

## **Learning to write our name**

There are a few stages involved in children learning to write their name and it starts long before they pick their pencil up! It's important to remember that all children learn in different ways and at different speeds so please don't put any pressure on them or yourselves. Just have fun practising together and the learning will happen. Below are the stages involved. Some children will be starting at the first stage and others may be working more on the correct formation of each letter in their name. We always teach the children to ensure only the first letter in their name is formed as a capital letter and the rest are all lower case letters.

**Stage 1:** Firstly we need to encourage children to recognise their name as a whole – the length of the word and the shape that the letters make together. Expose them to it as much as you can – label belongings, clothes, books, you could create a bedroom door sign together or a place name for the dinner table! Your child could be responsible for setting the place holder name cards out each day.

**Stage 2:** Now they need to learn about the letters in their name. You can say the letter sounds in their name to them and spot them out and about reminding them that letter is in their name. It is important to get children to form letters correctly from the very beginning as it can be difficult to correct later (see previous handout for correct letter formations). Write their name in large letters and get your child to trace them with their finger. Form the letters in playdough or draw them large in chalk and your child can walk the route of the letters.

**Stage 3:** Now that your child can recognise their name it is about getting the letters in the right order. You could use magnets on the fridge to practise putting them in order or write their name on paper and cut each letter into a different square. You can play games such as asking your child to close their eyes, remove one letter and ask them to put it back in the right place.

**Stage 4:** It is now time to learn to write their name with a pencil. Start with big letters and get smaller over time. They could trace over your letters first and work up to writing their own.

***Alongside this we will also be helping your child to develop their fine motor skills. Please see our handout below for tips to support your child with this at home.***

## **Fine Motor Skills**

Any activity that engages the small muscles of the body – such as the fingers and eyes – is a fine motor activity. Children need to develop their fine motor skills in order to accomplish all kinds of self-care tasks, play and participate in activities and learn to write.

***Here are some ways you can help your child with their fine motor skills:***

### **Pencil Grip**

This is a picture of our end goal for pencil grip. Children will all be at their own starting points with this. We encourage the children to use their ‘snappy crocodile fingers’ to help them hold their pencil correctly. The children will become very used to us using this phrase to prompt the correct grip. You can help your child to practise this correct grip whenever they are drawing or writing.



### **Activities**

- *Use lacing and sewing activities such as threading beads and cheerios*
- *Use scissors (remember thumb is always on top and move the paper not your hand)*
- *Use tweezers/tongs to move objects*
- *Have them manipulate nuts and bolts to find the correct size one and twist them on and off*
- *Play with play dough, squeezing it, rolling it, writing in it with toothpicks, cutting it with scissors, building models.*
- *Pop plastic bubbles in bubble wrap*
- *Create a piece of art with small objects such as buttons.*
- *Encourage your child to become independent with using the zipper on their coat.*
- *Poke straws or pipe cleaners into colanders*
- *Pegs are a great resource for fine motor development you could have a peg race and see who can peg the pegs on to a piece of rope the fastest. You could set up a washing line and your child could help to peg the clothes on. You could place a pom-pom on the end of a peg for your child to paint with.*



The most important thing is to make the learning fun and frequent small bursts are usually more effective with young children when they are taking part in a more focussed adult-led activity.

