

Handwriting in the Early Years and Key Stage One



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develop skills
for early
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Stage 1





01

How to
develop skills
for early
writing



Pre-writing skills

Before learning to write the conventional way, a child needs to have the strength, dexterity (the ability to handle small objects), and good sensory information.

Provide activities that help develop the strength in the children's hands (finger gym activities.)



Hand eye coordination

Provide activities that help develop the child's hand-eye coordination



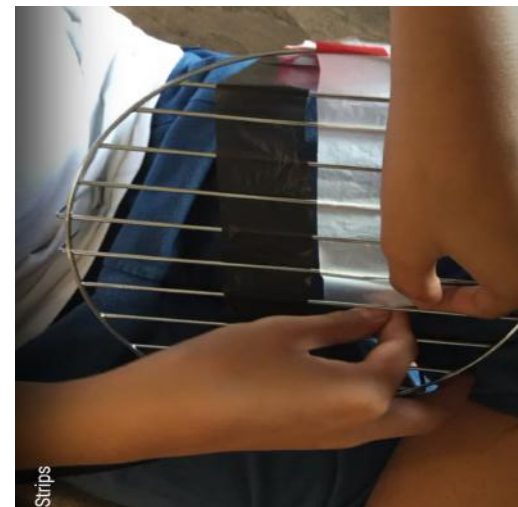
Hand eye coordination



Cut and stick activities



Throw and catching



Weaving

Fine Motor Skills



Cutting with scissors



Playing with large tweezers



Colouring



Washing toys

Fine Motor Skills



Construction toys



Designing with small loose parts



Threading

Malleables



Slime



Playdough



Plasticine and clay



02

Early Writing in
Early years



Early Mark Making

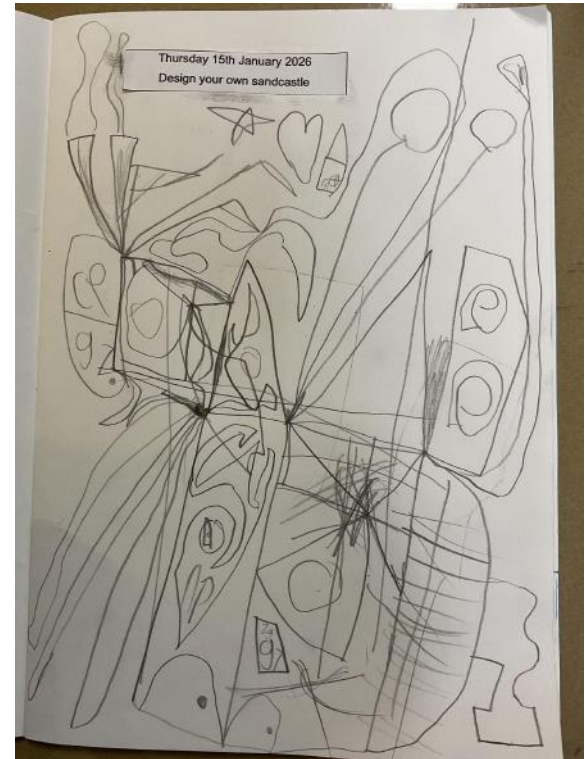
Scribble Stage

- A child in the scribble stage is usually around 2 to 4 years old.
- Early mark making is more of a sensory physical experience.
- Children like to scribble because it gives them a chance to move their arms around freely.



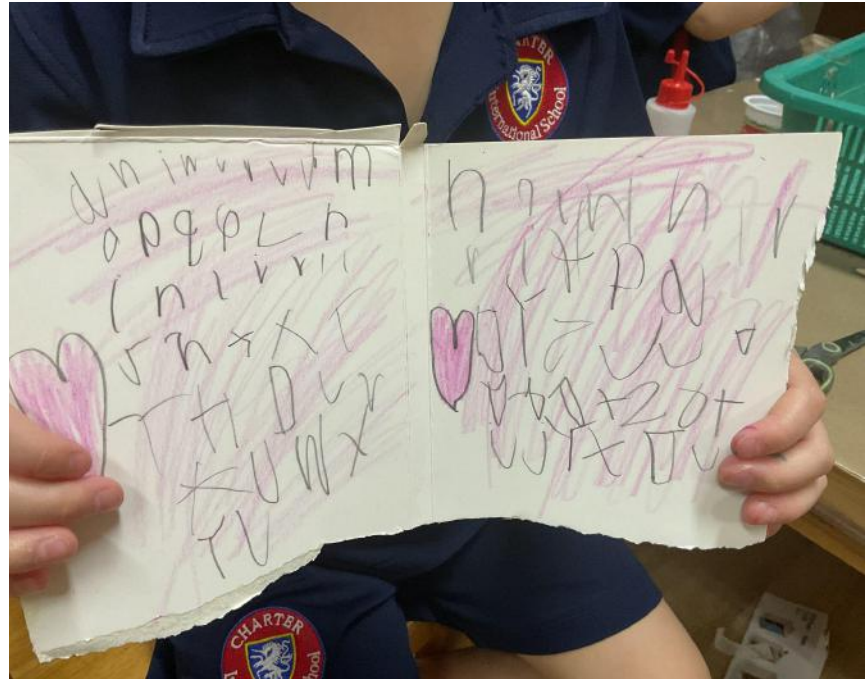
Pre-Schematic Stage (around the age of 3-5)

- Enjoy **repeating movements** (back-and-forth, spirals, zigzags)
- Hold tools in a variety of ways (often whole-hand grip)
Say their marks “**say something**” even if adults can’t see meaning yet
- Mix drawing and writing with **no clear difference** between the two



Schematic Stage (around the age of 3-5)

A book made in the junk modelling creative corner



Ideas to encourage letter formation and Mark Making

- Bending and forming play dough into letters
- Baking cookies in different letter shapes
- Large chinks on chalkboard or outside floor
- Writing letters in shaving cream, foam, sand flour, etc.
- Writing huge letters in the air with fingers in the air



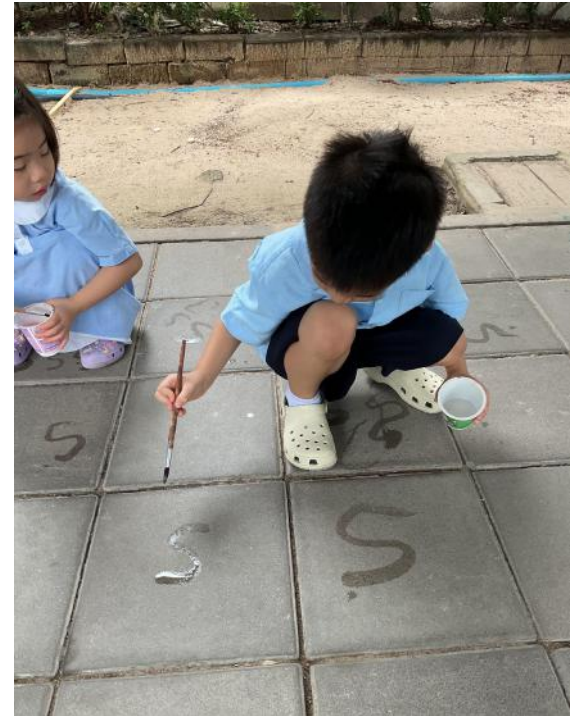
Mark Making

- Making letters with noodles
- Finger painting
- Providing a variety of mark making instruments, pencils, glitter pens, colourful markers



Mark Making

- Writing secret messages with wax candles reveal with paint.
- Painting on outside wall or pathway using water and a brush



Writing in Reception

- Writing starts in Reception with writing of own name
- This may be using sensory play rather than a pencil



Letter formation

As we progress through our Twinkl phonics programme, letter formation is taught using simple rhymes. Writing is supported through a range of engaging approaches, including:

- Using our “magic writing finger” to form letters in the air
- Exploring sensory materials such as sand, shaving foam, and glitter
- Mark making with marker pens, glitter pens, and chalk
- Using iPad apps such as *Writing Wizard*
- Alphabet crafts

Letter formation

Write It, Feel It

Around Gabi's head and wrap her scarf.

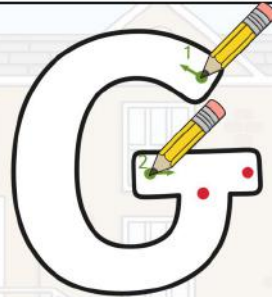


Play



Write the Capital Letter

Start at the top and make a curve like a c,
But add a little shelf on the end, you see?



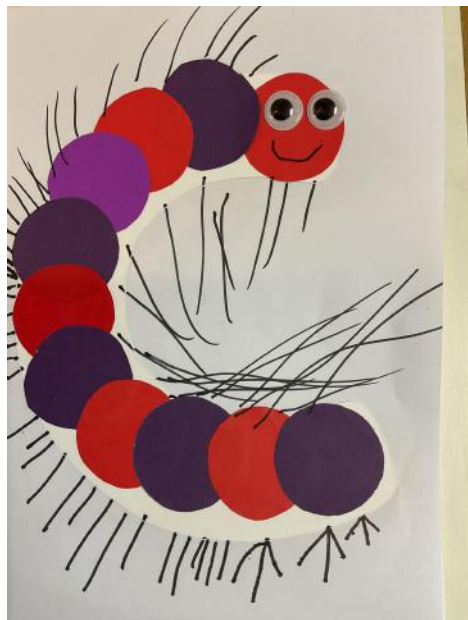
Play



Correct letter formation using little rhymes



Letter formation



Crafts

iPad apps - Writing wizard

Tracing over letters



Letter formation - Media



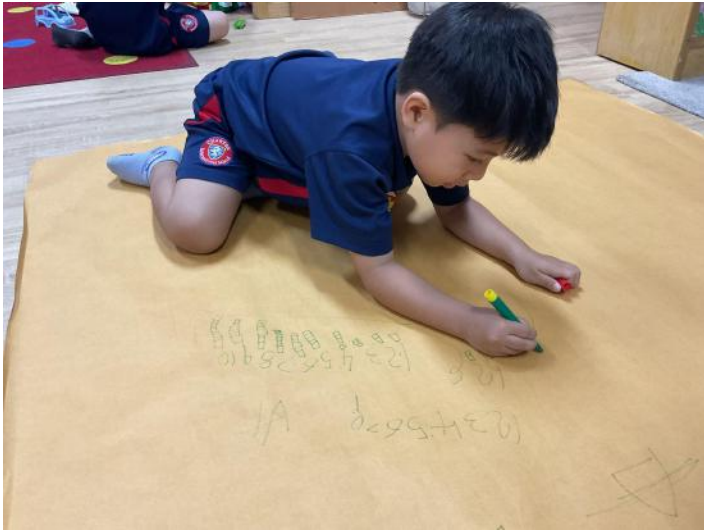
Drawing pads



Laminated sleeves



Letter formation - Media



Writing on large pieces of paper on the floor



Interactive whiteboard

Time to try!

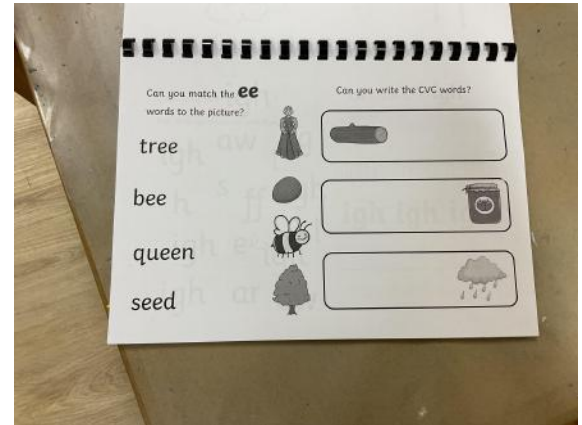
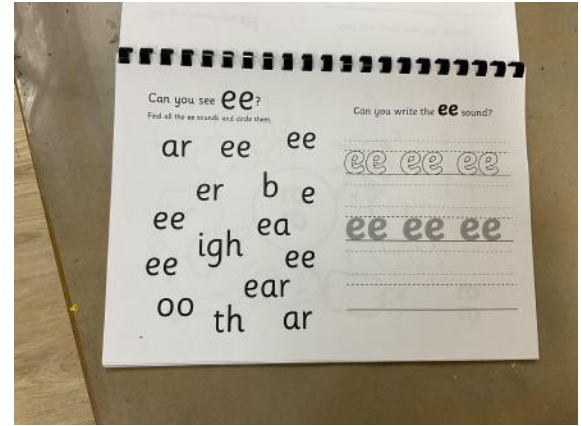
Hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills :

Wooden puzzles
Threading
Linking
Weaving
Flower arranging
Stamping in the circles
Lego
Bubble wrap

Letter formation skills:

Writing in glitter with paint brushes
Writing wizard iPads
Playdough mats
Shaving foam writing
Drawing pads
Tuff spot with chalk and paintbrushes

Handwriting with pencil and paper

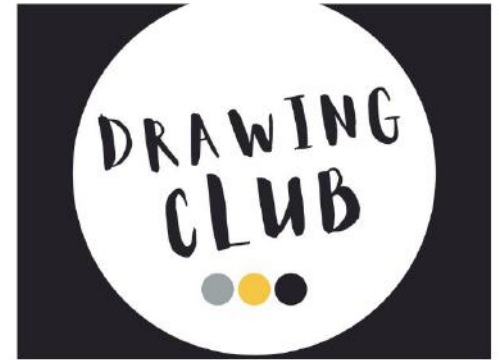


The Drawing Club - by Greg Botrill

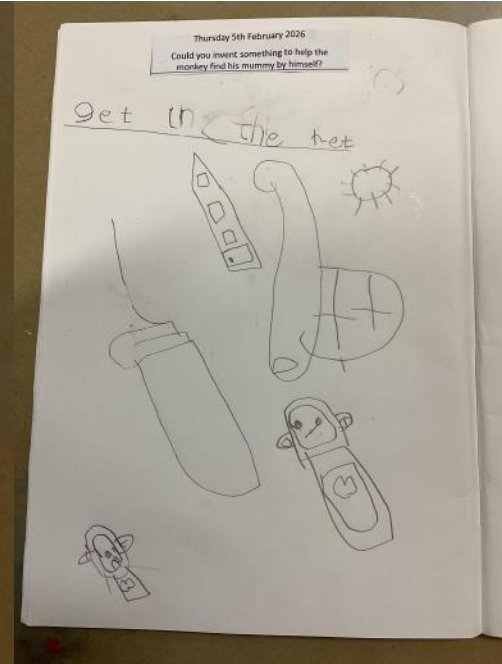
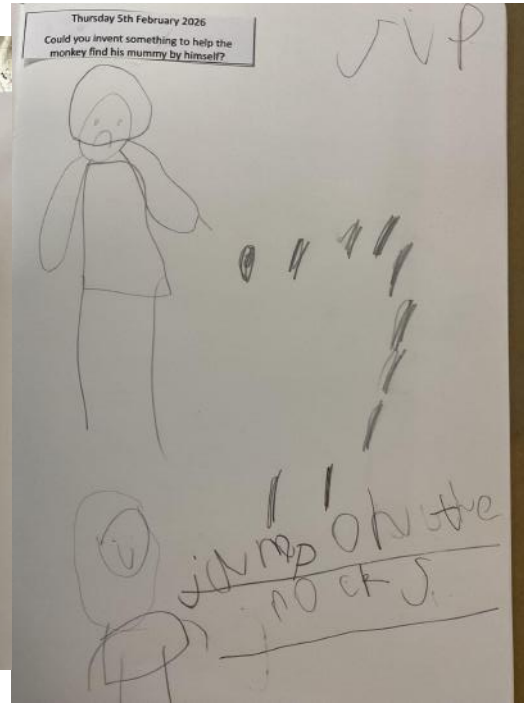
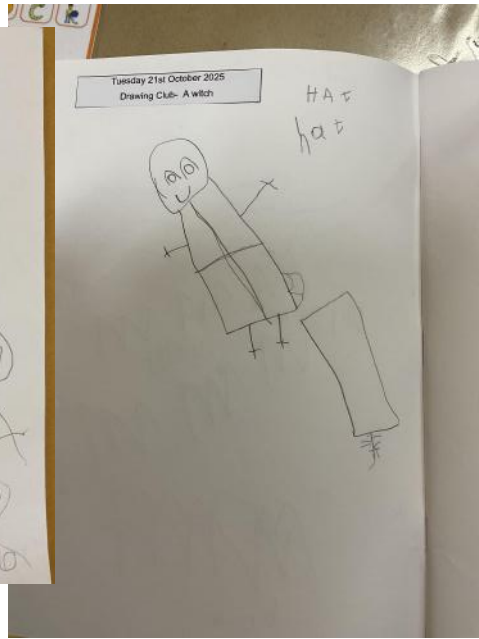
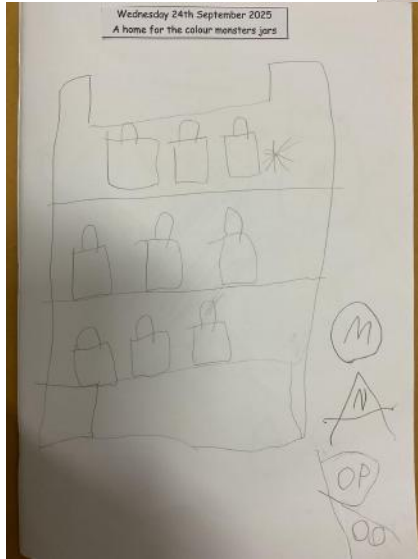
- Explore exciting, high-quality stories
- Learn and use rich new vocabulary
- Draw imaginative characters and adventures
- Add “magic codes” (marks, letters, words) to support early writing
- Develop creativity, confidence and fine motor skills

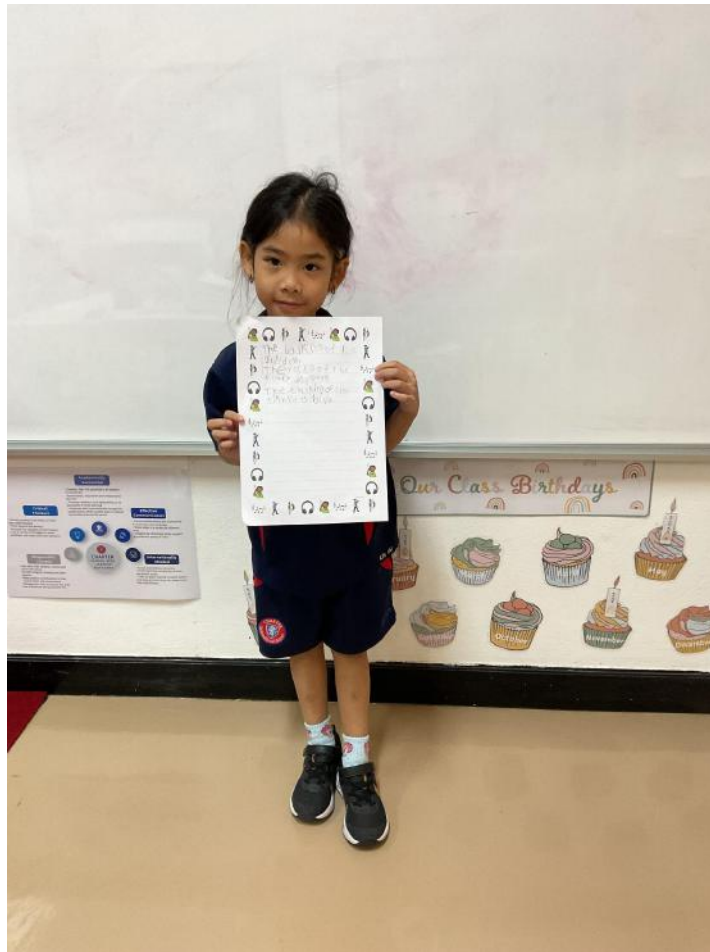
In Reception, 3 times per week:

- Character
- Setting
- Adventure time



The Drawing Club - by Greg Botrill





03

Writing in Key Stage One



How handwriting develops in KS1



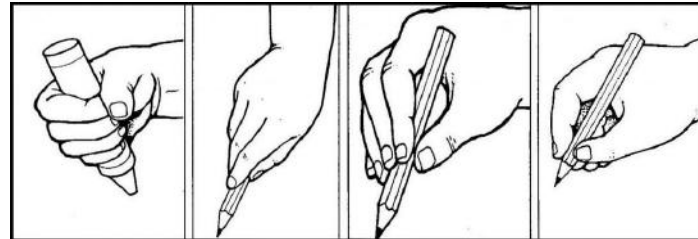
Our focus in KSI

- Correct pencil grip
- Good posture and paper position
- Letter formation and starting points
- Consistency before speed



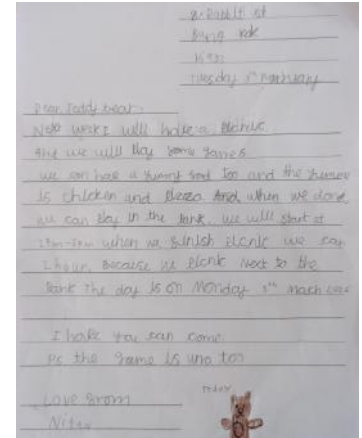
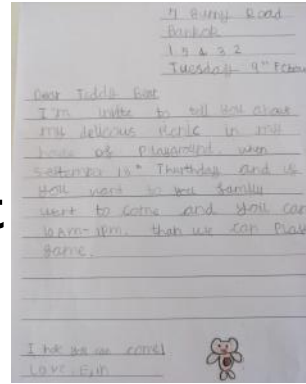
Pencil Grip - The Key Information

- Dynamic tripod grip is encouraged
- Important to understand some grips are developmental
- Pencil grips can be used to support development



Cursive Writing - The Key Information

- Introduced towards the end of year one
- Built on secure letter formation first
- Supports writing fluency and stamina
- Not all letters join immediately
- Accuracy and confidence come before neat joins



Letter-join

- Patterns
- Easy letters
- Easy words
- Harder letters
- Harder words
- Letter families
- More...
- Phonics
- Fun
- Resources
- Info

Choose a letter to watch

i l t u w e

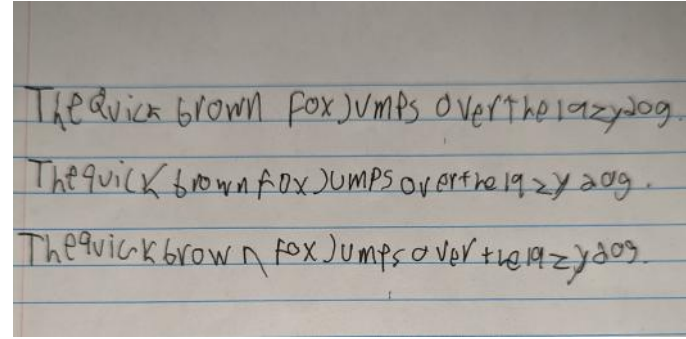
c o a d n m h

a b c d e

Practise Joins

Common Handwriting Challenges

- Accuracy comes first
- Speed develops naturally over time
- Rushing leads to poor habits
- Letter reversals
- Inconsistent size
- Floating or sinking letters
- Tired hands



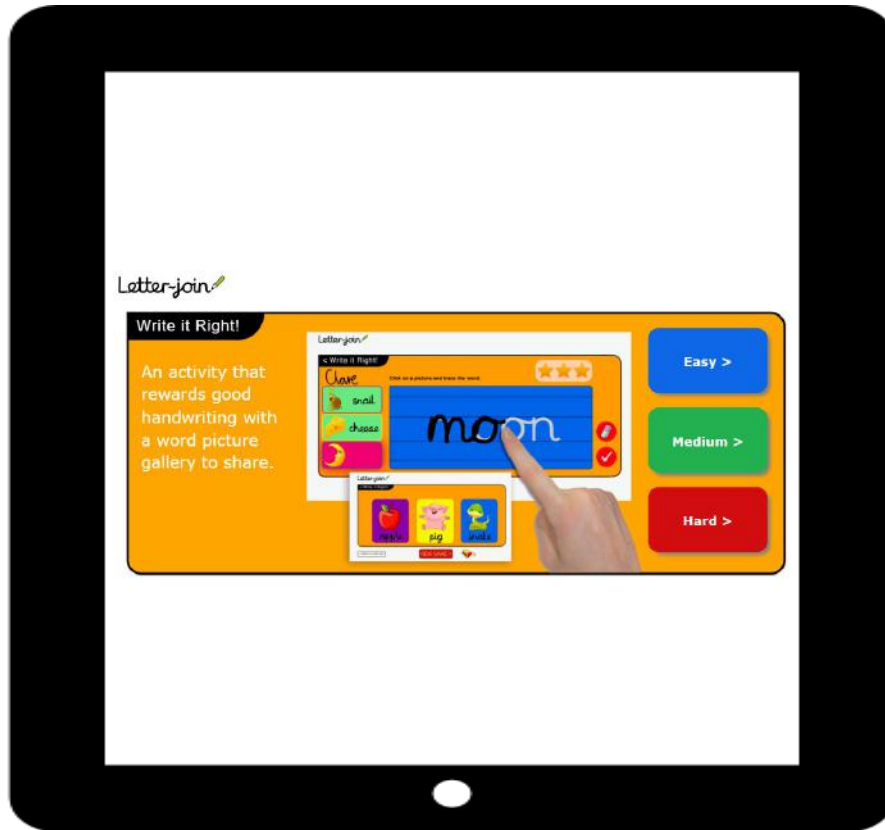
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flew at a soo.

How to Help at Home

- Short, regular practice (5-10 minutes)
- Focus on effort and formation
- Handwriting sheets
- Tracing shapes or patterns
- Using phonics and handwriting applications



Time to try!



Key Handwriting Takeaways

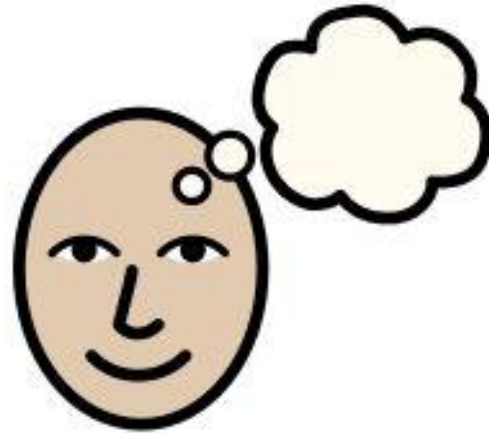
- Encourage **correct letter formation first** before focusing on joins
- Use the **same letter shapes and style** that are taught at school
- Practise little and often, **5–10 minutes is enough**
- Focus on **smooth, continuous movements**, not speed
- Praise **effort and improvement**, not just neatness



- Allow children to **lift their pencil when needed**, joins develop gradually
- Stop if hands feel tired or frustrated
- Use **fun activities** such as whiteboards, chalk, sand trays to build confidence
- Avoid correcting every mistake, choose **one focus at a time**
- **Ask the class teacher** if you are unsure which joins or letters to practise



Thank You!



Are there any questions?

