

Reception



At Foundation stage, your child will be focusing on developing the necessary fine and gross motor skills in readiness for handwriting. They will practise a range of patterns including dots, waves and zig zags to prepare them for letter formation.

Preparation for handwriting involves developing four key areas:

Here are some things you can do at home to develop these key areas:

1. Gross motor control:

The control and co-ordination of the big movements the body can make.

2. Fine motor control:

Being able to fine-tune the movements of the arm, hand and fingers.

3. Visual control:

Making sure hand and eye movements are working well together.

4. Spatial control:

Helping children to be able to move themselves confidently in a space with an awareness of direction (left/right) and plane (horizontal/vertical) and eventually helping them to transfer that sense of space on to paper.

As part of developing confidence in these key areas, children begin to explore patterns and basic letter shapes. We experiment with the following six basic patterns and their variations as they provide excellent preparation for more formal work on letter formation:

- Investigating dots.
- Investigating straight lines and crosses.
- Investigating circles.
- Investigating curves, loops and waves.
- Investigating joined straight lines and angled patterns.
- Investigating eights and spirals.

- Play with a ball, e.g. kick, catch, throw and bounce.

- Play with hoops, frisbees and stilts (the upside-down flowerpot kind).

- Encourage play on climbing frames, slides and swings in the park.

- Play with large scale building kits.

- Enjoy finger rhymes.

- Encourage your child to make things and model things (e.g. cutting, sticking, moulding, cooking, sewing and threading) using a range of materials (e.g. dough, Plasticine®, wood).

- Encourage your child to experiment with a range of tools and equipment (e.g. pens, pencils, crayons, felt tips, scissors, hole punches and tweezers).

- Share jigsaw puzzles and board games.

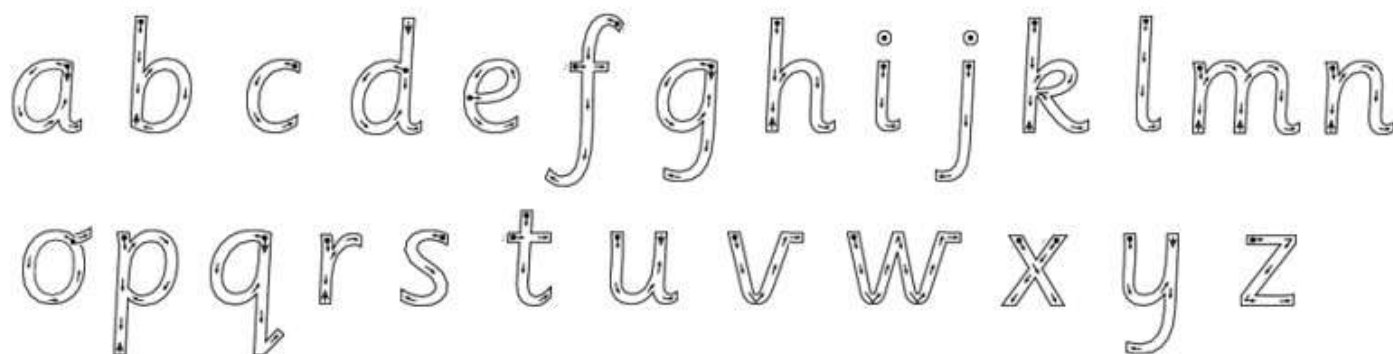
- Provide opportunities for painting, colouring and 'making marks' on different sizes of paper.

- Enjoy household tasks together (e.g. mixing ingredients with implements or hands, using a dustpan and brush, scooping compost into plant pots and digging in the garden).

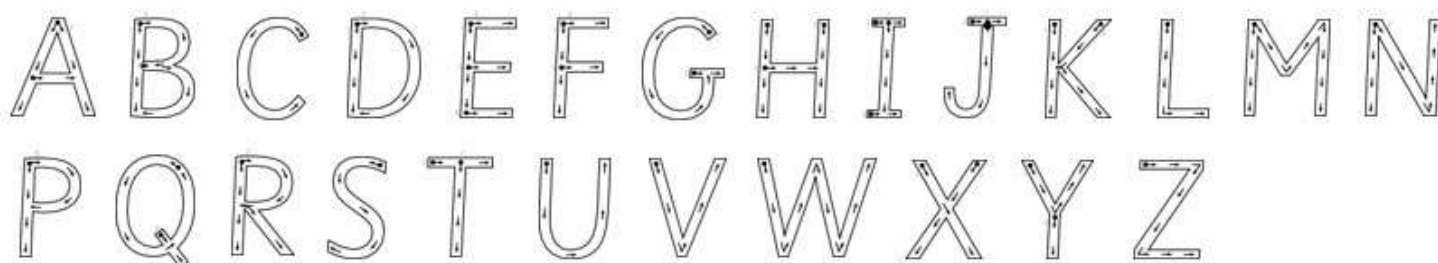


During this year, correct letter formation should become an automatic habit. Don't encourage your child to write too small or too quickly. Trying to enforce small handwriting too soon can lead to a very cramped style, which is then difficult to make fluent.

As a reminder, correct letter formation for lower-case letters is as follows. The arrows show the direction of your child's pencil.



Capital letters are formed as follows:



Letter families

Your child will still be thinking about the four letter families (similar letter shapes grouped together to help children form letters consistently).

Long-legged giraffe

l i t u j y ll L I T U J Y

One-armed robot

r b n h m k p R B N H M K P

Curly caterpillar

c a d o s g q e f ff ss C A D O S G Q E F Z

Zig-zag monster

v w x zz Z V W X

Letter combinations

ck qu ai igh oo ee oa ow ch wh



Joins

These four joins are introduced at the end of the year, so if your child is keen to start joining, then these are a good place to start.

Diagonal join to ascender

ch

Diagonal join, no ascender

ai

Horizontal join to ascender

wh

Horizontal join, no ascender

ow