

Handwriting Issues

Orientation

Letter reversals are common from kindergarten through 1st grade and are generally not a problem at that age. If reversals are still frequent beyond 1st grade, try the following techniques:

- Make practice sheets with the commonly reversed letters and make the student point out the letters that are reversed.
- Mark all b's and p's in red to indicate the loop is on the right and all d's and q's in green to indicate the loop is on the left.
- Provide a list of often reversed letters on the desk with proper formation noted.
- Draw a line down a sheet of paper. Place letters that face the left on the left side of the line. Place letters that face the right on the right side of the line (Hardin & Bernstein, 1980)
- Use your finger to write the letter on the student's back. Have them guess the letter. Have the student write the letter in the air. Have the student make the letter in clay. Finally, have the student write the letter on paper.
- Give verbal or visual cues:
"B" looks at "C"
b and d make a bed
The letter E faces number 3
- Place a dot to indicate where to start/stop.

Use of line

Students often disregard lined paper. This can be due to a variety of reasons including working too fast, poor visual perception, poor control and formation. Some strategies to help the student focus on proper line usage include:

- Bright Lines Paper-www.brightlinespaper.com
- Raised Lines Paper-www.brightlinespaper.com
- Handwriting Without Tears 2 line paper-www.hwtears.com
- Use a highlighter to emphasize the baseline
- Graph paper-place one letter in each box

Letter Formation

Many students have difficulty remembering how to form the letter, or how to pull the formation of the letter from their memory. Practice is the best way to learn letter formation. Use of these strategies can help improve letter formation:

- Use simple language “Down, up, down up makes a W”
- Handwriting without Tears uses a variety of auditory phrases that match with the motions made to form letters.
- Practice letter formation in a multi-sensory approach-use clay, sand, chalk, paint, magnadoodle, Wikki Stix, etc.
- Use a letter strip on the desk for visual reminders.

Spacing

- To define the space, use the following as “spacers”: tongue depressor, pencil, finger, eraser, stamp, sticker.
- Draw lines between words: The ___ cat ___ ran ___ away.
- Tap a pencil between words: The...cat...ran...away.
- When students are copying from the board or worksheet, insert a marker in the text (such as a stop sign, asterisk, etc.) to remind them to check spacing.
- Over emphasize spaces between words when writing. Make sure the spacing is easily noticed.
- Use graph paper to emphasize spaces.

Legibility

- Skip every other line on paper.
- Write on highlighted paper