



Improving Letter Formation in Handwriting

Handwriting is an important skill to ensure your child's success in the academic setting and beyond. Handwriting is an essential component of literacy and can positively or negatively contribute to a student's academic success. As occupational therapy practitioners, one of the nine main occupations we focus on is education, which includes participation in different educational institutions. Handwriting is an essential part of educational participation as it can affect a student's grades and is an important life skill that will be necessary in all parts of life.

One essential part of legible handwriting is appropriate letter formation. "Letter formation is the process of using the correct strokes and making sure letters are in the correct proportion with each other. This includes the physical act of forming the letter and the mental process of knowing which strokes to use" (Begin, 2022).

Research shows that sensorimotor based activities, that is, activities that incorporate both sensory and motor components, are best when working on improving letter formation (Grajo, et al., 2020). Here are some activities that you can do at home to help improve letter formation in your child:

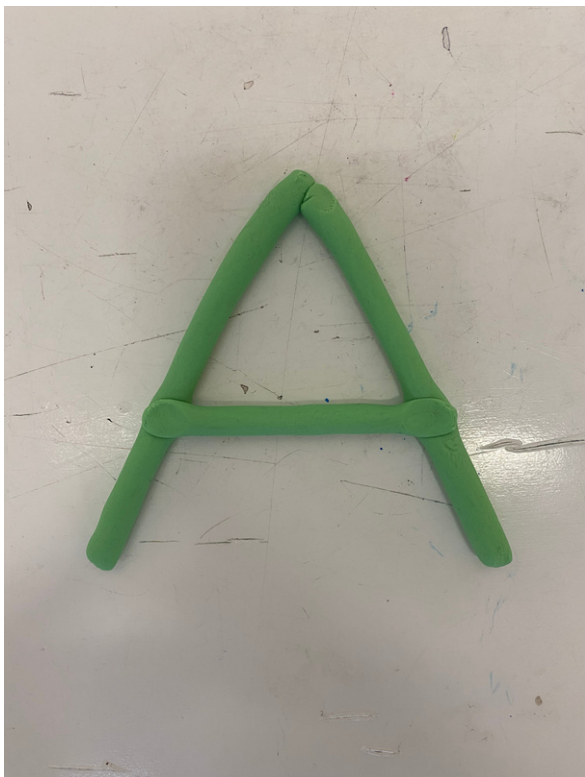
Draw letters in sand with your finger



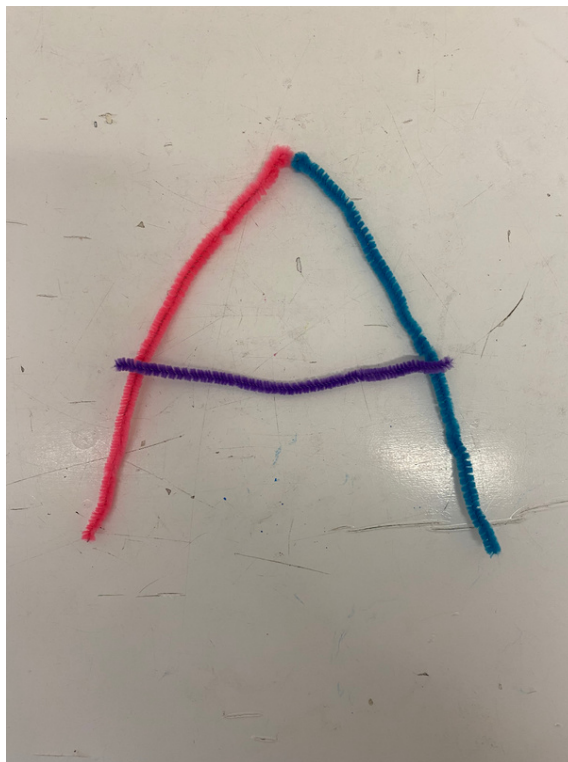
Use pom poms to form letters



Break, roll, and form pieces of play doh into letters



Manipulate pipe cleaners into letters



Spread shaving cream across a smooth surface and use your finger to draw letters



Fill a zip loc bag halfway with hair gel and trace letters on the bag with your finger



Resources

Begin. (2022, June 30). What is letter formation? Plus, 7 tips for practicing. Beginlearning.com. https://www.beginlearning.com/parent-resources/letter-formation/?utm_source=begin&utm_medium=blog&anonymousId_mr=ff2f4d89-d504-483a-bc25-8edb21e9b86d#handwriting-doesnt

Grajo, L., Candler, C., & Sarafian, A. (2020). Interventions within the scop of occupational therapy to improve children's academic participation: A systematic review. The American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 74(2), 1-32. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2020.039016>