

Occupational Therapy Advice for Improving Fluency and Correct Letter Formation

Letter Formation:

Correct writing movements are reinforced by teaching letters in stroke related families. Repeating and comparing similar strokes and letters helps the child to learn the shape and feel of the movement required to produce letter shapes. The "families" may change according to the model the school adopts.

Letter Families

i t l u y (j) line and anti-clockwise arch

n m r h b p line and clockwise arch

c a d g q o (e) (f) (s) anti-clockwise circular letters

k v w x z (s) letters with diagonal strokes

Some letters do not readily fit into a group e.g. e s f j. For example the letter e may be considered with the cadgqo group, as it is an anti-clockwise circular letter but starts in a different place from the rest of the group.

Try to practise the letters firstly with, and then without vision.

Use a multi-sensory approach with different mediums such as shaving foam, paint, chalk, sand and practise forming the letters using an index finger, a paint brush, different tools. Scale down slowly as the child becomes more confident with the correct formations.



When a child can form letters consistently without use of vision, it demonstrates that he / she has internalised the 'motor-map' of how to make the letters

correctly; this then means that the child doesn't have to consciously pay attention to forming the letters and is therefore free to focus on spelling, content and presentation.

Once the child can consistently produce single letters using correct formation, practise putting them into words; start with CVC words and words that you know the child can confidently spell, so that the task is not too difficult and the child can experience success.

Websites like www.twinkl.co.uk and Pinterest have a variety of letter formation sheets great for repeated practise. These can be laminated and used with wipe clean pens to start with to reinforce the movements and patterns required. Some sheets will have directional prompts with coloured arrows for example which are great at grading the task to begin with, making it easier.

Fluidity in Writing

Again, adopting a multi-sensory approach works well in encourage fluid movements in writing as you can make practise fun and use lots of different writing surfaces, writing tools and positions. Standing to write at a white board or chalk board, on all 4s on concrete or patio slabs, at a table with large flip chart paper, for example.

Incorporate lots of writing patterns such as these shown below.



Again, these can be graded to include more complex cursive patterns the more confident a child is.

Practising forming these will help increase fluidity in writing, accompanying these tasks with using ribbon wands and performing the movements to music can also help.

