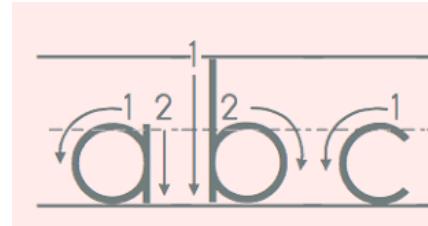


Early skills in reading and handwriting readiness to be taught in pre-K and kindergarten include **hand dominance, knowledge of size and shape, correct finger placement on crayon, and attentional, cognitive, and cooperation skills**. They should also be able to imitate vertical and horizontal lines, circles and crosses.

The developmental teaching order for handwriting skills are as follows

- Picking up, holding, aiming/placing and moving the crayon in scribbling motions
- Coloring within bold outlines and no overlapping parts to aid with development of horizontal strokes, vertical strokes, little circular motions.
- Singing and imitation for learning about shapes, letters and numbers
- Building letters with manipulative tools
- Combined shape drawing for forming drawings of people with appropriate body awareness and placement
- Tracing activities with crayon/chalk with supervision for correct sequencing of steps



Instructional stages for handwriting for preschoolers should be **imitation** of teacher for **proper sequence** of letter strokes as well as **top orientation** in letter formation. Worksheets are not the best method for teaching letter formation for preschool age kids unless completed with proper supervision and imitation by an adult. If left to themselves they will likely learn bad habits including incorrect and inconsistent sequences of letter formation that would result in sloppiness and decreased speed as the student progresses throughout school. Kindergarten through second grade children will benefit from continued imitation as well as copying from a printed model with some independent writing.

There are 8 key skills to develop in printing for speed and legibility

- Memory: identifying and visualizing letters and numbers
- Orientation: printing all letters/numbers without reversals
- Placement: attending to lines and anchoring letters to baseline
- Size: appropriate size of letters for age
- Start: Start all letters at the top except for e
- Sequence: complete letters in correct order of formation
- Control: neatness, straight lines are straight, curves are curved
- Space: letters are close in words and there is space between words



Children should learn to recognize both uppercase and lowercase letters for reading readiness, however for teaching handwriting the **developmental order** for learning to write is **capital letters first** followed by lowercase letters. **Capital letters are easier**. They all start at the top, are the same height and use the same space, and are easy to identify. Lowercase letters are more difficult because they start in 4 different locations, they vary in size, have 3 different uses of space (short, tall, descending), and are more difficult to recognize because of similarities.

For strategies to aid with fine motor skills and early handwriting skills contact Primary Therapy Soucre (208)734-7333.

