

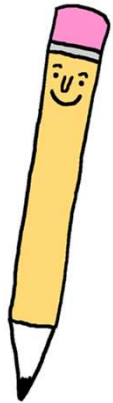


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# Early Writing





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# Early Writing Research

Learning to write is an important, but complex journey all children go on. An important part of learning to write, is learning how to form letters correctly and with speed (handwriting).

Children who find handwriting difficult can find finishing work on time challenging or may try to use as few words as possible when writing.





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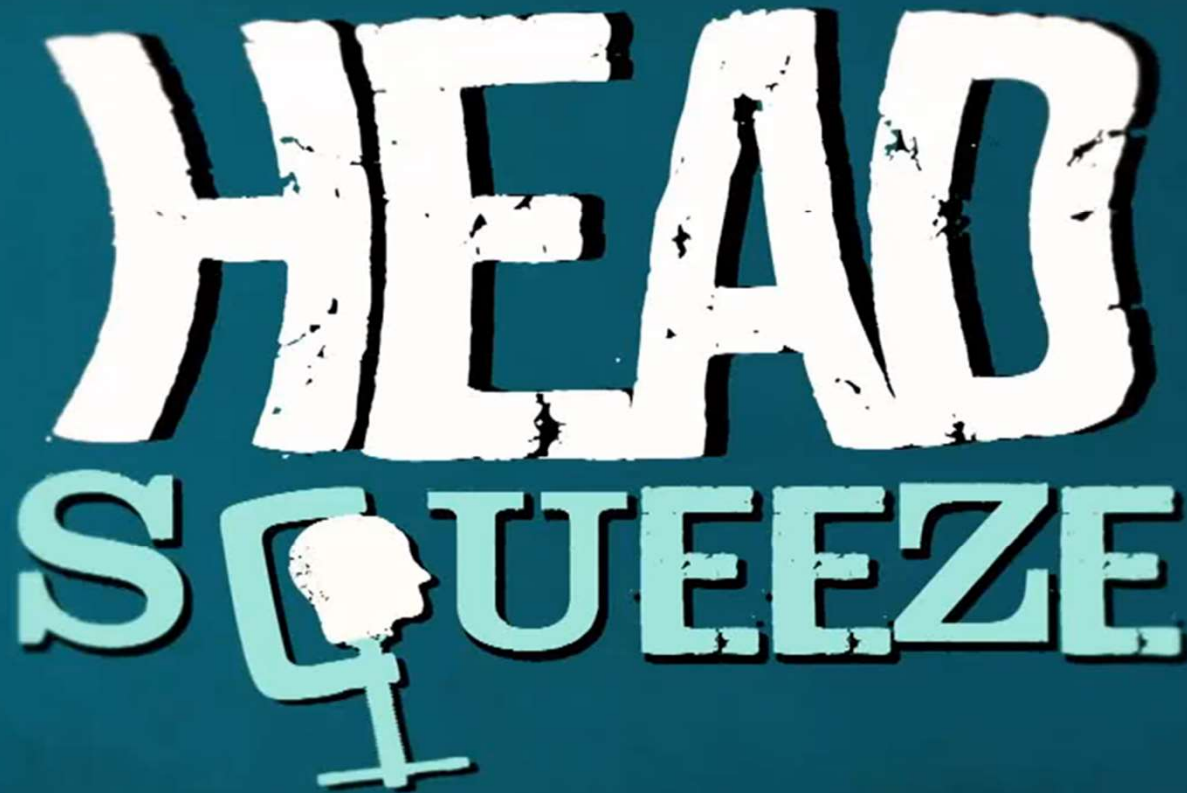
# Early Writing Research

Research has found that inadequate handwriting can impair academic performance throughout primary school. The amount of working memory space which a child has to use when writing can impact their overall writing performance.



*What does working memory mean?*

**HEAD  
SQUEEZE**

The graphic features the words 'HEAD' and 'SQUEEZE' in a bold, distressed, sans-serif font. 'HEAD' is in white with a black outline, while 'SQUEEZE' is in a light blue color with a black outline. The letter 'Q' in 'SQUEEZE' is replaced by a white silhouette of a human head in profile, facing right, with a brain visible inside. The entire graphic is set against a dark teal background.



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# Early Writing Research

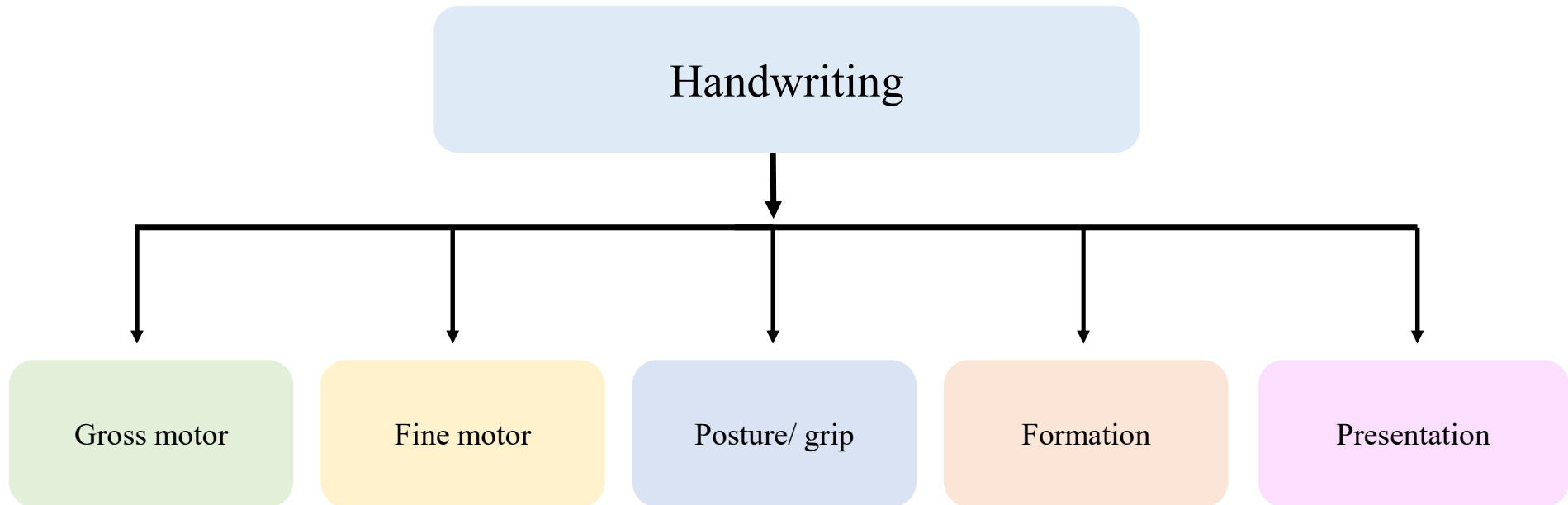
If young writers have to dedicate large amounts of working memory to form letters (handwriting), they may have little working memory left for processes such as generating ideas, vocabulary selection, tracking what they are writing and checking it makes sense. One way to manage the limited amount of working memory within children is to make some processes, such as handwriting, automatic.





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# What does gross motor mean?

Gross motor skills involve whole body movements using a person's legs, arms and torso (trunk). Gross motor skills include everyday acts such as standing, walking, running, jumping and sitting upright at a table.

Gross motor skills also include eye-hand coordination skills such as ball skills (throwing, catching, kicking) as well as riding a bike or scooter.





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# Gross motor

Developing a child's gross motor skills can influence a child's ability to write well and concentrate in the classroom. Children need to have good control of the larger muscles in their neck, shoulder and trunk to use their fingers and hand efficiently to write. As children grow, they develop stability in their trunk which progresses to their elbow, wrist and finally their hand. Taking part in gross motor activities can aid children in developing their handwriting.







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# Gross motor activities



## Visit the park

Encourage your child to run, climb, crawl and swing.



## Ball games

Throwing, catching, kicking, bouncing and rolling games.



## Sand

Encourage your child to dig, rake and fill buckets.



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# Gross motor activities



## **Bubbles**

Encourage your child to pop bubbles using only one hand (meaning they need to stretch across their body).



## **Washing**

Teach your child to complete tasks such as washing the car, pegging up washing or folding up large towels together.



## **Painting**

Paint on the floor or walls using water.



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# Gross motor activities



## Chalk

Draw on the floor or walls outside with chalk (then wash it off).



## Games

Play games such as twister or make an obstacle course at home.



## Races

Have races such as wheelbarrow races, sack races or three-legged races.



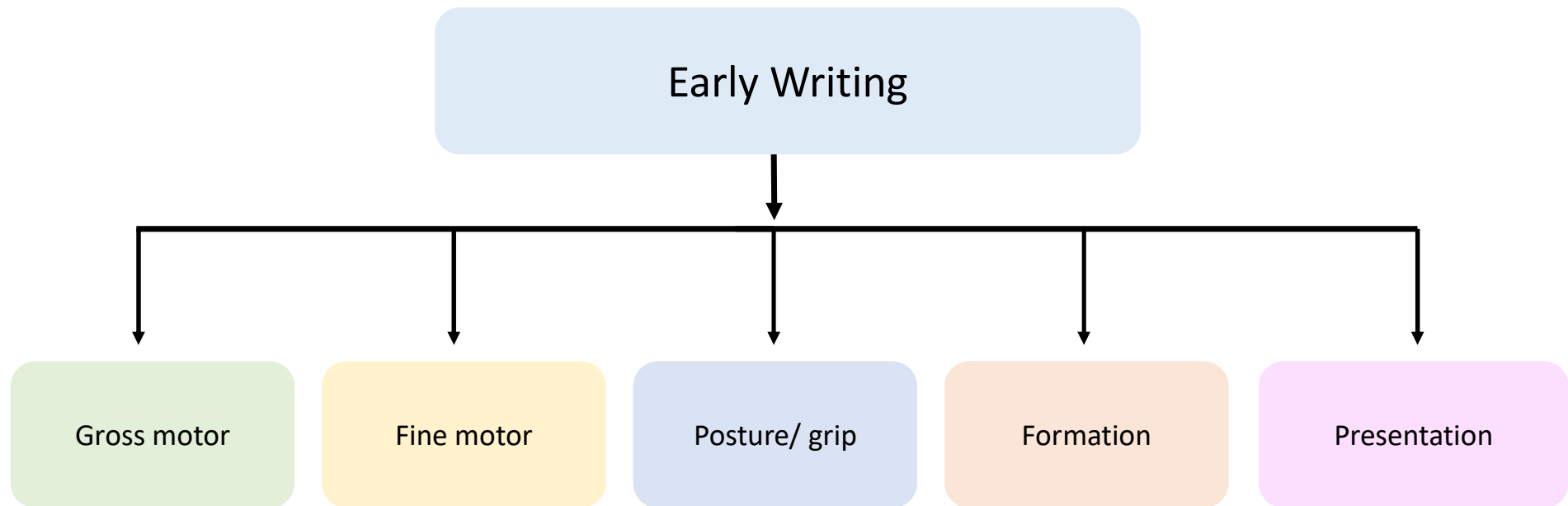
## Gardening

Encourage your child to dig and rake



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# Fine motor

Fine motor skills involve using the smaller muscles of the hands and fingers. Fine motor skills can include using pencils, scissors, construction with lego, doing up buttons and opening lunch boxes.

**Strengthening these skills are important because they directly impact how well a child can write as well as increases their stamina for writing.**





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## *Fine motor activities*



### **Pegs/ tweezers**

Encourage your child to pick up objects using pegs or tweezers



### **Playdough**

Encourage your child to roll, press, stamp and manipulate the playdough using their hands and tools



### **Lego**

Use Lego to build different models



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# Fine motor activities



## **Squeezing**

Encourage your child to squeeze bottles. This could be paint bottles, helping with the washing up, shower gel, moisturiser or sun cream.

## **Buttons and zips**

Allow your child to practise doing up buttons and zips



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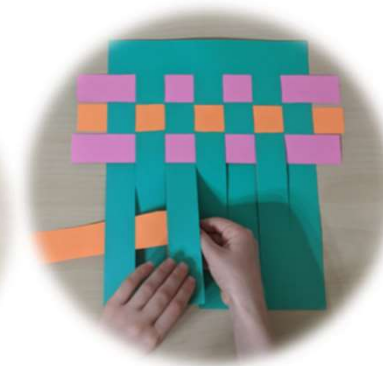
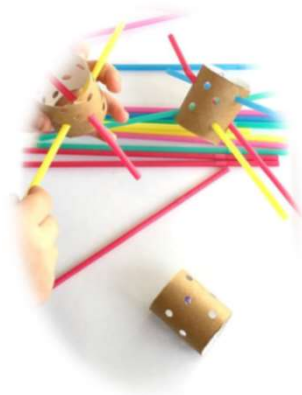
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# Fine motor activities

## Threading/ weaving

- Beads
- Pasta
- Leaves
- Buttons
- Card
- Twigs
- Wool
- Straws







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## *Fine motor activities*

### Arts and crafts

- Colouring
- Cutting
- Gluing
- Peeling sticker
- Ripping paper to make collages
- Picking up small accessories such as buttons, sequins or glitter.





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# Fine motor activities

## Sensory trays/ bags

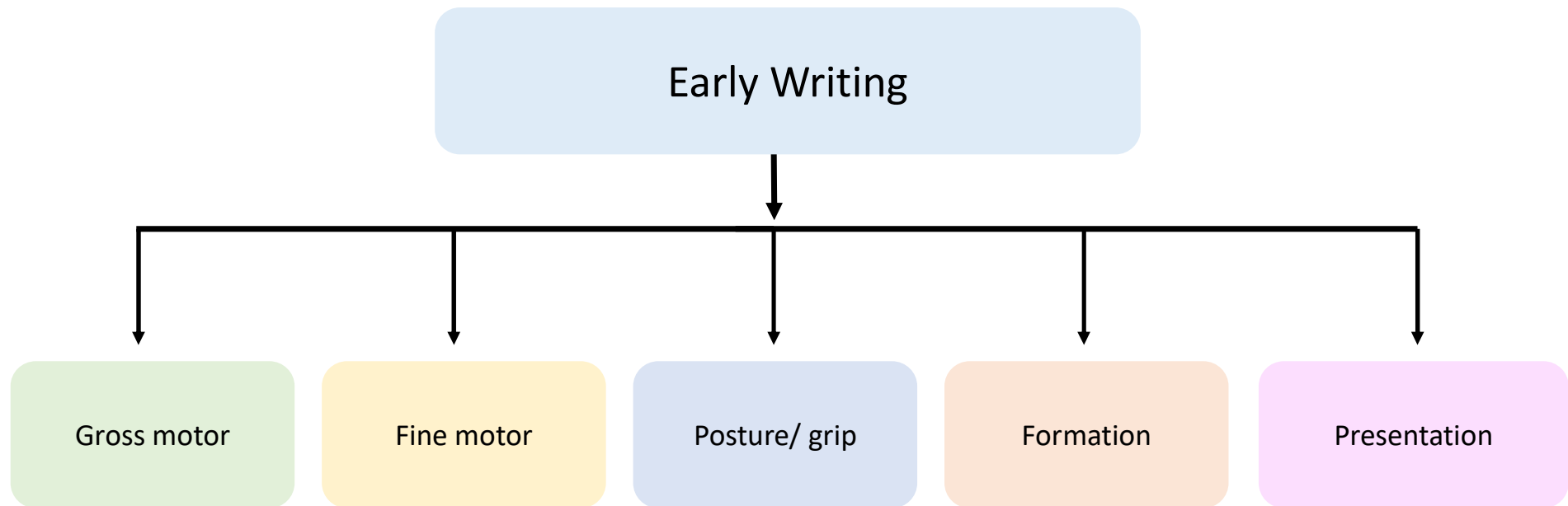
Use different resources at home to draw patterns or letters. This could include rice, salt, flour, coco powder and sugar. You can also seal a sandwich bag with paint, hair gel, glitter or baby oil and food dye for your child to write on. Your child can form the letters or patterns using their finger or instrument.





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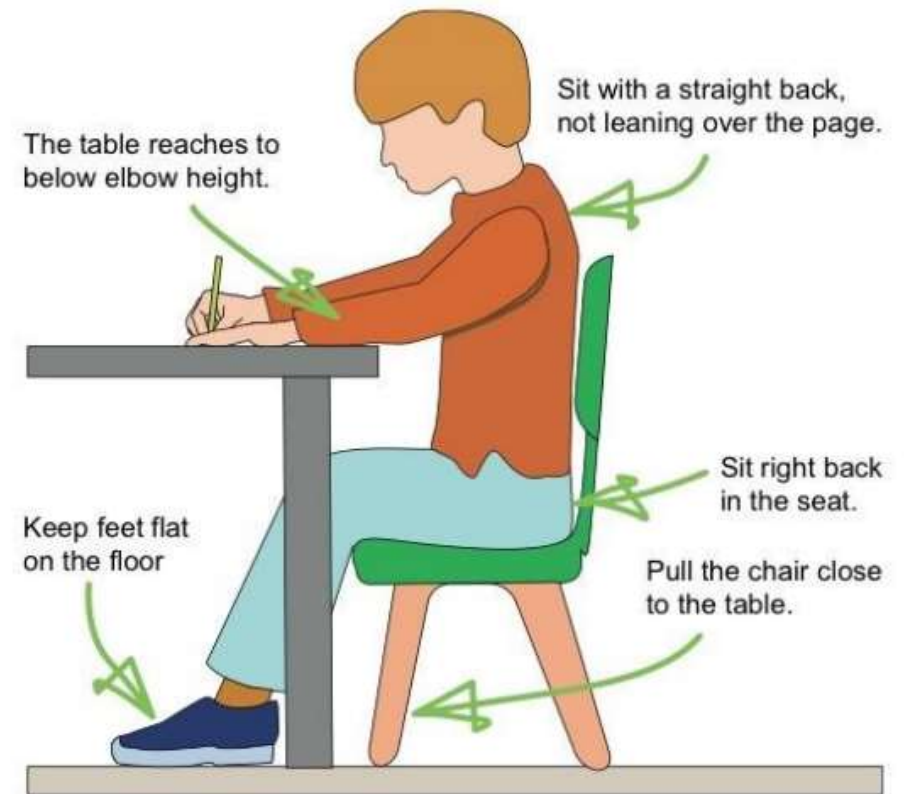


# Posture

Maintaining good posture is important for writing, especially handwriting. Good posture should include:

- Both feet flat on the floor
- Hips and lower back supported by the chair
- Knees at a 90o angle
- Elbows slightly flexed with forearms resting on the surface

*Avoid slouching over as this puts additional strain on the arm. If a child is slouched over or use their hand to hold their head up, poor core and upper body strength may be the culprit.*

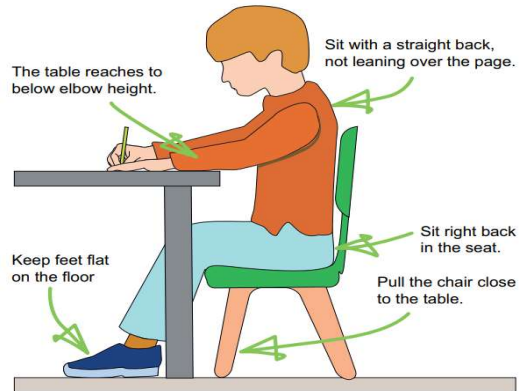




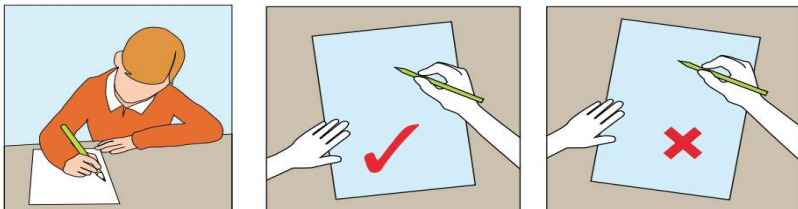
## Comfortable Sitting Position and Correct Paper Position

### Right handed children

How to sit correctly to be comfortable for handwriting.

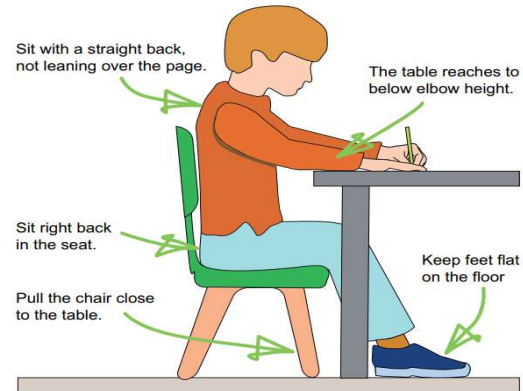


How to hold and position the paper.

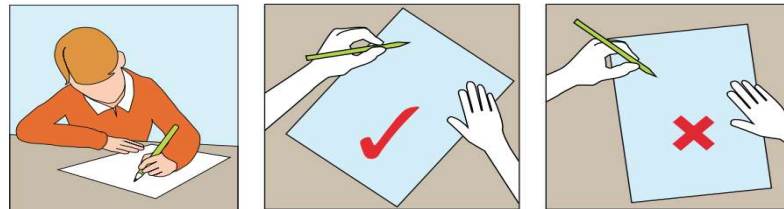


### Left handed children

How to sit correctly to be comfortable for handwriting.



How to hold and position the paper.





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## Grip

As a child develops, their grip on instruments changes. Children move from using their whole hand to hold instruments to using their fingers, and finally using the dynamic tripod grip. This is the ideal grip to help move the pencil efficiently, accurately and at a good speed. Most children will master this skill by the age of 5-6 years.

10 Months  
Pincer Grasp



12-15 Months  
Palmar Supinate Grasp



2-3 Years  
Digital Pronate Grasp



3-4 Years  
Quadrupod Grasp



3-4 Years  
Static Tripod Grasp



5-6 Years  
Dynamic Tripod Grasp





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# Grip

If your child is not holding their pencil using the dynamic tripod grip, ensure they are proficient in the previous skills needed (gross and fine motor skills) before trying to correct this.

If your child is not using the dynamic tripod grip, give them something to hold with their ring finger and baby finger. They will then have to use their remaining fingers to hold the pencil, promoting a tripod grip.

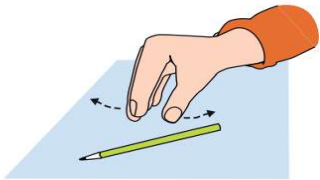




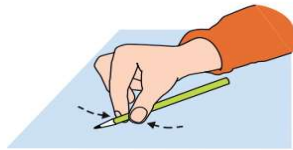
## Tripod Pencil Grip

How to hold a pencil correctly for handwriting.

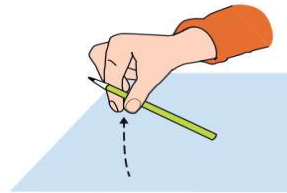
### Right handed grip



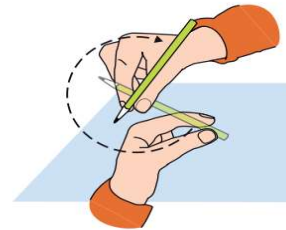
1. Point away the pencil,



2. Pinch it near the tip,



3. Lift it off the table,

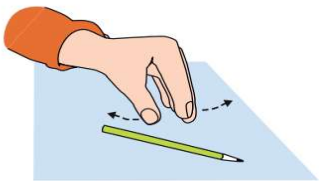


4. Spin it round...

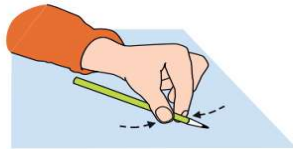


5. ...and grip.

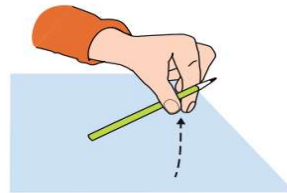
### Left handed grip



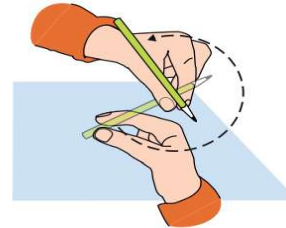
1. Point away the pencil,



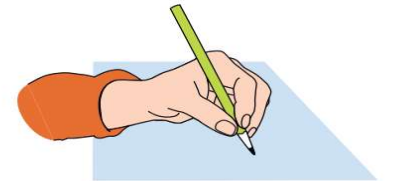
2. Pinch it near the tip,



3. Lift it off the table,



4. Spin it round...



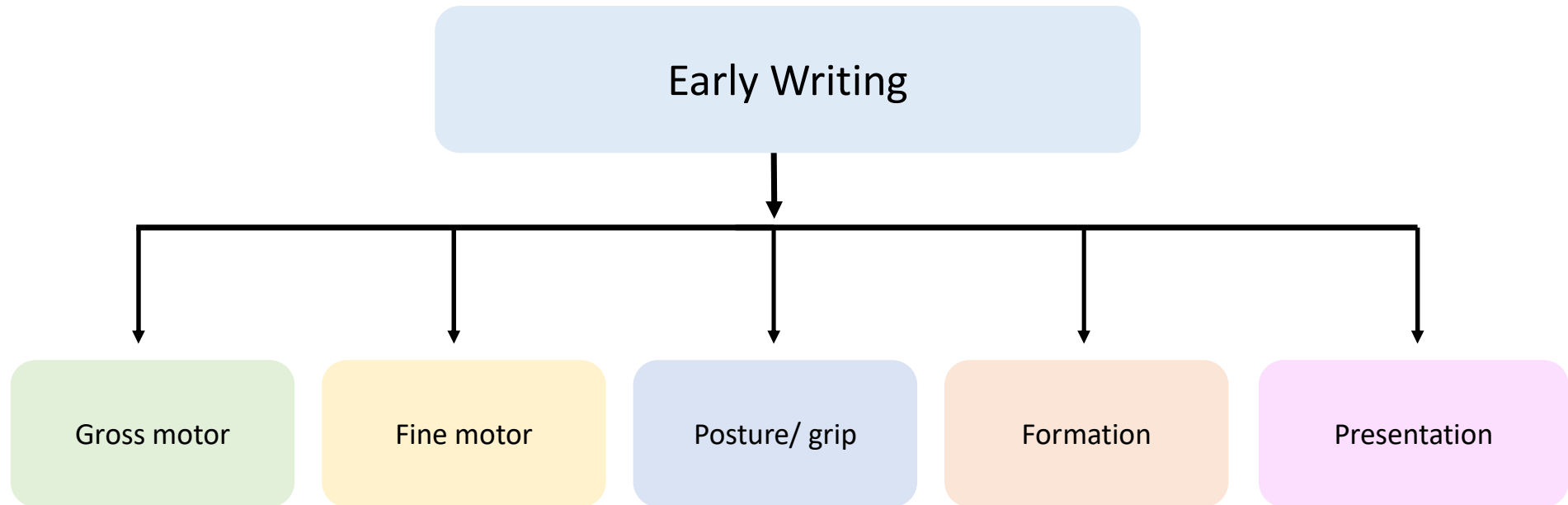
5. ...and grip.





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# Formation

Children who have not learned to form letters correctly may be putting **so much effort** into remembering and writing the letters that they don't have the mental energy left for creative writing or correctly answering questions.

It is therefore important to teach correct letter formations from the very beginning. Once your child can write letters correctly, automatically and without thinking about them, they will be able to **focus more on the actual learning process and on writing creatively!**





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# Formation

When learning to write, children need to first **trace** the letters. After, children can begin to **copy** letters, followed by writing them with a **starting point cue**. Finally children begin to write letters completely independently without cues.

If your child can not yet copy a letter with the correct formation, then write the letter yourself and have your child trace it. You may even find it helpful to **guide your child's hand as they trace** the letter.





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# Formation

**Ensure Your Child Starts In The Right Place and Flows Correctly!**

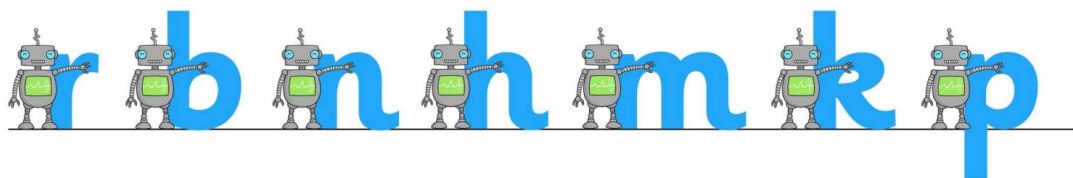
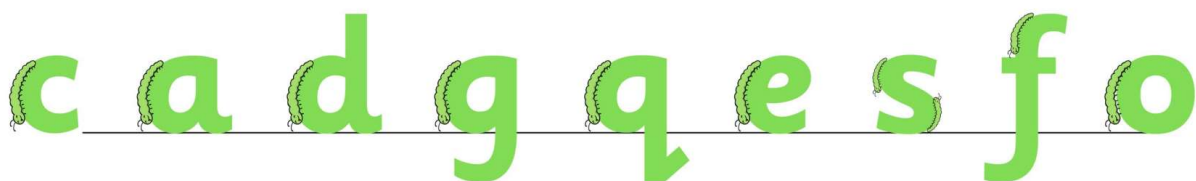
Some children are very good at getting their letter to **LOOK** correct, but their strokes were perhaps bottom to top, or right to left, which can lead to handwriting issues later.

Pay careful attention to **HOW** your child forms the letter, not just what it looks like at the end! If you catch formation errors early, they are much easier to correct!





# Formation



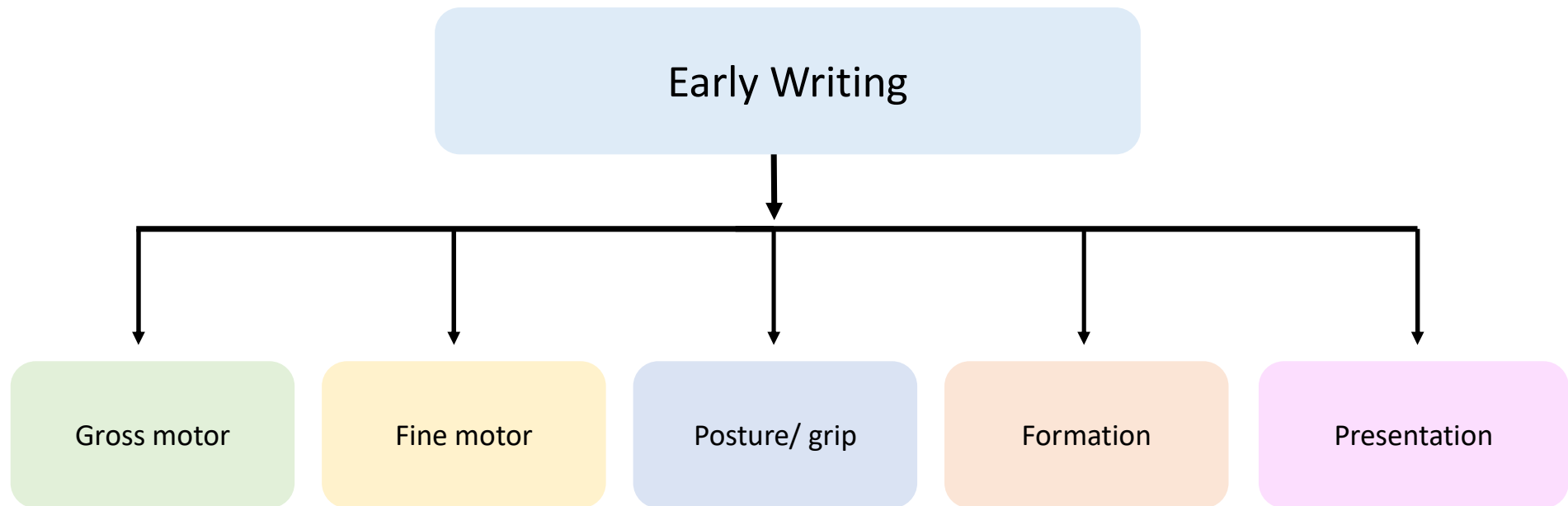
We use the letter families to the left to teach children how to form their letters correctly. Ensure:

- Your child starts at the top of the letter
- Curves the correct way or moves their pencil downward.



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# Presentation

Once your child can form their letters correctly, we can then support them to start thinking about how to present these considering their size, height and spacing.

I used  
my memory  
to sort the  
animals.



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# Presentation

By the end of Year One your child should be aiming to achieve...

## Statutory requirements

### Handwriting

Pupils should be taught to:

- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- form capital letters
- form digits 0-9
- understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.





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# Presentation

By the end of Year Two your child should be aiming to achieve...

## Statutory requirements

### Handwriting

Pupils should be taught to:

- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.



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# Presentation

Capital letters should be the tallest letter on the line.

x-height letters should be the same size.

Yesterday we went to bishops Wood  
to look for mini-beasters. First we  
had a <sup>Snack</sup> ~~snack~~. Next we went into  
the woods. Vicki gave us a mira

Longer letters should go below the line (these are called descenders).

Taller letters should stand higher than x-height letters (these are called ascenders).



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# Presentation

What do we mean by 'the correct size relative to each other'?



In Key Stage One children are encouraged to start thinking about 'tall' letters and 'long letters'. We encourage the children to sit these letters on the line and think carefully about their size. Children will need practice to become confident in their handwriting size, so that the letters are not too big or too small. Once the children can confidently form their letters and do not need to think about their presentation or sizing, they can begin to focus more on the content of their writing, spelling and punctuation.



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## Take Home



- Encourage lots of gross motor development
- Incorporate fine motor activities into your routine
- Encourage your child to sit correctly when writing and hold their pencil using the dynamic tripod grip (if ready)
- Support your child to form their letters correctly
- When ready/ time, support your child in learning to present their letters the correct size and height