



## MOVING ON

### Writing Letters

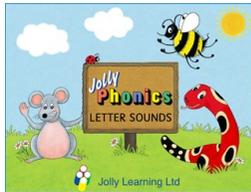
Make letters in fun ways such as in clay, playdough, or sand and talk about the sound each letter makes and the sounds they make when they are combined. This also provides good opportunities to teach correct letter formation.



### Writing Names

One of the first written word most children identify with is their name. You can promote this at home by talking about the letters in their name and the shapes they make. When reading stories get your child to find the letters in their name in other words.

Online software and apps for smart devices can be a great way of engaging children in writing activities. At Gatehouse School we use Jolly Phonics and the letter formation which goes with the programme. It is essential to ensure you use the correct formation to write your child's name but please don't try to teach your child the letter shapes and sounds before they are ready! If in doubt speak to a member of staff.



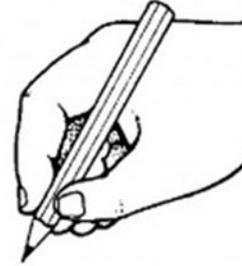
Names should always start with a capital letter, the following letters should then be lower case. When we first teach children to write we do not join the letters.

[www.doorwayonline.co.uk](http://www.doorwayonline.co.uk) is a useful website for learning the letter shapes.



## A WORD ABOUT PENCIL GRIP

To develop a fast fluent handwriting style children must learn to hold their pencil with a grip that is relaxed but allows for sufficient control of the pencil. We encourage children to use a tripod grip. This is holding the pencil between the thumb and forefinger, resting it on the third finger.



To help your child develop the correct grip they need lots of activities to build their finger muscles. It also helps to buy triangular pens and pencils which encourage children to use the three fingers to hold and support the pencil/pen.

4 1/2—7 years

Tripod Grasp

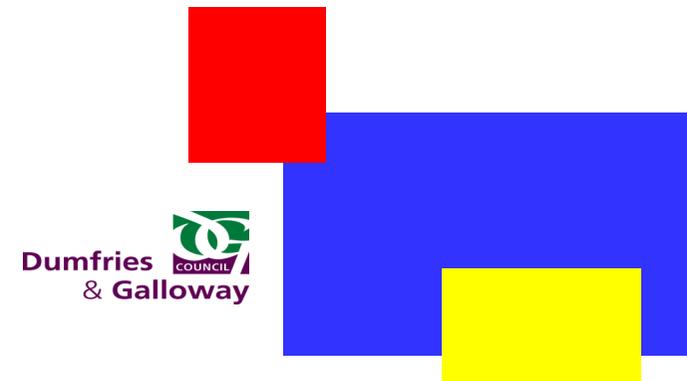


If you need further information on how you can support your child with phonics or any other aspect of learning then please get in touch with their teacher or the School Office



**GATEHOUSE  
PRIMARY**

# Developing Handwriting Skills



**Dumfries  
& Galloway**  
COUNCIL

# INTRODUCTION

The aim of this booklet is to give you a clear picture of how we approach the teaching of handwriting and how, as a parent or carer, you can support and encourage your child at home.

From a very early stage, children develop awareness of written language through shared stories, signs and posters in the world around them. Through observation of others around them they become aware of writing through such things as shopping lists, Birthday cards, postcards, forms etc. They develop understanding that spoken words can also be written



and as they begin to use mark making in play, they begin to copy the process they see adults using. Children will create their own marks on paper and 'read' back to you what it 'says'. This is a step towards becoming literate and part of developing as a reader and writer.



## GET READY

Before children can begin to learn to write they need to have:

- good gross and fine motor control
- a recognition of pattern
- a language to talk about shape and movement
- the main handwriting movements in the three basic letter shapes e.g. l, c, r.

## Gross and Fine Motor Control

**Gross Motor Control** is the development of controlled movements of the whole body, arms or legs. Good balance and posture are critical for developing handwriting. Activities to develop this are: such as dance, football, cycling, gripping climbing frames, using small equipment and building with large scale construction kits.



**Fine Motor Control** is the development of smaller movements of the hands and fingers. Activities to develop fine motor control: beading, lacing, threading/weaving, pegboard patterns, cutting/chopping/peeling vegetable and fruit, using pliers/screwdrivers/hammers, finger rhymes, counting fingers, small construction toys e.g. Lego, sand and water play for sieving/pouring/picking up toys using tools, pincer movements using tweezers for beads/sequins, finger painting patterns, modelling with clay/dough/plasticine, cutting using scissors, painting with thick brushes.



## Recognition of Pattern

Patterns occur throughout the natural world as well as the manmade one. Draw attention to patterns that you see with your child. Focus on patterns which build on the three basic letter shapes: l—long line, c—curly caterpillar, r—half a bridge.

At this stage you and your child will be talking about the shapes and patterns you see, encourage your child to draw them in the air using their whole arm. Keep talking about the movements you make in the patterns. Let your child invent sounds as they draw the patterns e.g. a buzzing sound as they make spirals, a whoosh sound as they make waves. Using a tray with flour for your child to create patterns in using their fingers encourages mark making. Let your child decide which hand they prefer to use, don't worry if they are still using both! Many children don't finalise which hand to use until they are 7 years of age.

## OFF WE GO

### Language of Shape and Movement

Children need to be able to describe movement patterns before they learn to write. Essential vocabulary includes: up, down, straight line, curve, zigzag, spiral, clockwise and anticlockwise, across. These words can be used in a variety of activities to promote both fine and gross motor skills development.

The words can be used to describe the four main letter shape families:

- down and off in another direction: l, j, i, t, u
- down and retrace upwards: b, h, k, m, n, p, r numbers: 2, 3, 5 clockwise
- anti-clockwise rounds: c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f, s; numbers: 0, 6, 8, 9
- zigzag: v, w, x, z, numbers: 1, 4, 7