Handwriting warm-ups
Home program

What are handwriting warm-ups?

Writing is a “total body activity.” Handwriting warm-ups are activities that “wake up” the arms and hands so that the child’s body is best prepared to practice writing.

**Note:** Typical pencil placement is between the thumb and first finger with remaining fingers bent underneath the pencil.

How can I help my child?

The following checked activities could help prepare a child for writing.

This home program should be used only under the guidance of an occupational therapist.

Do the warm-up activities first and then follow immediately with exercises to practice learning letters.

These activities should be done as often as possible, daily if time permits.

Chewing may help your child focus with handwriting tasks. Offer something resistive like chewy candy, a granola bar, or sugarless gum when doing handwriting or table activities. This should not be done during a physical activity, to avoid choking.

To “wake up” arms and prepare them for writing, do the following:

- □ Tug-of-war
- □ Play on monkey bars.
- □ Use a playground glider.
- □ See the education sheet “Arm and hand strengthening: Home program” for more ideas.

To “wake-up” hands and prepare them for writing, do the following:

- □ Use a dry washcloth and “wash” hands vigorously, especially between all fingers.
- □ Have fun with Play-Doh®: Push and press with individual fingers, especially thumb and first finger, and then all fingers. Push small items such as paper clips, coins, and pegs into the Play-Doh® and then find the hidden object.
- □ Place elbows on desk or table and squeeze hands together to the count of 5, relax, and squeeze again. Repeat 5 times.
- □ With both hands, tap thumb and first finger together 10 to 15 times.
Practice writing letters with the following activities:

☐ Write letters in the air using large arm movements with first 2 fingers extended. Or while holding a flashlight in a darken area, write letters on the wall while moving the light.

☐ Hold the student’s hand and move it to form a letter. Ask the child to guess which letter is being made.

☐ Have child trace over letters to practice forming them correctly.

☐ Write with a variety of tools and materials: using chalk, in carpet, sand, shaving cream, and so on. Even writing on the chalkboard or sidewalk chalk is another idea.

Special instructions


Questions?

This home program is to be used only under the guidance of an occupational therapist. If you have any problems with this home program, or any questions, please call your therapist in the Developmental and Rehabilitation Services Department.

___________________________________________________________________________

Therapist signature

___________________________________________________________________________

Date

___________________________________________________________________________

Phone

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