable. Hold on the barrel to prevent writing being obscured. Holding too close to the tip may also restrict fine motor movements. Encourage left-handers to hold at least 2cm from point. Coloured tape or rubber band on the barrel could be used.

**Multi-sensory methods**

* + - Practise large letters on vertical before horizontal if available
    - Trace over letters
    - Write letters in air using whole arm movement
    - Practise on whiteboards – Within squares; eyes open; eyes closed
    - Sand – Adult to form letter and pupil to trace over using upside down pencil

**General tips**

* + - Finger spacing
    - Provide visual prompt – start point, directional arrow
    - Question - Where do you start – main body of letter should sit on the line
    - Self evaluate – pupil selects best letter formation out of whole line by circling. Ask why – tall enough, long enough etc
    - Self evaluate – use a ruler along the top body of a letter and see how many are the right size
    - Capital letters always stand alone – used at the beginning of sentences and for proper nouns
    - Tall letters – above the line, long letters below the line
    - Use fingers and wrist rather than whole arm/shoulder

**Games**

Sensory letter. Played in pairs or with up to 4 children. All sit in a row facing the front. Pupil at the back is shown a letter and has to finger draw it on the back of the pupil in front. Front pupil then writes letter on a piece of paper. Swap round.

Feely bag. Guess a letter by its shape in a feely bag.

**Hand exercises**

Shake, flap or rotate hands

Fingertip presses on table top

Clench fists and release with alternate hands

Walk fingertips along the desk

Touch thumb to finger as quickly as possible – can do with hands out at sides

Exercise thumb and index finger joints by making a circle, then the shape of a bird’s beak.