



## Prewriting/Handwriting Strategies

If handwriting is too hard or the student often uses a pressure that smashes markers or breaks pencil led, use a mechanical pencil - if the led keeps breaking the student cannot write. If student likes breaking the led, do not use mechanical pencils as this will reinforce breaking pencils, try writing with paper taped to the wall or even on the bottom of the desk (this also gives a sensory component to writing).

Tip: If student is holding high up on their pencil or using a fist, use small golf sized pencils or break crayons in half so that they force the student to use only the finger tips, not the whole hand/fist to write, this will make it harder to use excessive force, and will promote a proper pencil grasp. Various grips can also facilitate the integration of a proper pencil grasp, such as and Egg Grip, Grotto Grip, Writing Claw, etc. (Your classroom OT can recommend grip for a specific student based on their needs).



Tip: If the student uses their whole arm to write, and not just small fingertip surfaces, have the student write on a slanted surface, like a binder. This changes the student's wrist angle, making it more difficult to use a firm pressure and use a whole arm movement, and helping to develop more finger control with writing.



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Tip: Lay down on the ground and color, laying down makes it challenging to use excessive pressure, and it develops good postural control and shoulder stability that is necessary for writing.

Students also really enjoy this as it is more fun than writing at the table.



Tip: Tape or hang a paper on the wall, or use a chalkboard/whiteboard or other vertical surface for writing. This also reduces the amount of pressure used with writing, and allows the child to move when writing, and develop postural control and shoulder stability.



Tip: Color with chalk on the ground, like the crayons, break pieces of chalk into smaller pieces so that the student can only hold the chalk with their fingertips. Or you can use very thick chalk that the student cannot break as easily, however this may cause the student to use a fist to hold the chalk, if so, break the chalk into smaller pieces to again promote use of the fingertips.

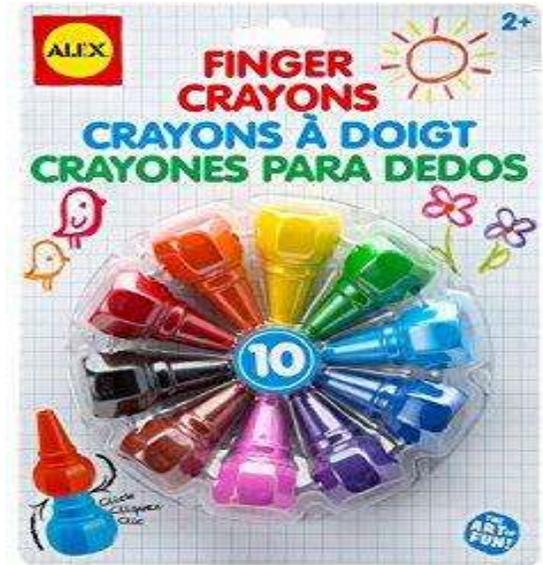


## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

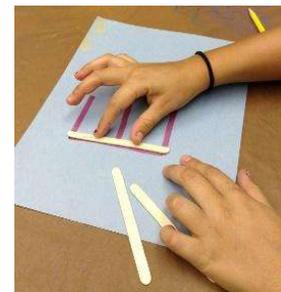
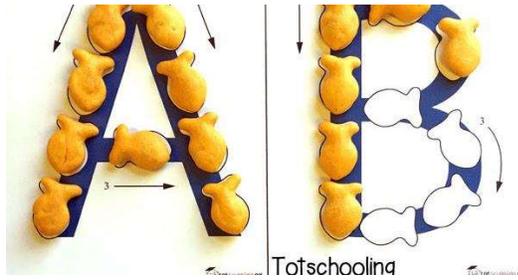
Tip: Use short adaptive, crayons. These can be found at times at Target, Walmart, and Amazon.

They force use of the fingertips for development of a proper pencil grasp, and are very difficult to break.

Tip: To assist with learning to trace and copy letters/shapes, various activities can be done to develop increased visual motor skills. This does take time and can be quite challenging for students, so it is important to make the activity something that the student can master.



Tip: Learn the shape of letters by building them with other materials like play dough, clay, food, blocks, sticks, pipe cleaners, magnets. At first, allow the student to copy an adult, or you may even have to start the letter for them. Always say the name of the letter as you make it, for reinforcement. Learn capital letters before lower case. You can grade the difficulty of the activity by adding less or more support of a visual model.





Tip: Participate in letter matching activities or letter "hide and seek." You can make your own cards easily with index

cards or cut paper. Making this an active game, where the child has to pick up letters off the floor or find letters taped to a wall is a great way to add sensory input/movement and develop skills like visual scanning.



Tip: Trace or copy letters in other sensory stimulating materials like sand/sugar, shaving cream, pudding, soap, paint, or even water. Placing a piece of paper or a sheet of low intensity sandpaper is a great way to get more input while writing (use caution as the vibration of the pencil with this activity is too aggressive for some students).



Print out line mazes, dot-to-dots, and tracing worksheets off google or Pinterest. Many children coloring books, or activity books have these types of exercises. These activities work on visual motor skills that help develop line adherence with writing. Using lined paper with colors or raised lines such as HiWrite or Mead See and Feel Learn to Letter paper provides visual and tactile input that can help with line adherence and letter sizing.



Tip: Use various Applications for the iPhone, smartphones, or even websites on a computer that challenge visual motor skills, letter learning, and handwriting activities. Some free/low cost examples include:

- All About Shapes
- Broom Broom
- Connecting Dots is Fun
- Dino Maze
- iMazing
- Skill Game
- Squiggles
- Whizzy Kids
- Tracing Lite
- Touch and Move Vehicles
- Alphabet Tracing
- iTrace
- Hip Hop Hen
- LetterSchool
- Dexteria Jr.
- Writing Wizard

The important thing to remember is to try and make writing as FUN as possible for your students. Writing is challenging and many children do not enjoy it for many reasons. Incorporating sensory activities and frequent practice sessions that are very short and successful for the child can help to increase visual motor skills and handwriting success within the classroom. Thank you for your support of your students' occupational therapy goals. If you have any further questions or need clarification on any activity strategies/materials, please feel free to contact Sarah Cruz (MOTR/L) ([Scruz@banning.k12.ca.us](mailto:Scruz@banning.k12.ca.us)) or Rachel Wheeler, (MOTR/L) ([Rwheeler@banning.k12.ca.us](mailto:Rwheeler@banning.k12.ca.us)).

Here are some helpful YouTube videos to support yourself and your child in the development of prewriting and handwriting related skills:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EgWlxKzZhLE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6R23ukb-qW4>

Write on!

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