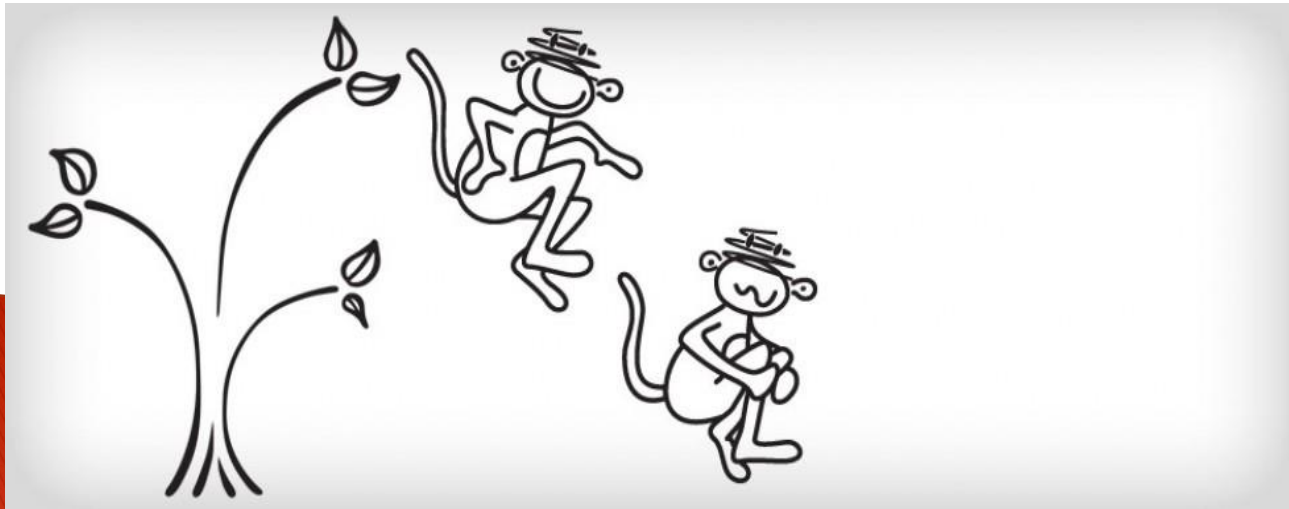


Handwriting

“Kinetic Letters”



Kinetic Letters

- Kinetic Letters is a scheme that allows children to learn letter formation through movement.
- We learn letters by moving our bodies to look like letters, saying the language as we make the letters and finally writing the letters using the language.
- We teach the children exercises to strengthen core muscles to help with their writing.
- The children become familiar with 'brave' monkey and 'scared' monkey to help them recognise where to start to form each letter.

Key Principles

- Physical strength underpins handwriting, as poor handwriting may be the result of poor strength.
- Letters are learnt as movements not as visual shapes and movement remains central to developing flow and fluency.
- Handwriting is made easier using a pen and white board. Lying on the floor to write enables the hand to be held in the correct position for writing.

Strong Bodies

- A strong Pelvic Girdle enables children to sit still and concentrate without wriggling.
- Shoulder Girdle Strength enables the hand to hold the pencil correctly and write well.

How is this achieved?

- Lie on the floor to read and write- teach children that this 'makes bodies strong'.
- Kneel to draw and colour, table kneeling activities
- Physical activities to develop balance: climbing, jumping, hopping, skipping
- Games involving passing a beanbag, whilst kneeling up.
- Crawling games
- Pull ups (monkey bars) and press ups

Strong Bodies

Forearm and Wrist Strength

How is this achieved?

- ✓ Hammering games
- ✓ Activities that require wrist stability and control e.g. Hand prints
- ✓ Activities requiring forearm control e.g. Playing musical instruments
- ✓ Crawling and clapping games

Hand and Finger Strength

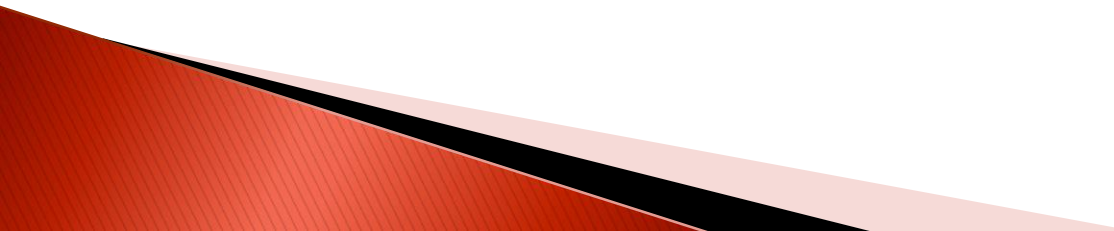
The hand has muscles that need strengthening in order to enable dexterity and strength.

Both of these functions are required in order to write legibly and at speed without physical discomfort.

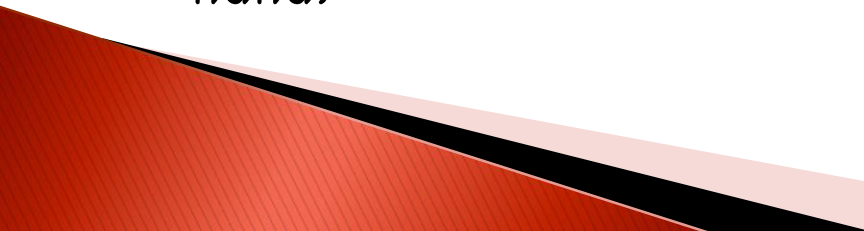
How is hand and finger strength achieved?

- ✓ Crawling games- strengthen the muscles in the hand as the weight is transferred from one side of the palm to the other.
- ✓ Finger rhymes- improve the dexterity and control of the fingers.
- ✓ Duck beak stretch
- ✓ T-rex head stretch
- ✓ Tweezers clothes pegs

Learning The Letters

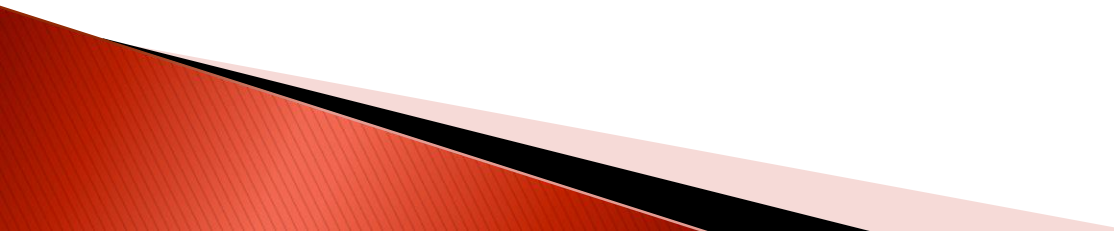
- There are six core movements in kinetic letters to help the children form the letters.
 - All 26 Letters of the alphabet can be re-constructed for writing using different combinations of these six letter parts.
- 

Six Movements

- **Down-bump**
 - **Up**
 - **Flick**
 - **Slide**
 - Making **the Sign Post** before pull/push
 - **Pull** (2 hands for Pre-school/ older children use their writing hand)
 - **Push** (2 hands for Pre-school/ older children use their writing hand)
- 

Star tips!

- Practise the moves whilst saying the words. (Co-ordinate movement and speech)
 - Use trail markers to enhance the experience.

 - Magic wands
 - Squeegees
 - Shakers
 - Glow sticks
 - Torches
- 

Letter Trails

Letter trails is the name for the imagined 'marks' left in the air when children mimic the Monkeys from the stories. They make the letter moves in the air and, just as an aeroplane leaves a vapour trail in the air following the movements, they leave an imaginary vapour trail behind.

The Letter Trails teaching strategy is known as
'Move it, Say it, Write it'.

Step 1- Letter Trails are taught as whole body movements with the hand holding a Trail Maker

Step 2 -Letter Trails are practised with the finger in shallow sand tray

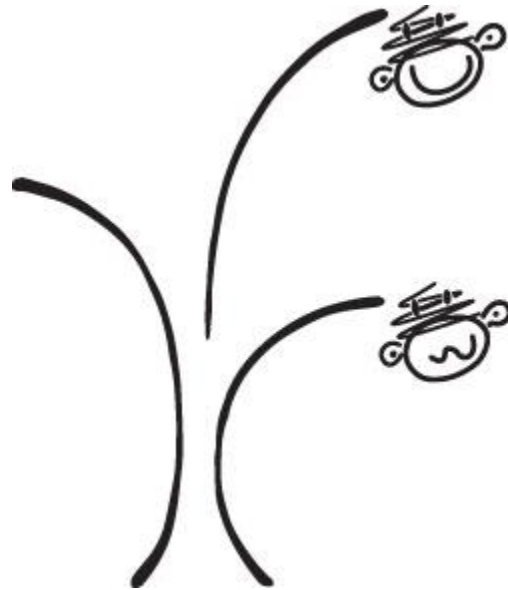
Step 3- Letter trails are practised with a pen on a white board.

Introducing 'scared' and 'brave' monkey.

- Once upon a time there was a turtle with magic powers. She wrote down all her powers in magic books. She was looking for someone to give her magic powers to as she was getting old. She found an island full of monkeys and met two of the youngest members called Bounce and Skip. The monkeys loved to play hide and seek! Bounce liked climbing to hide in the tops of the trees because he was a brave monkey. Skip preferred the lower branches to hide and so, the other monkeys called him the scared monkey! They follow the turtle's magic to help them to make the letters to write the pages in the turtle's spell book. To be continued...
- In summary; tall and capital letters start at brave monkey's branch and lower case letters usually start at scared monkey's branch.

The Monkey Tree!

You will see children using the image of a tree with two monkey faces. This helps the children recall the places where letters start on the page.



Stories

- First children are introduced to these two monkeys, through the Jumper family story. The Brave monkey jumps **down** from the high branch of the tree to make **b and h** and then the scared monkey jumps down from the lower branch of the tree to make **r n m**.
- The BRAVE monkey also makes all the Upper-case letters and numerals.

Six Letter Families

- Jumper h m n r b p down, bump Back up
 - Abracadabra c a o d g q s Pull in (all start with c)
 - Squirter e In the middle
 - Window l i t u down, bump
 - Fisher g j y f pull around to make a tail
 - Slider v w x z k slide down
-
- g is unique as it belongs in two families because it has two distinctive features. It begins with a c (Abracadabra) and has a tail (Fisher family)

Holding the Pencil

Pencil points to tummy.

Holding fingers ready.

Pick it up, push it back, pillow fingers ready. Tucked fingers form a base.

Children's Pencil checks

- Are my Holding Fingers level with each other?
- Can I see a little bit of colour between my Holding fingers?
- Is my pillow finger underneath?
- Is my pencil laying across my hand?