

SECTION 6

Handwriting

**Ideas and Suggestions to help you support your child
with Dyslexia at home**



Helping with handwriting

Children with Dyslexia sometimes have problems with handwriting. When learning to read, children first have to link the shape of the word on the page with the sound it makes. Then, when it comes to writing, they have to recreate that shape back onto paper. For children with dyslexia, decoding these patterns and making these links can often be very difficult. As a result, they frequently fail to develop the automatic flow of writing which will help them to express themselves clearly and easily in writing.

Practising continuous cursive handwriting

If you wish to practise handwriting with your child, it is advisable to follow the scheme use by your child at school. This will show you exactly how to form the letters and how best to practise them.

It is also worth paying attention to a few basics, such as:

Paper - It is a good idea to use lined paper. At the earliest stages you can use double lines to show the correct size of tall letter and letters below the line. Lines should be well spaced to start with e.g. 100mm apart, gradually reducing to single lines about 5mm apart.

Posture - Make sure that the chair and desk are the correct height. You child's back should be straight and feet resting on the floor. A right handed child should have their book slanted to the left. For a left handed child the book should be slanted to the right.

Implements - It is best to use a standard HB pencil, well sharpened. With the youngest ages, you might use a chunky triangular pencil to aid the grip. As children get older and more confident, they can move on to a fountain pen or a special handwriting pen. You should avoid using ballpoint pens for handwriting exercises.

Touch typing - Some pupils with dyslexia may find that handwriting involves a great deal of concentration and effort. Handwriting can inhibit their ability to structure and write a piece of work. Teaching touch typing skills and allowing pupils to use a computer for written work can allow more concentration to be focussed on the content of the piece.

Good sitting = Good writing



Verbalising Letter Formation

These instructions about how to form the letter are called 'Patter'. Your child's school might have their own 'patter', in which case you are advised to use it. Otherwise you could use this patter below.

Please refer to page 8 for additional guidance.

a - All the way round, up and down

b - All the way down to the line, up and around

c - Round we go

d - All the way around, up and down

e - Along and around on the line

f - Over and down, pencil off, then cross

g - All the way around, up, down with a curve

h - Down, up and over

i - Down with a little curve, pencil off, do the dot

j - All the way down with a curve, pencil off, for the dot

k - Down, pencil off, in and out

l - Straight down with a little curve

m - Down, up, over and over

n - Down, up and over

o - All the way around

p - All the way down, up and around

q - All the way around, down with a flick

r - Down, up and a little over

s - round and round again

t - Down with a curve, pencil off, then cross

u - Down, under and up, down again

v - Across and up

w - Down, up, down, up

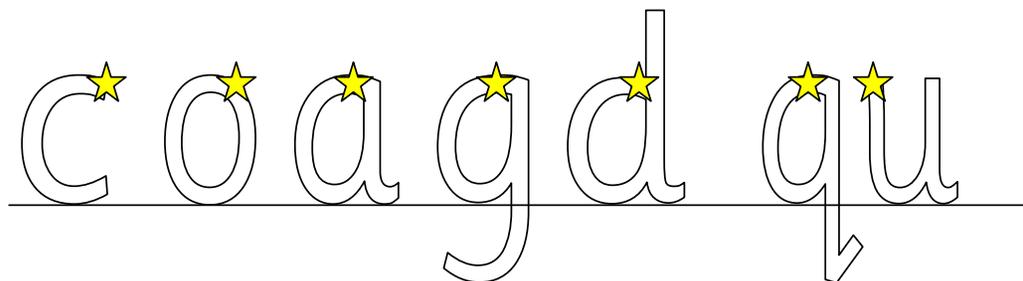
x - Across and across

y - Down, under and up, down with a curve

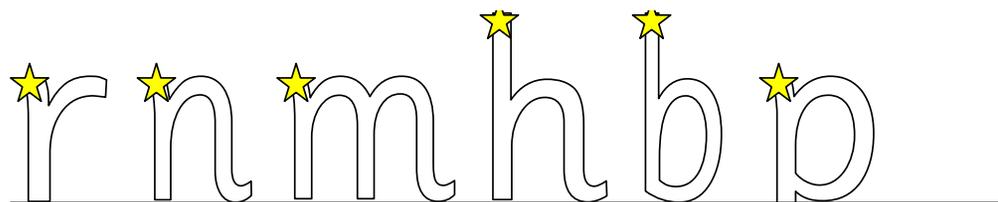
z - Along, across, along

Start at the top... Start at the star!

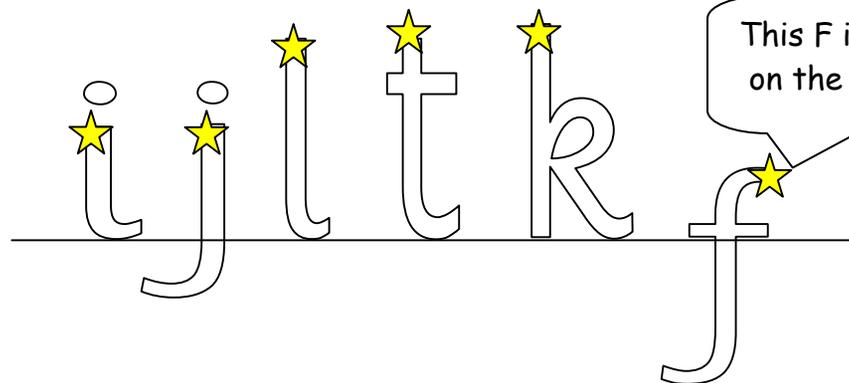
All these letters start with a
C
... round, up and down...



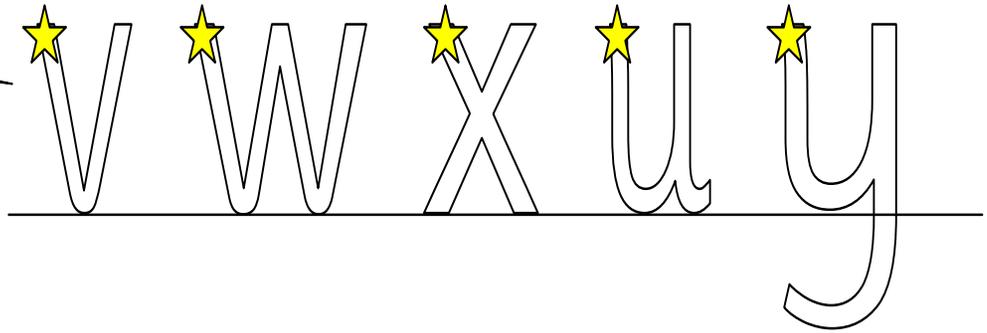
All these letters go
down, up and over!



Start at the top
Go down...



Straight down...



Start on the
star!



Sometimes Children experience problems with pencil control. Their grip might be too tight or quite weak; sometimes their pencil grip is unusual and causes pain when writing.



Ask your child's school for advice on the most comfortable pencil grip.

The following exercises might help in strengthening and/or relaxing the muscles in the hand and fingers:

- Wiggle fingers in the air
- Hands flat on table, talk about them, creases, nails etc. Name fingers and thumbs touch them.
- Shake hands
- Tap thumbs, tap all fingers
- Flex and stretch each finger in turn
- Spread fingers in and out
- Press all fingertips and thumbs together then move fingers apart and together
- Press palms together with elbows pointing out
- Thumbs touch each finger in turn, one hand then two
- Bent fingers then straighten them
- Rub hands vigorously together

