

Leda Education Support Centre

Handwriting Policy

RATIONALE

Writing enables communication through the recording of messages. We acknowledge the importance of pre-writing patterns to aid in the smooth transition to writing alphabet letters. Handwriting is one of a number of skills used in the writing process. Handwriting skills, like other aspects of the writing process, develop over time. By providing demonstration and opportunities for practise, and with application in meaningful contexts, handwriting patterns are established and reinforced, becoming automatic processes within the learners' control.

A whole school Handwriting plan ensures that staff, students and their parents are receiving a consistent message about writing, ensuring clarity therefore leaving no room for ambiguity about the process and expectations.

We recognise that before our students can be expected to undertake independent writing tasks for a range of purposes and audiences, they must possess sufficient gross and fine motor skills.

Final OBJECTIVES for every child...

1. To be able to hold a pencil in a comfortable and correct manner.
2. To be able to correctly and consistently form lower and upper case letters.
3. To know the correct entry and exit points of letters.
4. To be able to write letters and words showing regularity of spacing.
5. To handwrite with legibility.
6. To orient writing to line.

IMPLEMENTING HANDWRITING

As a whole school

We will:

- include handwriting as a regular agenda item at meetings (whole centre & class)
- ensure staff remain informed and up to date on the teaching of handwriting
- purchase resources to support our handwriting program including lined paper, i-pad apps, texts, pencil grips, etc.
- include handwriting 'how to' DVD & associated notes/information on S Drive
- conduct 'on entry' assessment

In the classroom

Teachers will:

- explicitly teach handwriting and pre-handwriting skills as a separate component within the English curriculum
- conduct regular, explicit handwriting sessions
- adopt the 'bat and ball' (foundation) technique and style (Appendix 1)
- implement a consistent approach to handwriting across the school
- determine individual student readiness for lined paper
- implement fine & gross motor skills programs to support handwriting as required

Students will:

- apply an appropriate pencil grip (Tripod Grip – Appendix 2)
- adopt an appropriate seating position
- adopt the correct paper position

Information to parents

- at parent workshops
- through the school website, newsletters and/or brochures, etc.
- during parent/teacher meetings

SCHOOL HANDWRITING STYLE

Leda ESC uses the 'bat and ball' (foundation) style of writing. This style is taught from K-Yr 6 negating the need for cursive joins which have often proved to be difficult for our students to master and which we consider an advanced skill that can detract from the handwriting itself.

The main features of our handwriting style are:

- it has a simple and easy to follow language
- skills are taught in a sequential manner
- the bat and ball formation aligns with most commonly used fonts

Alphabet letters will be introduced in the following order:

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

All staff will participate in training to enable them to deliver the program to students. All staff will use the same style of handwriting. This will be evident when marking children's work, writing on whiteboards and scribing for children.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- On entry assessment
- Assessment used across contexts and activities
- Observation & work samples
- Handwriting checklist (beginning each year & end of Semester 1 & 2)

SOME HELPFUL RESOURCES

Preparing Children for Handwriting Step 1 (text in library)

Preparing Children for Handwriting Step 2 (text in library)

Pre – Writing Patterns (text in library)

Letter Formation for little people (text in library)

S Drive : [Leda ESC\All Staff\Handwriting](#)

In drawing and writing we are encouraging:


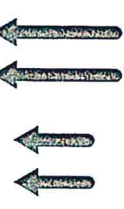
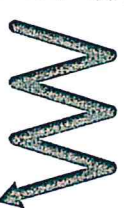



- the development of the right grasp of the pencil or brush
- the establishment of a preferred or dominant hand
- ability to draw some simple lines and pictures
- moving in a left to right direction

As well as providing lots of opportunities for free drawing and painting, we can also present activities that introduce some pre-writing patterns and movements. These include painting and drawing in a variety of medium, as well as colouring in and dot to dot and finish the picture activities.

These patterns can be practiced in a variety of ways:

- the movement pattern can be demonstrated and an example given for the child to copy.
- the child can try to copy by using different hands, using both hands (together) and drawing with their eyes shut.

The six basic patterns that form the basis of all alphabet letters are:

		
Sideways, sideways, left to right	Tall lines and short lines	Zig Zags
		
Circles, drawn forwards and backwards	Up and overs	Down and unders Down, back and unders



Keep An Eye Out For

- Grasp of writing implement.
- Child crosses midline left to right or right to left.
- Child imitates movement.

- It is OK for children to use different hands for different jobs
- It is still OK if they have not established a clearly dominant hand



What makes it easier?

- Try to have them use one hand to finish a job.
- Do lots of activities that involve using both hands together crossing the midline, eg: picking up an object with one hand and placing on the opposite side of body or picking up an object with one hand on the opposite side of body and bringing it over to same side. Try with both hands.
- Present objects from left and right sides of the midline.



Keep An Eye Out For

- Lots of swapping hands during an activity.
- Child not crossing midline in play.
- Forgetting to use the other hand to help.

When children first begin to draw using crayons, pencils or brushes they use a dagger grasp. In a natural development sequence they will hold the writing implement in a variety of grasps until they settle on a functional tripod grip for handwriting. The development sequence is a result of neurological growth in the child.

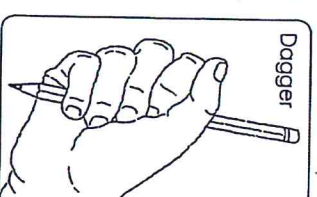
There is a natural progression as the child's fine motor skills develop. The complexity of the drawing skills increases as the child develops more control over the pencil or crayon in his or her hand.

12 Months

to

2 Years

- Development of fine pinch grip and precise release of small objects
- Both hands develop skilled function and work together
- Crayon is held initially in the palm (*Palmar Supinate or Dagger grasp pictured right*). Movement mainly occurs from shoulder, the arm and hand move as a unit.
- Makes marks on paper with crayon
- Vigorous scribble in imitation
- Scribbles spontaneously
- Draws a stroke then obliterates by scribbling
- Imitates drawing a vertical line

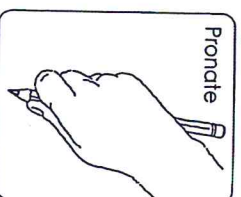


2 Years

To

3 Years

- Crayon or tools may be held across all fingers, with the palm facing down. *Digital Pronate grasp (pictured right)* movement mainly occurs at the elbow, the forearm and hand move as a unit.
- Imitates drawing a circle
- Copies a horizontal line
- Copies a vertical line
- Draws 2 or more strokes when attempting to copy a cross

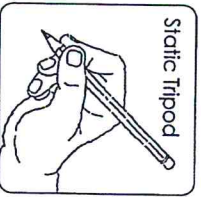


3 Years

To

4 Years

- The fingers (often all four) are held on the pencil shaft opposite the thumb. *Quadrupod grasp (pictured top right)*. Movement can occur from the wrist, the hand moves as a unit with the fingers static. *Static Tripod grasp (pictured bottom right)*. Adjustments to the pencil are made with the opposite hand (3½ - 4 years).
- Copies a circle
- Imitates a horizontal cross
- Imitates a zig zag line
- Joins two dots
- Draws a diagonal stroke by following a continuous dotted line
- Traces over a diamond shape (rounded corners)
- Draws a man with a head and one other body part e.g. arms, legs
- Traces and stays on most of the time a 7cm wide horizontal line.

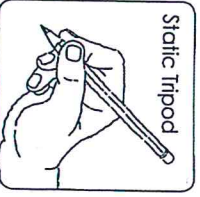


4 Years

To

6 Years

- Child developing ability to manipulate objects between the fingers and palm and rotate objects with the fingers.
- Uses a *Static Tripod grasp (pictured right)* of a pencil consistently
- Developing fine control to manipulate a pencil
- The thumb, index and middle fingers work as a unit for precise control of the pencil, the ring and little fingers provide support. Horizontal movement across the page occurs at the wrist elbow and shoulder (4½ to 6 years).
- Copies a diagonal line, a square, a diagonal cross, circle and triangle
- Draws a man with a head, arms and legs
- Colours in a simple picture staying mainly within the lines (no more than 0.6 cm)
- Draws a man with a head, trunk, arms, legs, feet and three facial features



Pencil Grasps

Children should ideally be introduced to an efficient and functional grip in kindergarten. It is much easier to introduce and reinforce the proper way of holding a pencil in kindy than it is to change an inefficient one a child has been using for several years.

Kindergarten children tend to use shoulder, elbow and wrist actions when they are painting or drawing. As they grow they begin to refine their movements and use smaller movements of their hand and fingers.

The dynamic tripod grip is the pencil grip adopted by many educational authorities throughout the world and is recommended in Western Australian schools. It is important because it allows the muscles to work in an efficient and co-ordinated manner that reduces the amount of tension generated by writing and the subsequent fatigue of the hand. It ensures that writing is a comfortable and enjoyable activity.

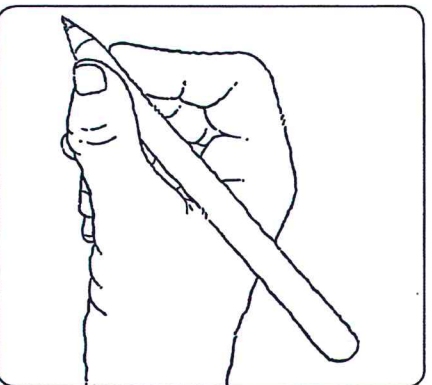
What is a Good Pencil Grip?

- The pencil shaft is held between pads of index finger and thumb of dominant hand.
- The middle finger sits along side the index finger supporting under the pencil.
- The ring and little fingers curl gently into the palm.
- There is an open, fairly circular web space formed by the thumb and index finger. This is where the pencil shaft will rest.
- Sometimes the pad of the middle finger on the pencil too, this is acceptable if the web space remains open.

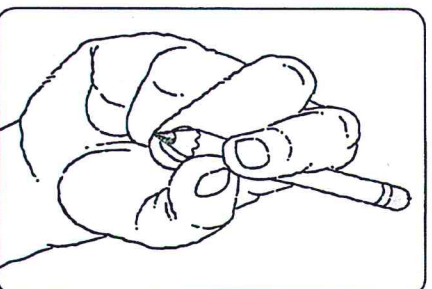


What makes it easier?

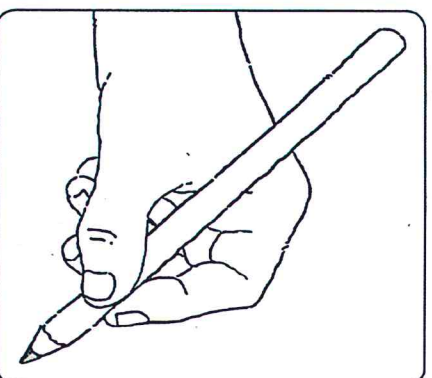
- Big pieces of paper.
- Big crayons, brushes and markers (larger tools ensure children use the right muscles and hand and finger position for the activity and are less likely to adopt incorrect grasps to control the tool).
- Use thick outlines.



Good pencil grip for right handers.



Front view.



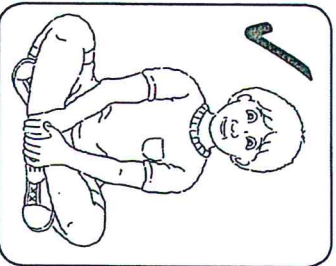
Good pencil grip for left handers.

Posture

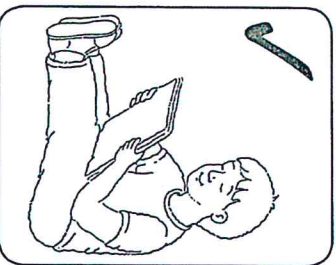
As children move around the kindergarten and sit and stand to participate in the activities it is important to encourage good body posture. Good posture means the child is in a stable and balanced position to use their arms and hands efficiently to do the job.

Sitting positions on the floor.

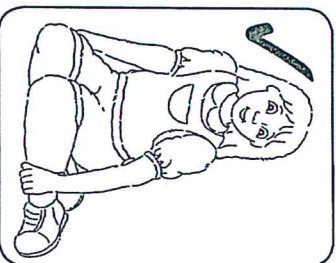
Good Sitting Positions



Cross Legged

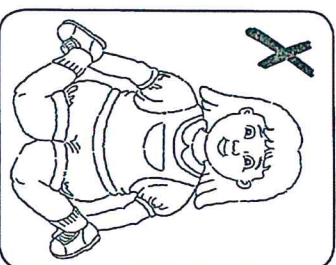


Long Legged



Side Sitting

Poor Sitting Position



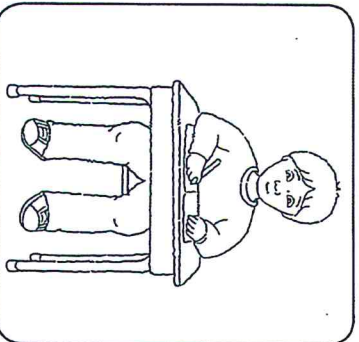
'W' Sitting



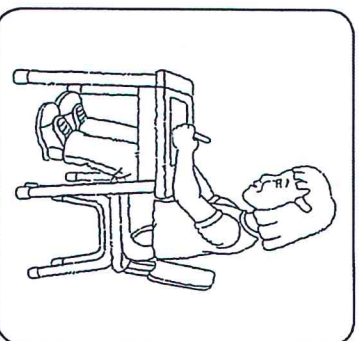
Keep An Eye Out For

- Ensure that the child is sitting fairly upright and not slouching, curving their spine into a 'C'.
- Sits fairly still, not constantly adjusting their position or wiggling in their seat.

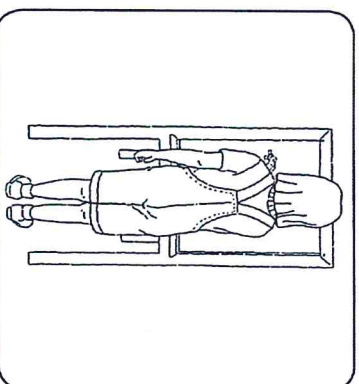
Good sitting positions at the desk.



Front View



Side View



Back View

Good standing posture.



Keep An Eye Out For

- Both feet flat on floor.
- Forearms rest comfortably on desk.
- Child's bottom placed toward back of seat.
- Child's back is straight and leaning forward slightly, not slumped over desk or slouched back in chair.



Keep An Eye Out For

- Weight evenly distributed over feet.
- Feet approximately shoulder width apart.
- Trunk is fairly straight.