



Playapy's Smart Guide to Printing Letters

Description

Playapy® has published two award-winning workbooks that provide a new multi-sensory approach to printing letters that is both fun and easy to use. Treasure C.H.E.S.T. and Heads, Tummies, & Tails were developed by an occupational therapist to guide or remediate the practice of handwriting skills using contemporary design, motivational mascots, and smart and simple action words that children and parents love to repeat. Learn the foundational skills and stages of pre-writing and bring joy to handwriting again with Playapy!

Learning Objectives

- Plan instruction based on the stages of development for pre-writing by age.
- Learn the six foundational skills needed for pre-writing skills.
- Understand why children should learn uppercase before and separate from lowercase letters.
- Gain knowledge of creative strategies and new materials to instruct children how to draw shapes and print letters.
- Practice fun exercises to foster hand development and strengthening of hand muscles.
- Build habits for proper letter formation and alignment using groups and action words.
- Pick up fun and effective tips and techniques to help children remediate handwriting quickly.
- Understand the importance of handwriting instruction through current research.

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Amy is an occupational therapist with over 15 years of experience working with children of all ages and abilities levels as well as a variety of diagnoses. She has worked in home, preschool, private school, and rehabilitation settings. Amy has a special interest in play and fine motor skills and has published two award-winning handwriting workbooks, Treasure C.H.E.S.T. and Heads, Tummies, & Tails. Creative Child Magazine named the workbooks the 2013 Educational Activity Books of the Year. Amy is also the founder of Playapy and writes for the other publications as well as serving as an expert resource for numerous on-line sites. Follow her on Twitter @AmyBaezTweets!



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Six Essentials for Pre-Printing Skills

Many parents and educators have expectations that children should know how to print their names before they start formal schooling. However, rarely is the question asked of whether a child is ready. Here are some factors to consider as essential in building a foundation for printing and writing skills. Without a mastery of these developmental skills, a child can learn poor habits and become fatigued and frustrated with learning which can lead to possibly requiring therapeutic services.

1. **Posture & Balance:** Must be able to sit upright in a chair without requiring additional support from the use of his/her arms.
2. **Shoulder Stability:** Must be able to coordinate and hold weight at the shoulder joint. Strength develops from the joint closest to the torso to the joints farthest at the fingertips. Muscle tone can also factor into quality of movement of the shoulder muscles.
3. **Arm Control:** Must be able to move the arm with accuracy with different levels of force and speed.
4. **Bilateral Coordination:** Must be able to use both hands together to accomplish a task. This should not be confused with a child switching hands when writing. Hand dominance is required for strong handwriting skills. Typically a child will use one hand as the doer and the other as the helper. The non-dominant hand would hold and turn the paper while the dominant hand writes or cuts with scissors.
5. **Visual Motor Coordination:** Must be able to coordinate the eyes and hands to create and imitate formations to connect and intersect lines or maintain within the boundaries of images.
6. **Pencil Grasp:** Must be able to hold onto a writing tool in a functional manner. As the child grows, the grasp becomes more efficient where the small muscles of the hand are creating the movement instead of the wrist or arm. This allows for less fatigue and stress. Development of hand arches and adequate hand strength are necessary for proper pencil grasp. There are four functional grasps: dynamic tripod, dynamic quadrupod, lateral tripod, & lateral quadrupod.

Six Stages of Pre-Printing Skills

Children begin developing pre-printing skills by forming lines, distinguishes directions, and then combining lines to form shapes, letters, and numbers. Directionality is very important. Lines, shapes, numbers, and letters are formed in a top to bottom and left to right orientation. This is encouraged early in age to aid in the development of visual skills required for reading. Lines should be mastered before moving onto shapes. Shapes and numbers begin at the top. Then uppercase letters and later lowercase letters are introduced.

1. Ages 0-1: Children learn to coordinate movement, develop the arches of the hands, and increase hand strength when crawling and grasping objects.
2. Ages 1-2: Children learn to scribble randomly and then with direction by imitating strokes.
3. Ages 2-3: Children learn to copy vertical, horizontal, and curved lines.
4. Ages 3-4: Children learn to form circular shapes and intersect lines.
5. Ages 4-5: Children learn to copy diagonal lines and form angled shapes.
6. Ages 5+: Children learn to copy a triangle, diamond, numbers, letters, and eventually words.



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Lines Order of Development

- 1st Vertical Line: Say, "Zip down."
- 2nd Horizontal Line: Say, "Zoom across."
- 3rd Curved Line (counter-clockwise): Say, "Curve around."
- 4th Curved Line (clockwise): Say, "Make an ear."
- 5th Curved Line (downward or upward): Say, "Make a hook."
- 6th Diagonal (downward): Say, "Slide down."
- 7th Diagonal (upward): Say, "Slide up."

Shapes Order of Development

- 1st Circle: Counter-clockwise direction. Say, "Curve around."
- 2nd Oval: Counter-clockwise direction. Say, "Curve around."
- 3rd Cross: Say, "Zip down. Lift up. Zoom Across."
- 4th Square: Say, "Zip down. Zoom across. Lift up. Zoom across. Zip down."
- 5th Rectangle: Say, "Zip down. Zoom across. Lift up. Zoom across. Zip down."
- 6th Triangle: Say, "Slide down. Lift up. Slide down. Lift up. Zoom across."
- 7th Diamond: Say, "Slide down. Slide down. Lift up. Slide down. Slide down."

Action Words for Numbers

- #0. Say, "Curve around."
- #1: Say, "Zip down."
- #2. Say, "Make an ear. Zoom across."
- #3. Say, "Make an ear. Make an ear."
- #4. Say, "Slide down. Zoom across. Lift up. Zip down."
- #5. Say, "Zip down. Make an ear. Lift up. Zoom across."
- #6. Say, "Slide down. Curve around."
- #7. Say, "Zoom across. Slide down."
- #8. Say, "Curve around. Make an ear. Slide up."
- #9. Say, "Curve around. Slide down."

Ideas For Fine Motor Play

- Use broken crayons • Roll modeling clay • Link paperclips • Color with circular strokes
- Squeeze paper with hole punchers • Draw on the floor or on a vertical surface
- Play with sidewalk chalk, tweezers, tongs, or clothespins

Ideas For Gross Motor Play

- Practice yoga poses for cat, cow, down dog, & dolphin • Hop like frog, bunny, or kangaroo
- Walk like a crab with tummy facing up or a bear with tummy facing down
- Walk on hands like a wheelbarrow with partner holding feet

Ideas For Sensory Play

- Squeeze water from sponges • Squish wet pasta • Draw on sandpaper • Play with sand or soil
- Find objects hidden in dry pasta or rice • Play balloon volleyball with only fingertips
- Play hand clapping games • Put lotion on a baby doll or plastic animal



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What Makes Playapy's Program a Smart Choice?

- Encourages Family-centered Approach
- Uses a Kinesthetic Approach
- Focuses on Letter Formation
- Encourages Correct Orientation
- Uses Simple & Consistent Action Words
- Divides Uppercase & Lowercase
- Uses Traditional Line System
- Showcases Fun & Modern Mascots

Treasure C.H.E.S.T.: A Smart Guide to Printing Uppercase Letters

The 26 uppercase letters of the alphabet are separated into six formation groups forming the acronym CHEST: Clocks, Hats, Hooks, Ears, Slides, & Trees. Seven action words are used to form letters according to curved or straight lines: curve around, make an ear, make a hook, slide down, slide up, zip down, and zoom across.

- C is for **Clocks**: The 5 letters are C G O Q S.
Ask the child: Which letters curve around like a circular clock?
- H is for **Hats**: The 5 letters are E F I T Z.
Ask the child: Which letters have a line across the top like a hat?
- H is also for **Hooks**: The 2 letters are J U.
Ask the child: Which letters curve up like a hook?
- E is for **Ears**: The 4 letters are B D P R.
Ask the child: Which letters have a bump on the right side like an ear?
- S is for **Slides**: The 5 letters are A V W X Y.
Ask the child: Which letters slide down to the side like a playground slide?
- T is for **Trees**: The 5 letters are H K L M N.
Ask the child: Which letters zip straight down and have branches like a tree?

Heads, Tummies, & Tails: A Smart Guide to Printing Lowercase Letters

The 26 lowercase letters of the alphabet are separated into three alignment groups: Heads, Tummies, & Tails. Ten action words are used to form letters according to curved or straight lines: add a dot, break through, curve around, make an ear, make a hook down, make a hook up, slide down, slide up, zip down, and zoom across.

Heads

Lowercase letters that ascend or "touch the top line" are in the Heads group. These are the following 7 letters: b d f h k l t.
Ask the Child: "Which letters touch the top line like the monkey's head?"

Tummies

Lowercase letters at the middle or "mark the middle line" are in the Tummies group. These are the following 14 letters: a c e i m n o r s u v w x z.
Ask the Child: "Which letters stay in the middle like the monkey's tummy?"

Tails

Lowercase letters that descend or "break through the bottom line" are in the Tails group. These are the following 5 letters: g j p q y.
Ask the Child: "Which letters break through the bottom line like the monkey's tail?"

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Presentation Review & Feedback

Thank you for attending the presentation of Playapy's Smart Guide to Printing Letters! You can help us to continue to provide quality and informative programming to others by providing us with your thoughts about your experience. Please answer the questions below with your honest feedback and include a score of **1** to **5** with **5 being the best score** for questions 1-8.

1. Was the presenter knowledgeable and easy to follow?

Score: ____ Comments: _____

2. Were the presentation & materials provided adequate and easy to follow?

Score: ____ Comments: _____

3. Was the length of time of the presentation adequate?

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4. Do you believe the learning objectives were achieved in this presentation?

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5. Do you believe viewing this presentation will make you a better teacher/parent/therapist?

Score: ____ Comments: _____

6. Would you like to attend another Playapy presentation on a different topic?

Score: ____ Comments: _____

7. Would you recommend this presentation to other teachers/parents/therapists?

Score: ____ Comments: _____

8. Would you recommend Playapy handwriting workbooks to teachers/parents/therapists?

Score: ____ Comments: _____

9. What was the most important or memorable part of the presentation?

Comments: _____

10. How can we improve the presentation?

Comments: _____