

Talking Matters

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Helping your child to reach their potential



Letter formation

Children learn how to write letters at home and at school. Some children find this task more difficult than others. Some strategies to assist in the development of letter formation include getting children to start writing on the left hand side of the paper and move to the right, encourage use of their free hand to hold the paper steady, use dot-to-dots for correct orientation and shape and use a finger to make spaces between words.



Your child will first need to develop the ability to trace letters that have been pre-drawn. Then they will develop the ability to copy letters next to pre-drawn ones. To draw letters without them pre-drawn to copy, your child will then need to rely on their visual memory. Your child will learn to form letters more quickly if they practice drawing letters that look similar. For example:

- 'Magic C' letters – a c d g o q s
- 'Zigzag' letters – k v w x y z
- 'Down' letters – f i j l t
- 'Bouncing' letters – h m n r p b
- 'Other' letters – u e
- Numbers – 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

It may also be useful to group letters into those that sit on the writing line, those that travel below the writing line and those that travel well above the writing line.

For example:

- Sky letters – b d f h k l t
- Grass letters – a c e i m n o r s u v w x z
- Dirt letters – g j p q y

Alternate activities that can develop the ability to form letters include:

- Tracing/copying/drawing letters in shaving cream with a finger
- Tracing/copying/drawing letters in sand or soil with a finger
- Tracing/copying/drawing letters in plasticine or play dough with a pencil



Strategies:

- Describing how you are drawing while demonstrating will help your child remember the process.
- Instruct your child to start at the top of letters and form the left portion first.
- If your child begins to start letters at the bottom, it is important to correct them and have them repeat the letter. Repeated, correct practice is key to the skill becoming automatic.