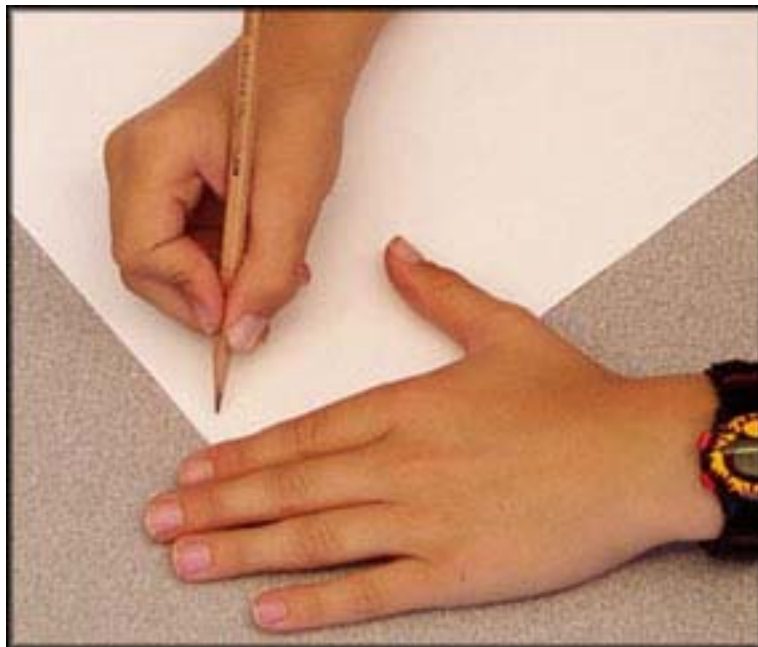


GETTING READY TO WRITE

- Sit squarely in the chair, with feet flat on the floor.
- Position forearm so that it is parallel to the angled paper, not perpendicular to it.
- Angle the paper so that the bottom corner points toward the chest.
- Stabilize the paper by positioning the non-dominant hand near the pencil. (See photo below.)
- Hold the pencil as shown in the photo below. Pencil aids may help facilitate this grasp.
- Size desk and chair so that the child's shoulders are relaxed when forearms rest on the tabletop.
- Keep the wrist stable (no bending forward). This may require movement from the upper joints of the arm when moving across and/or down the paper.
- Keep forearm and hand on the table when writing, with elbow slightly tucked toward the trunk (e.g. no lifting to draw a large circle or a vertical line).



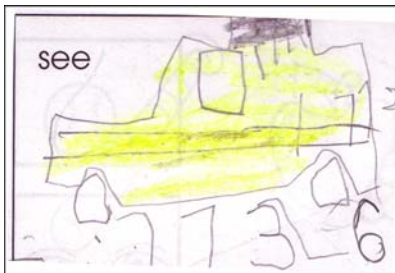
IMPROVING LEGIBILITY

- Write with a sharp pencil or a mechanical pencil.
- When erasing, the pencil should be held the same as when writing (with the same grasp and near the end of the pencil). Also, the non-dominant hand stabilizes the paper near the pencil. Rotating the paper may be helpful in facilitating vertical or horizontal erasing.
- Minimize smudges on papers by using Ticonderoga #3 Hard pencil.
- To improve the appearance of written work, encourage erasing rather than scratching out or writing over.
- Use proper letter case.
- Increase awareness of spacing and space management by drawing lines on which to write letters or words. Practice and reminders help too.
- For tips on formation of difficult letters, refer to handout entitled *Tips for Proper Letter Formation*.



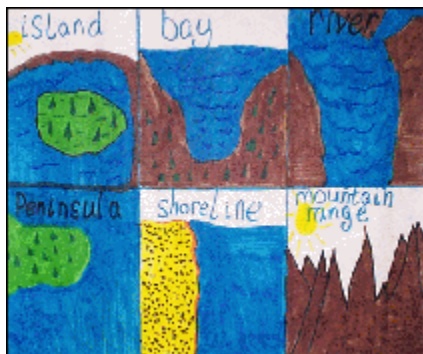
BETTER QUALITY

- Provide the same type of paper as frequently as possible for written assignments.
- Consider providing paper with narrower space between top and bottom lines.
- Allow a child who struggles with copying from the word wall or board to copy from a model at his or her desk.
- To encourage a child's best effort, provide check lists and teacher feedback (reminders and positive comments).
- Consistently practice number and letter formation to get it automatic.
- Draw lines top to bottom and left to right. (right to left for left handers)
- To help a child with time management, make a plan together for approaching the task, decide what is important to focus on, use a timer, and/or break the assignment into smaller steps.
- When coloring in bubbles on worksheets, use circular lines, rather than vertical lines.
- When coloring, encourage coloring in one direction and completely filling blank space.
- For big spaces that must be colored, consider using the side of a piece of chalk or crayon that has had the paper removed.
- When using a ruler, spread the fingers on the non-dominant hand to stabilize the ruler on either end. Angle the paper so that the line can be drawn top to bottom.



ORGANIZATION

- Draw a happy face to show where to begin writing and to encourage writing left to right.
- Add a bold or colored line at the left margin to encourage starting each line there.
- To help organize thinking and space management, add lines, divide paper into sections, provide graphic organizers and use templates, as appropriate.
- Add borders to improve the appearance of some papers. Simple ideas include designs in the corners, simple geometric shapes, repeating patterns and clip art.
- On a blank piece of paper, provide a line on which the child can write his or her name, ideally in the same place each time.
- Provide top and bottom lines for beginning writers. Experiment to see what size line works best for each student.
- Use paper that makes it easy for the child to respond. For example, divide paper into four parts for a story that has four parts, e.g. *first, next, then, finally*. Additional strategies include using paper that has lines for writing and blank space for illustrating as well as using graphic organizers for specific writing purposes.
- For a child who has difficulty fitting words into spaces provided, enlarge the worksheet or provide lined paper on which to respond.
- Use the eraser on the pencil to “sketch” the layout of a blank piece of paper before actually drawing with a pencil.



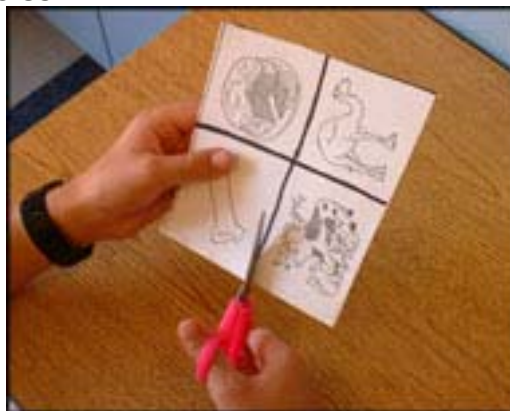
TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Make directed drawing books available to children who like to have ideas for what to draw and step by step directions for how to draw.
- Show and discuss what peers have done well.
- Simplify visually complex worksheets. Ideas include enlarging them, outlining sections and highlighting where answers should go.
- Break tasks down into smaller steps (for both big projects and small tasks).
- Consider what support might help a child be successful. Strategies include using the computer, templates, checklists and a specific type of paper.



USING SCISSORS CORRECTLY

- If right handed, cut in a counterclockwise direction; if left handed, cut clockwise.
- Fan fingers of the non-dominant hand under the paper when cutting.
- Cut with both thumbs up.
- Cut slowly for accuracy.
- Cut with the “deep” part of the scissors, not the tips. For most cutting, the scissors blades do not close completely. For curves, the blades are only slightly closed.
- Cut paper into smaller pieces to make cutting more manageable.
- Draw a thick line along which to cut, if it is difficult to stay on a thin one.
- Cut off excess paper that gets in the way when cutting.
- To stiffen paper, attach it to a thicker paper before cutting.
- Rather than cutting around each square on a grid, cut along the entire line for each vertical and horizontal line.
- Keep hands positioned across from each other when cutting a long straight line.
- Make smooth, continuous rotations with the non-dominant hand when cutting circles.



TIPS FOR PROPER LETTER FORMATION

- **m, n, h, r**

Start with a downstroke of the stick, retrace with an upstroke, and then complete the letter. For the "m", retracing with each upstroke keeps the letter from looking like a flying bird.

- **e**

Start with a horizontal line drawn left to right, then make a "c".

- **a**

Start at 1:00 on a clock face to form a "c", then add the stick with an upstroke, retrace that line on the downstroke. Starting at this point will ensure closure of the letter.

- **g**

Start by drawing the "a", but continue with a *straight* line drawn below the baseline with a curve added at the bottom of the straight line.

- **d**

Start the same as the "a", but extend the upstroke to the top of the line before retracing the line on the downstroke.

- **b**

Start with a stick drawn with a downstroke, retrace halfway up the stick with an upstroke, then add the curve to complete the letter. This formation will prevent the letter from looking like a "6".

- **o**

If you imagine where 12:00 is on a clock face, that is the starting point for drawing this circular letter. The letter should be drawn in a counterclockwise direction and close neatly at the same place it started.

Note that these letters are formed with one continuous movement, never picking up the pencil.