NHS Solent NHS Trust

Schools Therapy Resource Pack

Section 6d – Handwriting

Introduction

The expectation of the National Literacy Strategy is that most children will write consistently with neat, legible, joined handwriting by the end of Year 4. However, handwriting is a complex task which relies on many underlying motor and perceptual skills including:-

- Balance and postural control
- Ability to move rhythmically
- Eye-motor control
- Arm/hand stability and finger dexterity
- Body/spatial awareness and directionality
- Visual attention and listening
- Combining spatial and language concepts ('up', 'down', 'round')
- Bilateral coordination (both sides of the body working together)
- Individual finger awareness
- Hand dominance
- Linking letter sounds and shapes
- Visual discrimination and recognition
- Motor planning

Children need to develop the mechanical skills of writing before they can start to concentrate on factual or imaginative content and achieve the later stages of writing in the Foundation Stage Profile. It is important to focus on quality before quantity and for children to have fun with developing such a complex skill!

Your school will have a handwriting policy; some handwriting schemes are more helpful particularly for children who find writing difficult - you may wish to discuss this with the occupational therapist.

Readiness for Writing

With early school entry now in place in the United Kingdom for over a decade, reports suggest that that many children coming into reception classes exhibit variations in maturity and have not fully developed the foundation skills for more formal learning. Pilot occupational therapy/education research in a Hampshire infant school (2006) identified that during their first term, over two thirds of reception children were not developmentally 'ready to write'.

When children come to school, experience of letter shapes and writing varies. Some may know how to hold a pencil and form certain letters, others may have been encouraged to write before they are ready. Most children will benefit from practising the foundation skills needed for writing.

Foundation skills can be improved through the programmes provided in fine motor programme and the ABC, particularly Building Blocks 123, Clever Bodies, Clever

Hands and the activities in the Visual Perception Section. You may also want to draw on approaches such as Write Dance, hand gym etc. which promote movement, rhythm and coordination.

Developing pre-writing skills

The following are examples of the type of activities which could be included in a pre-writing programme and why they are useful:-

Balance and postural control

- Lie on tummy and pull along with forearms - move like a seal with appropriate noises! - *extension posture, shoulder stability, strengthening arm muscles*
- Kneel up tall, roll ball to named child in circle - *eye tracking, balance*
- Actions to Grand Old Duke of York, Hickory Dickory Dock - *coordination, body and spatial awareness, rhythm*

Hand function

- Hold onto large piece of Lycra, lift up and down keeping ball/bean bag on surface - *eye tracking*, *shoulder stability, hand grasp*
- On all fours, rub chalk/chunky wax crayon to cover large sheet of paper with colour - *shoulder and arm stability, developing pencil grasp*

Motor planning/sequencing, visual perception

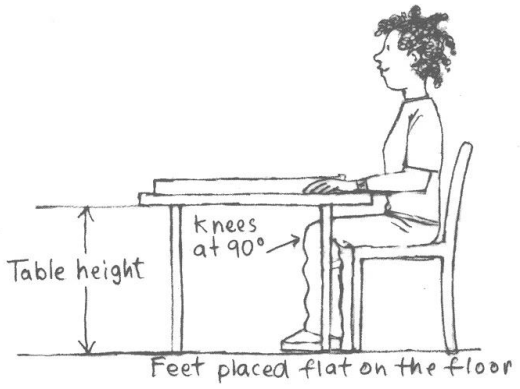
- Make (anti-clockwise) wheels in the air (tractor, bus, bicycle) in time to music - *movement, rhythm and letter shape*

As children begin to consolidate foundation skills, other factors need to be considered

Guidance on sitting position (stable, upright posture)

- child sits on chair with hips, knees, ankles at right angles
- feet are supported e.g. flat on the floor or a foot rest
- seat depth allows child to be well supported by back of chair (without front edge of seat pressing into back of legs)
- chair is pulled into the table/desk, providing good forearm support on table
- table height is at level of child's bent elbow (when sitting upright) or 2-3 cms below

Check for correct sitting posture



Good posture when writing (or for other table top activities and using a computer)

Hips, knees and ankles at 90º, feet flat on the floor, good back support, chair well pulled in

Table at resting elbow height or just below

Strategies for Pre-writers

- Practice making shapes and patterns in the air with big arm movements to reinforce motor memory, then with smaller hand or finger movements (in sand, playdough, finger paint etc.)

- Repeat the above with letters/numbers.

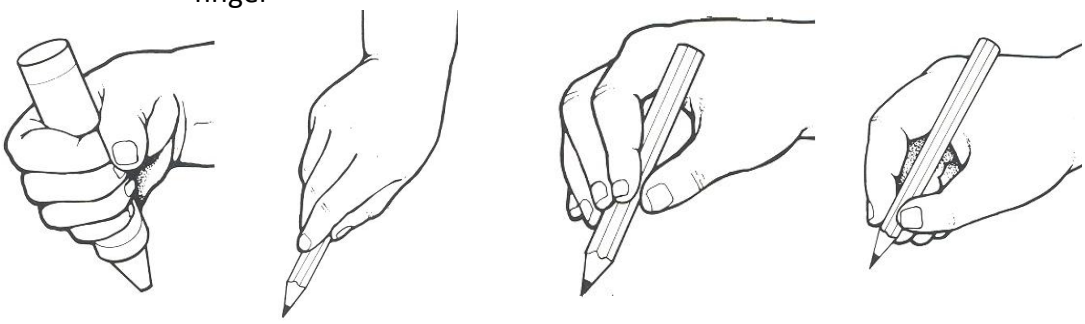
- Encourage good posture for writing: it is important to reinforce this early, so children do not have to unlearn habits later on.

Pencil grasp

Observe the child's grasps on crayons and paint brushes. Practice correct pencil grasp as soon as children are developmentally ready, for drawing and patterns. (You may wish to divide the class into groups, working on this as children are ready).

Normal development of pencil grasp:

- whole hand (cylindrical grasp)
- pencil pointing downwards in direction of finger tips
- pencil held between thumb and several finger tips (rounded web space between thumb and index finger developing)
- tripod grasp between thumb and index finger, resting against middle finger



To develop pencil grasp:

- Colour on sugar paper with very short, chunky wax crayon
- Identify thumb/fingers needed: place writing hand palm down on table. Lift named finger in turn: Tommy Thumb (1), Peter Pointer (2), Toby Tall (3), then tap each separately on table
- Pick up pencil and practise where the fingers go
- Reinforce with rhyme/song (tune as in 'Here we go round the mulberry bush' or 'Twinkle, twinkle' - repeat last two lines)

  On my pencil, can you see?
  Thumb and fingers, one two three
  Hold your pencil just like me
  Thumb and fingers, one two three

- Children with extra stretch in finger joints may hold a pencil with an excessive dip in fingers (usually index); a suitable pencil grip can reduce this dip. See also 'Pressure' below.

NB: If the child is reporting or showing signs of pain or discomfort during writing (sighing, shaking hands out, rubbing hands, slow writing) or there is swelling please ask parents to consult the child's GP or Paediatrician.

Letter formation

- Practice letter sounds and names (e.g. point to alphabet cards, naming 't' for teddy)

- Sing alphabet to reinforce sequence

- **Check school's handwriting scheme: encourage correct letter formation from the start - check frequently and reinforce; practice for short period every day** When children learn poor letter formation it is really hard for them to change this when they are trying to concentrate on content.

- Think of writing a letter as a sequence of movement, emphasising correct starting point

- Use multi-sensory techniques for learning shapes, letters, and numbers e.g. talk through sequences ('I go round, up and down') and illustrations ('b' is 'big stick down and circle away from body').

- Letters can be practiced in similar 'families' but they may be easier to learn in alphabet sequence (easily reinforced by singing) where each succeeding letter has a contrasting shape

- Share information on how pencil grasp and letter formation are being taught with parents so they can reinforce in play activities at home

Strategies for Early Writers

Warm up exercises

These can be done as a class or individually

- Rub hands together - fronts and backs
- Hands flat on table, tap thumbs and fingers in sequence.
- Tap specific fingers, e.g. "tap your index finger (Peter Pointer) twice".
- Press palms, fingers and thumbs together, keeping fingers straight.
- Touch thumb to each fingertip in sequence, both hands at the same time, then right hand, then left. Try and do it without looking at hands.
- 'Flash lights' (fingers opening and closing quickly); again specify both hands, then left, then right.

Then

- Stand up, stay on the spot and wriggle your whole body.
- Stamp your feet on the spot.
- Stretch arms up above your head, let arms flop down.

'Now you are ready to sit down and write'!

Print or cursive?

Most children find single (i.e. printed) letters an easier motor and visual perceptual task to start with (but always include **exit** stroke/flick on appropriate letters to prepare for later joining).

Materials/equipment

- Provide suitable pencil grips for children who need more help with correct pencil grasp (see *Resource List*)

- Provide a selection of pencils (pens), so children can choose what feels comfortable

- Children can experiment on blank paper but then move on to lined paper (wide space between single lines)

  Raised line paper is available (see *Resource List*)

- As letter formation develops, double (tram) lines often help (set at width approximating to child's average mid-zone letter size when written freely)

- Use exercise books rather than loose paper

- Try large graph paper for sums to keep columns and rows organised.

Consistent, preferred hand for writing?

Some children may not have developed a leading hand or clear hand dominance by the time they start school. (Even those who always hold a pencil in the same hand may alternate the leading hand in two-handed activities).

Picking up a pencil alternately with either hand can sometimes be linked to coordination problems or difficulty crossing the mid-line of the body and/or directional confusion.

Strategy/review

- Give child time to experiment
- Does child generally use both hands together efficiently (or tend to ignore one?)
- Check whether there are immediate left-handers in the family (especially mother) which may suggest a left preference
- Observe whether one hand is preferred for throwing a ball, pointing, picking up food, threading a lace into a bead etc.
- Where there is no reason to predict left-handedness and child appears to function at the same level of skill with either hand, encourage using pencil in right hand (in liaison with parents)

Note: a child could be genuinely ambidextrous i.e. equally skilled with either hand but this is rare.

Paper position

The position of the paper can affect the fluency and speed of writing.

- right-handed children should angle the paper to the left
- left-handed children should angle the paper to the right

Younger children will need guidance; older children can check for themselves:

- sit straight at the table
- clasp hands together in line with both head and midline of the body, place forearms on table to make a triangle
- place paper inside the triangle, parallel to writing arm

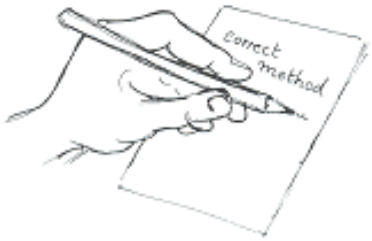
Left and Right Hand Paper Position

Advice for left handers

In order to see text as they write and prevent smudging, they should hold the pen/pencil further from the point. The preferred position can be marked with a small elastic band or by using a pencil grip or pen with an integral grip. Left-handed children have to push the pen/pencil across the paper which can be more tiring. Ballpoint, Berol or fibre tip pens create less friction and left-handed nibs are available from commercial stationers.

Position left-handers at the end of a table (not next to a right-hander) to provide adequate space for forearm support.

Correct grasp for left-handed child



A hooked grasp may result in:

- restricted arm and finger movements - having to move the whole arm when writing letters, which becomes tiring
- continual re-adjustment of hand position with jerky movements which reduce fluency and speed
- ache in wrist and fingers with extended periods of writing
- smudging of work and difficulty achieving neat writing and presentation

Hooked grasp

Strategies to avoid a hooked grasp

- practise drawing /writing on vertical or sloping board to develop wrist extension
- check paper position - angled correctly for left-hander
- try an angled surface on table
- experiment with softer pencils or alternative pens
- use relaxation techniques regularly (see below)

Useful resources for left handers

The following resources are available from Anything Left-Handed *(see Resource List):*

- Writing Left Handed
- Helping Left Handed Children to Enjoy
- Left Handed Children - A Guide for Teachers and Parents
- The Left Hander's Handbook

Relaxation techniques for the writing hand

Most children will tire at some stage when writing and exercises can be incorporated into classroom activities:-

- Position hands under thighs, flat on chair seat, palms down, rock from side to side

- Place hands palms down, grasp edge of chair seat, straighten elbows, push down through hands to lift bottom off chair.

- Place palms together and interlock fingers, turn fingers towards body and push away with elbows straight.

- With arms down by sides, make a tight fist in both hands and then straighten and spread fingers

- Place palms of hands together in 'praying' position with fingers stretched then lower forearms onto table, keeping fingers pointing upwards and wrists extended.

- Shake arms and hands down by sides.

Pressure

Children may press either too hard or too lightly.

Contributory factors may be

- poor shoulder stability (and attempt to compensate by tightening muscles in the arm or hand)
- weak arm or hand muscles
- poor sensory feedback
- extra stretch (hyper-extension) of thumb/finger joints (where children try to achieve a more stable position by using position of maximum stretch, causing an excessively dipped appearance)

Tripod grasp with hyper-extension of index finger

***Heavy pressure may result in**:*

- increased tension (aching) in forearm and wrist
- loss of fluency
- difficulty writing for a sustained length of time
- indentations or holes made in paper

<u>Strategies to support reduced pressure</u>

- check sitting posture (see page 3)
- see hand relaxation techniques (see above)
- implement Clever Bodies – Motor Planning and Coordination and (Section 2) and Clever Hands (Section 3)

- practise writing on sheet(s) of paper over carbon paper to provide visual feedback on degree of pressure
- write in exercise book rather than on a single sheet of paper on desk
- place card under the paper to prevent imprint of text onto the next page
- try an angled surface (*see Resource List*)
- use larger diameter pencil/pen to reduce strain on finger joints
- use commercially available pens with cushioned grip incorporated into the barrel, which may reduce tension
- try pen (nib) with easier ink flow on paper e.g., fibre tip, roller ball, fountain pen

Light pressure may result in:

- inability to make consistent marks on paper
- poor pencil control
- illegible, spidery script

Strategies to increase pressure

- check sitting posture (see page 3)
- implement 'Clever Hands' (Section 3)
- try angled surface (*see Resource List*)
- try different pencils /pens which require less pressure e.g. soft pencils, fibre tip, roller ball
- a weighted pen can help dampen a tremor (shakiness); a light weight pen can help children with muscle weakness (*see Resource List*)

Strategies for Older Children

For older children, specific programmes may be helpful:-

- 'Write from the Start' Books 1&2 (Teodorescu, Addy) : perceptuo-motor approach
- 'Speed-up' (Addy) : kinaesthetic approach (from 8 years)

See Resource List

To type or not to type?

Writing continues to be important to schools and employers; word processing is not an automatic alternative to handwriting since it also requires fine motor and perceptual skills.

However, for some children, typing becomes a useful addition or occasionally the sole recording method. In these cases, it is particularly important to introduce a useful method from the start (preferably touch-typing), usually not until about 7 years old. Various children's programmes are available for keyboard familiarisation (e.g. Speedy Keys) and typing (e.g. BBC Dance-Mat, *see Resource List).* Daily practice with adult support is strongly recommended.

Even if word processing is introduced early, try to maintain limited handwriting e.g. confidence in signing name.

Encourage practice and praise effort - becoming a good writer can take time!

Websites with free typing resources

Tux Typing - https://tux4kids.alioth.debian.org/tuxtype/

BBC Dance Mat Typing - http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/z3c6tfr

Typing Test - http://www.typingtest.com/

Free Typing Game - http://www.freetypinggame.net/

Only Typing Games - http://www.onlytypinggames.com/

Learning Games for Kids - http://www.learninggamesforkids.com/

Strategies for children approaching or attending secondary school

- Allow extra time for writing assignments.
- Begin writing assignments creatively with drawing, or speaking ideas into a dictaphone writing down key words.
- Vary focus of writing assignments - clear requirement for grammar, neatness and spelling or for organisation of ideas.
- Explicitly teach different styles of writing (provide templates) - personal essays, short stories, letters, poems, etc.
- Do not judge timed assessments on neatness and spelling.

- Get students to proof-read work after a delay - easier to see mistakes after a break.

- Help students create a checklist for editing work - spelling, neatness, grammar, syntax, clear progression of ideas, etc.

- Encourage use of a computer spell checker (or speaking spell checkers which can be used for hand written work).

- Reduce amount of copying; focus on writing original answers and ideas and use prepared worksheets where possible

- Consider alternative ways of assessing knowledge, such as oral reports or visual projects.

- Encourage practice through less pressured opportunities for writing such as letters, diary, making household lists or keeping track of sports teams.

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Children's Occupational Therapy

Handwriting Programme

5-7 Years

This programme has been devised for children between the ages of 5 and 7 years old who are having difficulty with handwriting. Its aim is to work on the underlying skills needed for handwriting and to identify areas that need to be developed for each individual child.

Learning to write is a demanding skill that requires good postural control and shoulder stability to secure and control the use of the upper limbs. It requires the use of both hands (one to hold the paper, the other to hold the pencil), proper position of the paper and a functional grasp on the pencil with good wrist and hand function to allow free movement. Several parts of the brain must work together to produce efficient and legible letter formation. The child needs to have adequate visual, memory, sequencing and perceptual skills. They need to learn letter / sound correspondences and word / sentence construction and they need to plan ahead whilst maintaining the movements of the pencil. With this in mind, it is extremely important that children gain an effective pencil grasp and practice letter formation regularly. This helps develop motor memory and will eventually influence speed and efficiency when completing written tasks.

If a child still needs to think then he / she will not be able to keep up with peers who have automatic recall and efficient fine motor skills. Many children have acquired letter formation habits that are not helpful for an easy transition from printing to a cursive style. Getting rid of bad habits requires an enormous conscious effort. Once a child has learned unusual letter formation it is virtually impossible to change.

Running the programme

The programme has been designed to run for 8 weeks. Each session lasts for 1 hour and takes place once a week. It is recommended that it is run with a small group of 3 – 4 children, which is manageable for one person.

During the sessions, discussion is used to encourage each child to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses. The activities are quick changing and varied to motivate, build confidence and maintain the child's interest.

The programme will highlight areas that still need to be worked on after it is completed. At the back of this booklet, suggestions are given to use within class or small groups to encourage each child's individual skills.

Resources

The programme is simple to follow. Each session is clearly laid out and has photocopyable worksheets that may be produced by the educational establishment of the purchaser.

In addition you will need:-

- A separate room away from other activity with an area of free space to do initial exercises
- Each child will need a chair and table of suitable height
- A variety of writing implements to trial (pens, pencils, chunky chalks, chunky wax crayons, charcoal etc)
- Sugar paper
- Sand tray
- Plain A4 paper
- Old magazine pictures
- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- A variety of objects for 'Kim's game'
- Beads for threading

Assessment

Begin by completing the checklist (A1) and obtain a handwriting sample from each child. A dated piece of class work is ideal. The time it has taken to do and support given should be noted e.g. 20 minute topic work after whole class discussion – no individual assistance given.

Each child must also complete shape copying task (A2) and matching letter task (A3).

After the programme is completed assessments are repeated and another handwriting sample is obtained. (This should be a similar piece of classwork to the first one).

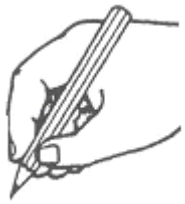
Note Taking

It is advisable to take notes during the sessions which, along with assessment and dated worksheets, can be used to inform and help evaluate progress at the end of the programme.

A1

Checklist

Name …….. Date ……

	Date of initial assessment		Date of final assessment	
	Y	**N**	**Y**	**N**
Does child maintain appropriate seating position when doing written work? (feet planted firmly on floor, trunk aligned with back of chair and head aligned with trunk)				
Can child name all letters (upper and lower case?)				
Does child know the sound for each letter (upper and lower case?)				
Can child copy I – O + / \ ☐ and x without an adult modelling movement (see Sheet A2)				
Does child use correct letter formation on all letters?				
Does child use a mature tripod pencil grasp? 				
Does child use heavy pressure when writing?				
Does child use light pressure when writing?				
Is paper angled correctly for writing?				
Does child use non-dominant hand to stabilise paper?				
Does child tire easily?				
Does child find it difficult to remain focussed?				
Does child leave appropriate margins?				
Does child leave spaces between words?				

A2

Equipment

Shape copying sheet

Purpose

To provide the teacher with a means of assessing whether the pupil's shape copying ability is age appropriate and whether they can write their name using correct letter formation and placing them on the base line correctly.

Instructions

1. Present the pupil with shape copying

2. Ask them to copy each shape in the space provided

3. Ask them to write their name on the dotted line

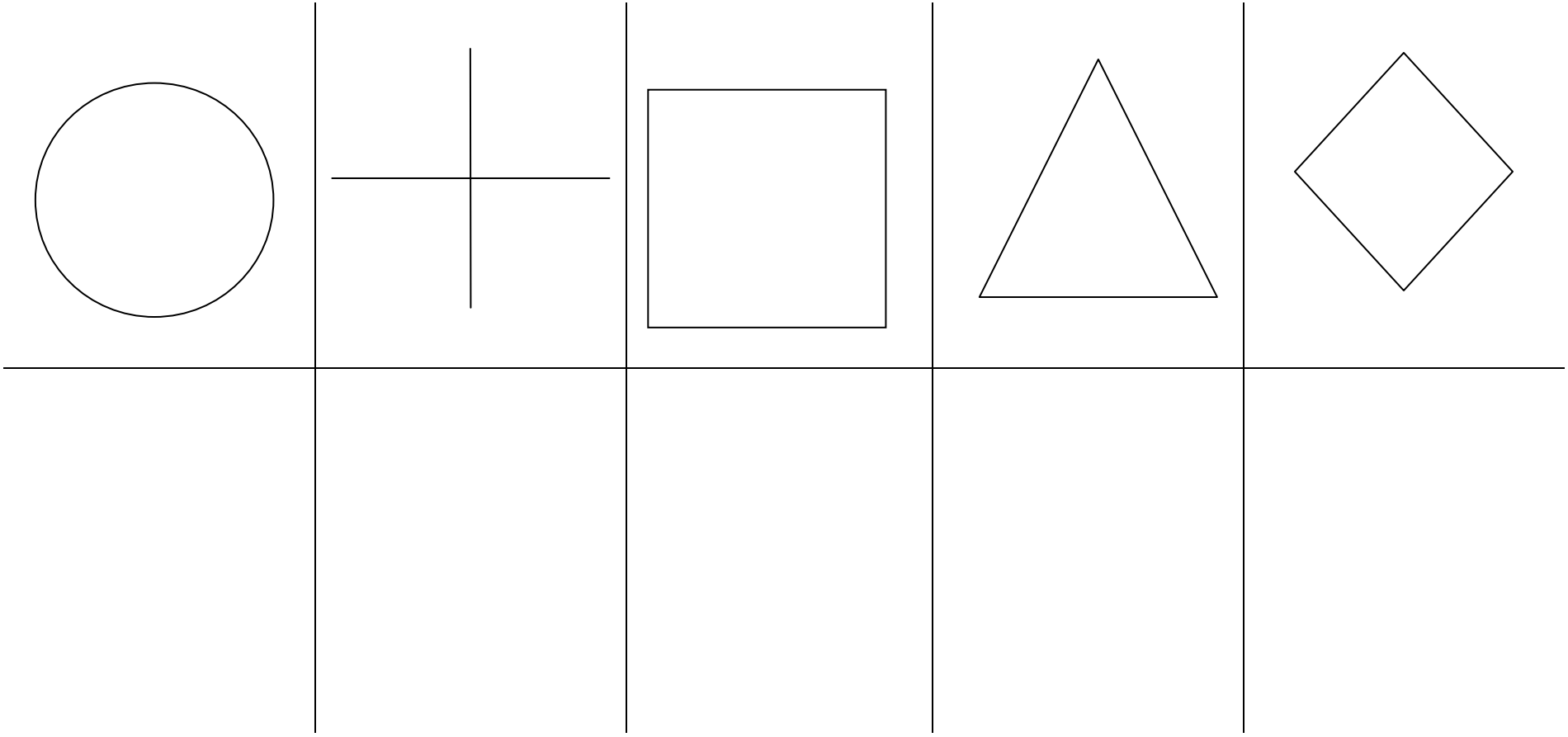
Evaluation

The task establishes whether the pupil:

- Needs to spend more time on prewriting activities
- Is ready to learn to write
- Needs further practice in writing letters of their name

Activity ideas for further practice of these skills are printed later in this pack

Name …… Date: ……



A3

Equipment

Matching lower case and upper case letters sheet and small letters to cut and match up.

Purpose

Visual discrimination is the ability to distinguish similarities and differences between shapes or objects. This skill is a pre requisite for developing other perceptual skills. This task establishes the letters which the pupil is able to match.

Instructions

1. Present the pupil with the matching lower case letters (A3) and the set of lower case letters in order.

2. Ask them to match each letter.

3. Repeat this task using matching upper case letters. (A3a)

Evaluation

This task establishes the extent to which the pupil has mastered this skill. Once the pupil can match a letter satisfactorily they can begin to work through the suggested activities in the next section.

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Matching Lower Case Letters

a	b	c	d	e	f	g
h	i	j	k	l	m	n
o	p	q	r	s	t	u
v	w	x	y	z		

NB Check that the letters match those taught in school

Matching Upper Case Letters **A3a**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
H	I	J	K	L	M	N
O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
V	W	X	Y	Z		

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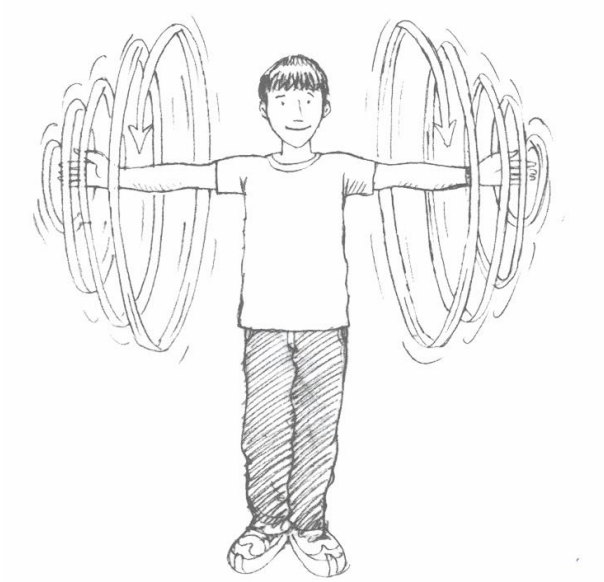
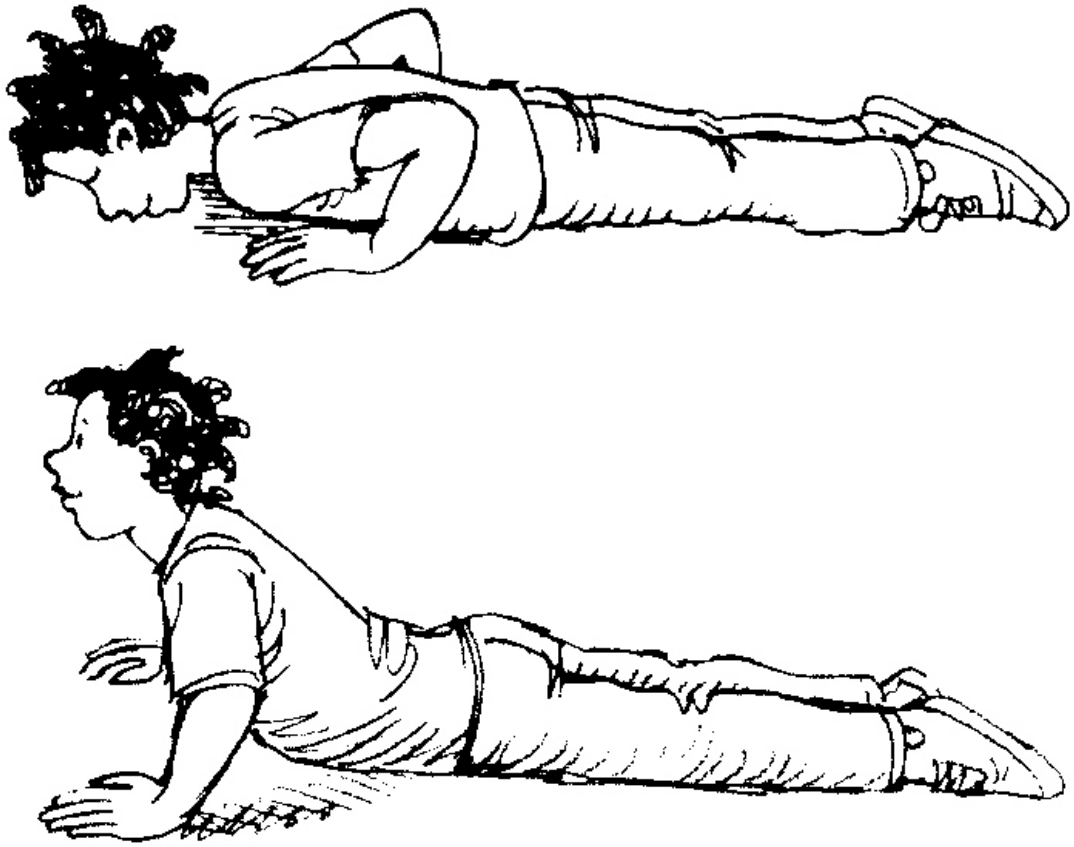
Warm-up exercises
(to be completed at the start of each session)

Arm spirals



Floor press-ups



Pencil Grasp. By using short stubbly crayons/pencils, playing finger isolation games and reminding of correct grasp we can encourage children to hold the pencil in a dynamic tripod grasp as illustrated below.

Dynamic Tripod Grasp (4½-6 years). The thumb and index finger form an open circular web allowing the thumb to work in opposition to the tip of the index finger; the ring and little finger are flexed for stability. This position provides for maximum speed, flexibility and refinement when writing.

Pencil grasp activities

At least one of these exercises will be used in each session to encourage correct pencil grasp.

Colouring PG1

For: Developing Pencil Control
Materials: Sugar paper and very short, chunky wax crayons
How: Encourage children to colour a large outlined picture
Measure: Observe how they hold a wax crayon and whether they have control of it
Variation: Use short chunky chalks on a chalk board

Tommy Thumb PG2

For: Developing pencil grasp
Materials: None
How: To identify thumb/fingers needed. Place writing hand palm down on table. Lift named finger in turn. Tommy Thumb (1) Peter Pointer (2), Toby Tall (3), then tap each separately on the table.
Measure: Can student isolate fingers
Challenge: Pick up a pencil and practice where fingers go. Reinforce with rhyme/song. Tune as in 'Here we go round the Mulberry bush' or 'Twinkle Twinkle' – repeat las two lines.
On my pencil, can you see, thumb and fingers 1, 2, 3
Hold your pencil just like me, thumb and fingers 1, 2, 3

Trial different Equipment PG3

For: Developing pencil grasp
Materials: triangular pencils
Different pencil grips
Place a clothes peg on a pencil so that once the pencil is gripped the peg goes into the palm of the hand. Some children find this comfortable.
Practise using tiny chalk pieces to encourage pincer grip writing.
Give 50p to hold against palm of hand with 3 fingers not in use.
Measure: Observe how student holds the writing implement

Week 1

1. Discussion – ask each child in turn what they think of their handwriting. Encourage them to discuss strengths and weaknesses (note down their responses)

2. Warm-up exercises

   Begin the session by teaching the children the warm up exercises

3. PG 2 =Tommy Thumb game.

4. Bead threading

   Trainer threads, 2 beads on to string - child copies pattern.

   If able slowly increase this until a 4 coloured bead pattern is created.

Week 2

1. Warm up exercises

2. Tommy Thumb game PG2

3. Pinch and Swing PG4

4. Letter formation check

   Using the sugar paper and short chunky wax crayons, ask children to write upper and lower case letters in a random order

   Note - formation
   recognition

5. Using sand tray, work around group and ask each child to create letters in the sand tray using their index finger (encourage the correct formation of letters that child found difficult in previous task).

6. Dot to Dot – Worksheet A

   Give each child a copy of worksheet and a pencil and ask them to join the dots in the correct order.

Note to trainer

Whilst doing this task check seating posture and pencil grasp.

Worksheet A

Name …….. Date …….

Worksheet A

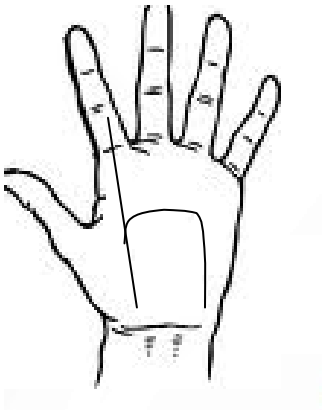
Name …….. Date ……

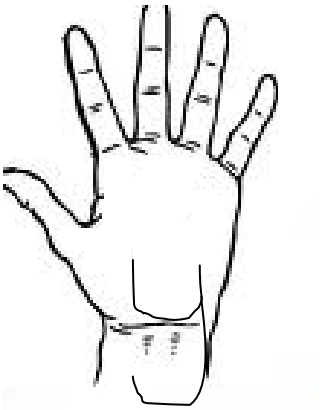
Week 3

1. Warm up exercises as in Week 1

2. Writing letters on hand game

Note to trainer: select letters that child forms incorrectly. Using index finger from non-dominant hand encourage them to draw letters on palm of other hand making sure that ascenders go up the finger and descenders go down onto wrist.





3. Pencil grasp activity as Week 2

4. Grid patterns - Worksheet B

   Give each child a copy of worksheet and a pencil. Ask them to copy grid patterns

5. Letters in the air

   Ask each child in turn to choose a letter from the alphabet, draw it in the air with their finger and then ask the others to guess the letter

6. Positional language

   Give the child a short chunky pencil and A4 paper. Ask them to

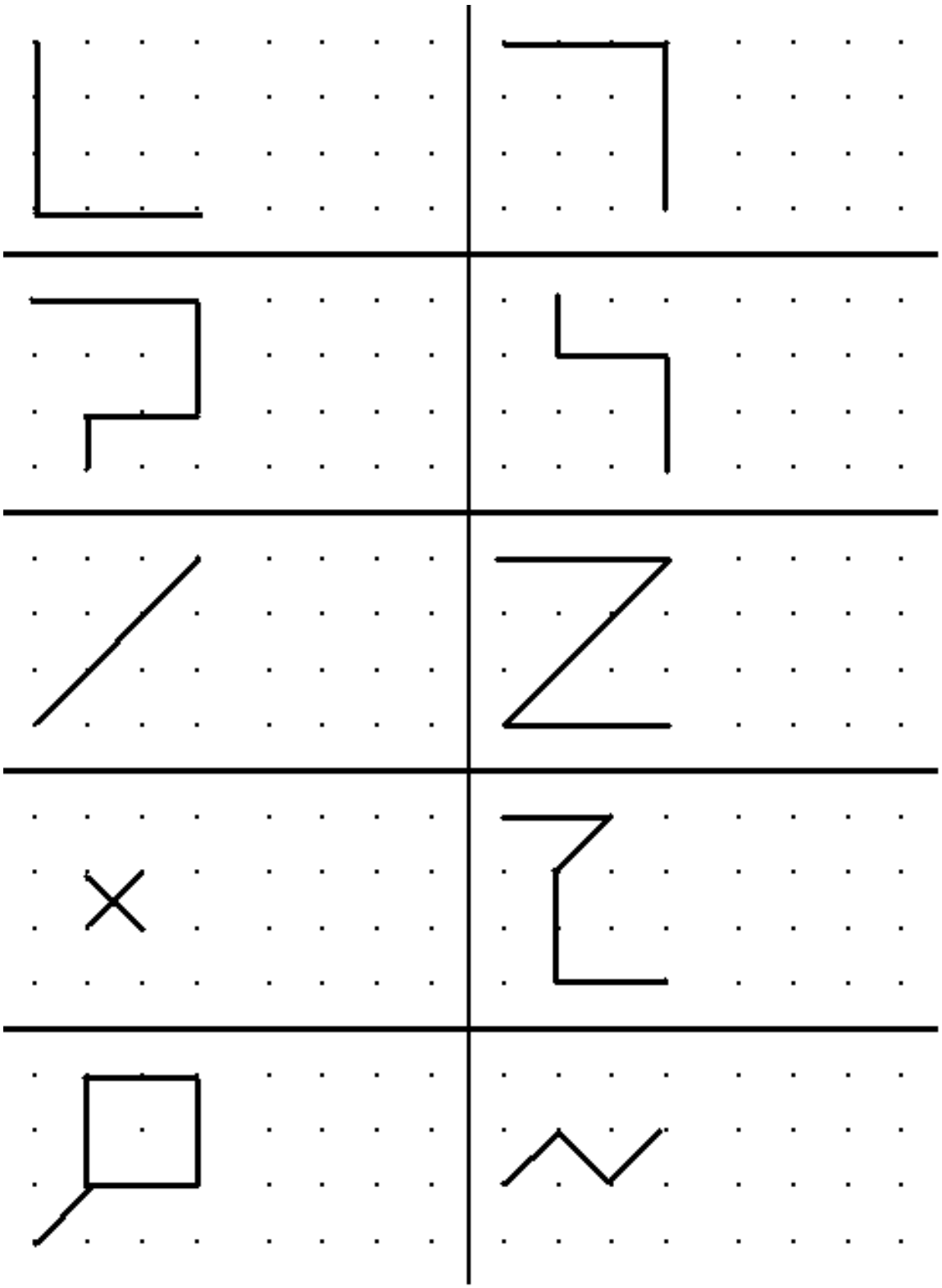
   (a) draw a circle in the middle of their paper
   (b) draw a line on top of the circle
   (c) draw a cross in the middle of the circle
   (d) draw a dot under the cross

   Give the child a pencil and A4 paper. Ask them to

   (a) draw a triangle
   (b) draw a dot in the middle of the triangle
   (c) draw a circle under the triangle
   (d) draw a **+** to the right of the circle
   (e) draw a square on top of the triangle

Worksheet B

Name …….. Date …….



Week 4

1. Warm up exercises as Week 1

2. Pencil grasp activity as Week 2

3. Sequencing task – Worksheet C

   Give each child a copy of Worksheet C

   Give them time to look at and remember each sequence. Then cover and ask them to recreate it in the box underneath

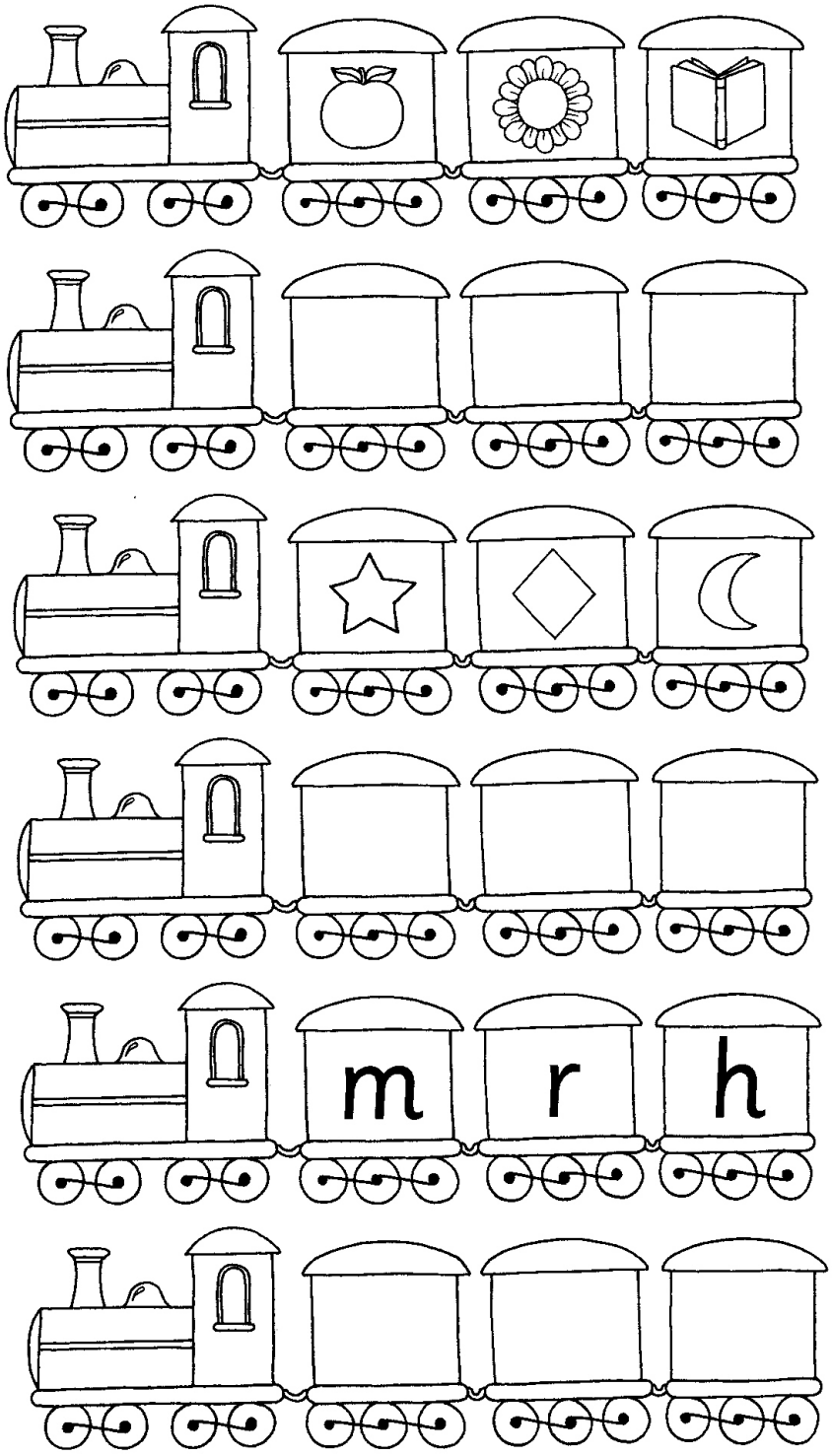
4. Letters in sand

   Using sand tray, encourage children to correctly form letters that they are still forming incorrectly

5. Make a fortune teller (instructions overleaf)

Worksheet C

Look at each train in turn and then cover it up. Try to draw the pictures in the right order on the blank carriages



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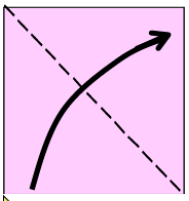
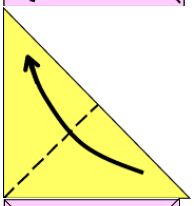
Fortune Teller

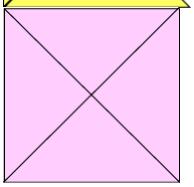
Valley fold paper from corner to corner, making a triangle.

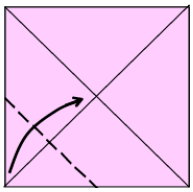


Valley fold the triangle from corner to corner, making a smaller triangle.

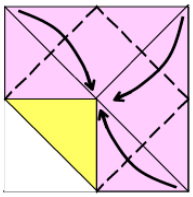


Unfold everything -- you'll have a square of paper with an X crease.



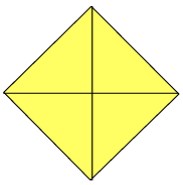


Fold the corner to the centre of the square (where the X crosses)

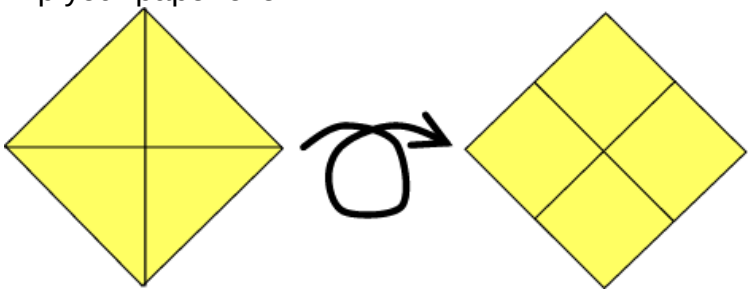


Repeat with the other three corners.

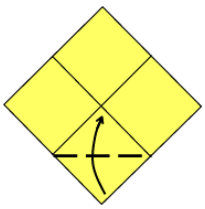
And you end up with a smaller square!



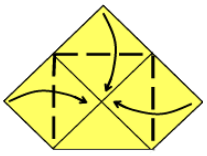
Flip your paper over



Fold the corner to the centre of the square (where the X crosses



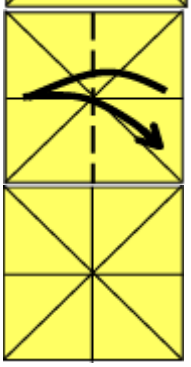
Repeat with the other three corners and you'll end up with an even smaller square



Fold and unfold the bottom edge of the square up to the top

Fold and unfold the left edge of the square over to the right

so that the creases look like an astrix across your small square



This bit is easier to do than it is to explain -- basically, you want to push the four corners of the square together in the centre and then slide 4 fingers into the flaps of your fortune teller, creasing the folds back so your fingers fit in nicely. You'll be able to move the flaps with your fingers like little puppets.

At this point, carefully print 4 things on the outside flaps (the standard are blue, red, green and yellow). Print 8 things on the inside flaps (the standard are the numbers 1 thru 8).

N.B Trainer writes fortune under flaps ready for use again in week 5.

Week 5

1. Warm up exercises as Week 1

2. Rainbow letters

   Using short stubby coloured crayons and A4 plain paper

   Trainer models how to form a letter that child is having difficulty with, emphasising the starting point. The child selects a different colour and traces over the trainer's letter. Child continues to trace over the letters with different colours until a rainbow effect is formed

3. Word search - Worksheet D

   Using Worksheet D, children outline the words within the grid

4. Bead sequence

   The trainer puts 4 beads onto a string for each child. Child repeats the sequence to end of string

5. Fortune tellers – play with fortune tellers made last week to encourage finger manipulation.

6. Discuss writing in class

   Ask children what they think of their writing now

   Is there any improvement?

   Has their teacher noticed any difference?

   Write down responses

Worksheet D

Name …….. Date …….

Can you find these words within the grid

pig cow cat dog goat rat ant ape

b	a	p	e	a	r
c	z	i	x	e	a
f	e	g	o	a	t
l	v	p	t	n	g
y	c	o	w	t	f
c	a	m	h	j	K
g	t	e	d	o	g

Week 6

1. Warm up exercises as Week 1

2. Sand tray as Week 4

3. Magazine picture puzzle

   Using a picture from a magazine, the trainer draws lines to divide it into 6 pieces using a thick felt tip marker pen

   The children cut along the lines and then stick the picture together on to a sheet of sugar paper

4. Pencil grasp activity as Week 1

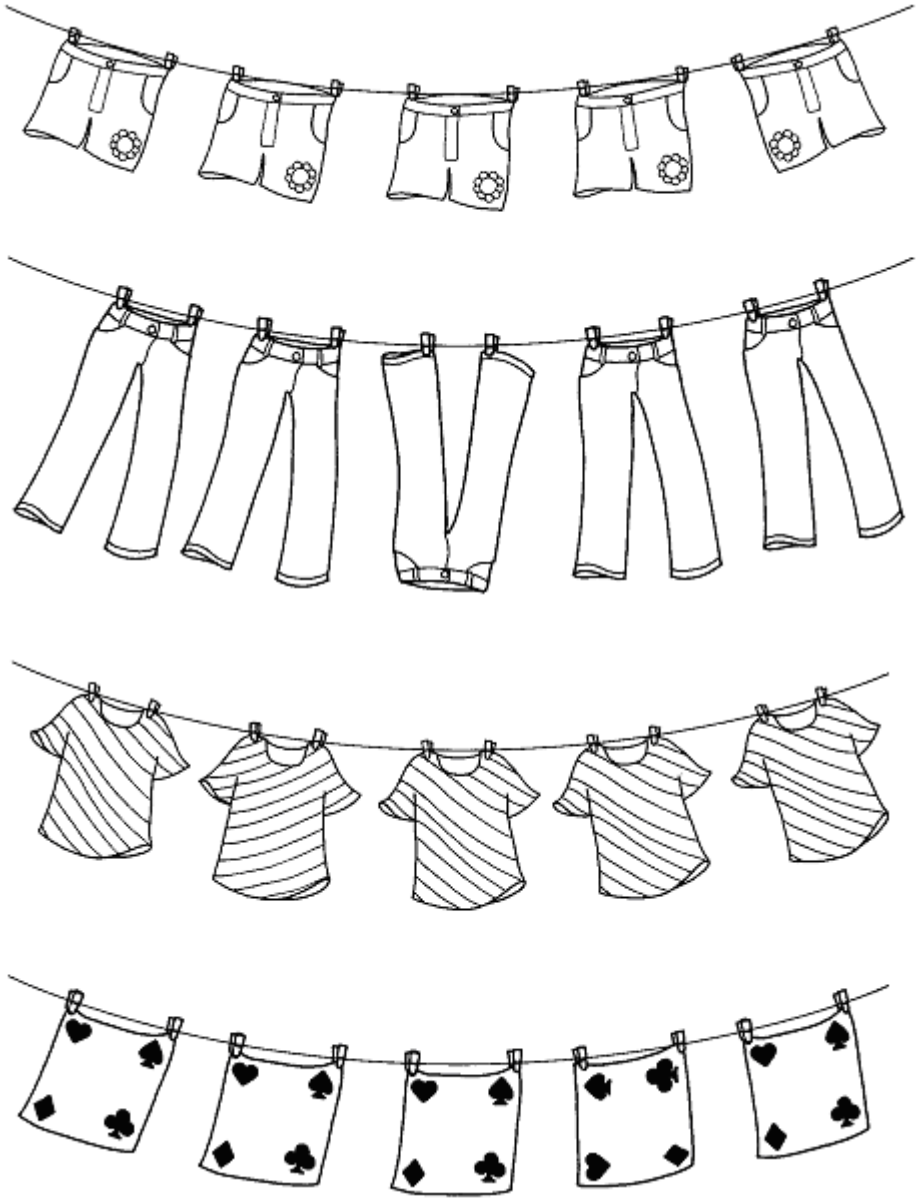
5. Copying – ask each child to copy 2 sentences from a reading book at their level

6. Odd one out

   Give each child a copy of Worksheet E. Ask children to identify the odd one out in each section

Worksheet E

Find the 'odd one out' on each washing line. Colour them in.



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Week 7

1. Warm-up exercises as Week 1

2. Pencil grasp activity as Week 2

3. Worksheet F

   Children to follow instructions on worksheet

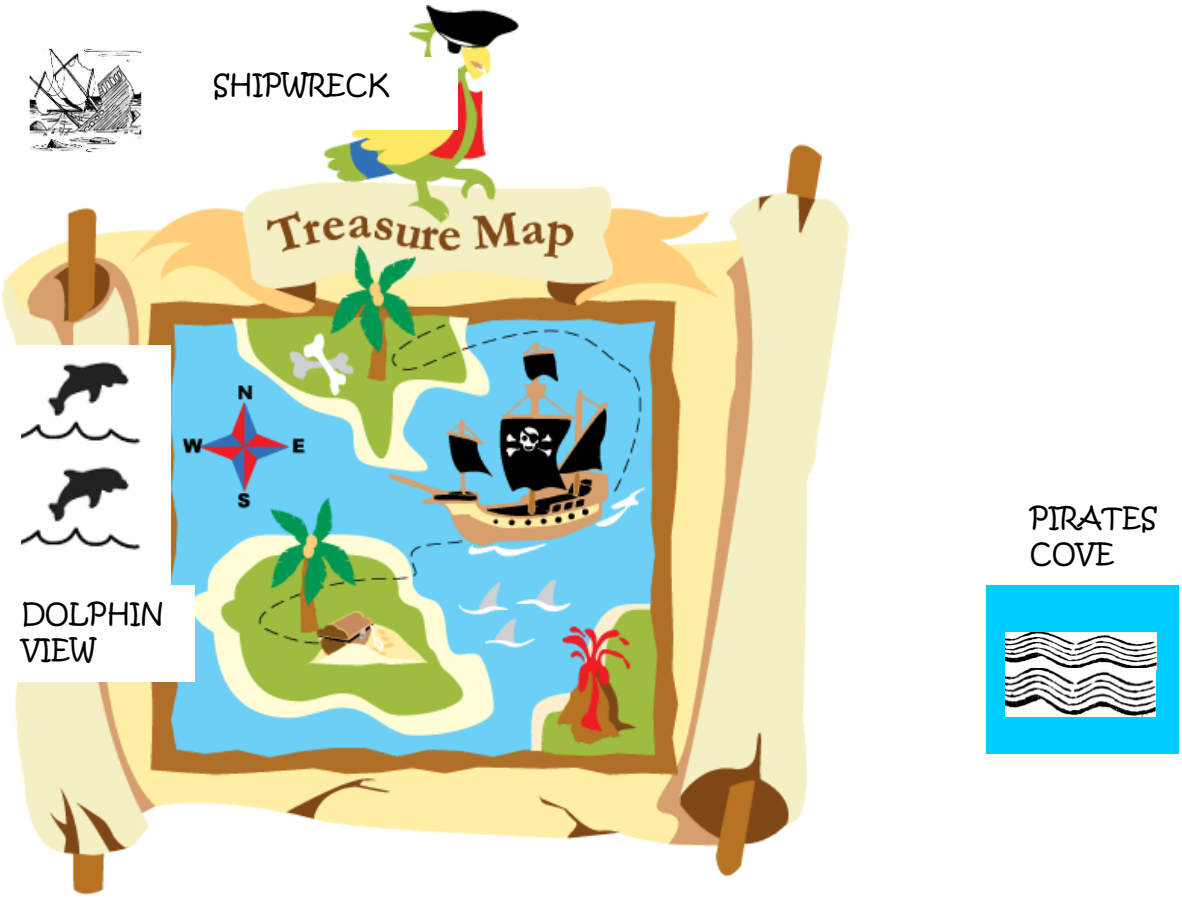
4. Kim's Game

   Place 8 different objects on a tray, show them to the children. Then cover and ask them to remember items. Taking turns, take one object away, then cover and ask children to identify missing object. Build up to 12 items.

5. Treasure Island

   Each child is given a sheet of A4 paper with a Treasure Island map drawn on.

   (i) Ask children to add land marks <u>in lower case</u>
   (ii) Ask the child to explain how to get to the treasure



Worksheet F

Name …….. Date …….

Put a red circle around every b

Put a green circle around every d

Put an orange circle around every p

b					p					c				
			a				d							p
									g		b			
		d		m		p								
							a				f			
	o								d				m	
				p										
	d					b		t			d			
			c											g
v					o				p					
		x					u					c		
				a										z
	b						d			g				
			n									b		
				p					m					

Week 8

1. Warm up exercises as Week 1

2. Pencil grasp activity as Week 1

3. Worksheet G

   Children follow instructions on worksheet

4. Write from dictation

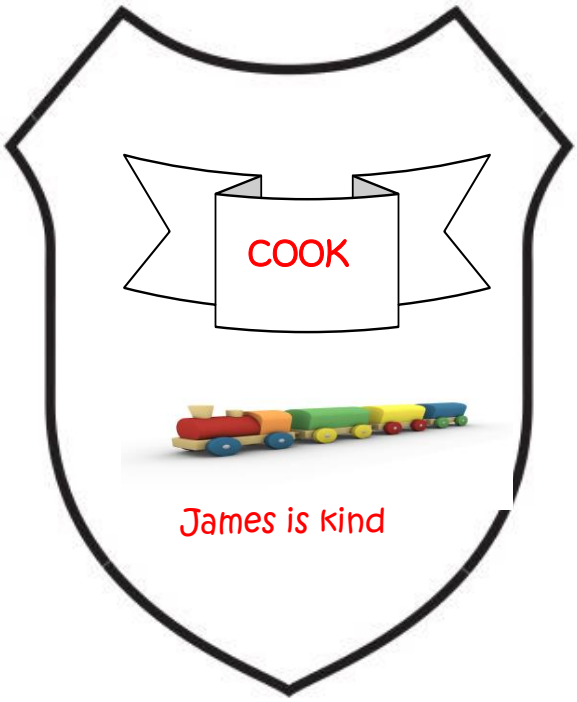
   Mum and Dad had a dog. It was sad.

5. Coat of Arms

   Give each child a sheet of A4 paper that has a shield shape on it. Ask them to make it into a coat of arms, including

   - family name
   - favourite hobby or toy
   - child's greatest achievement

   Children can colour it in if they have time



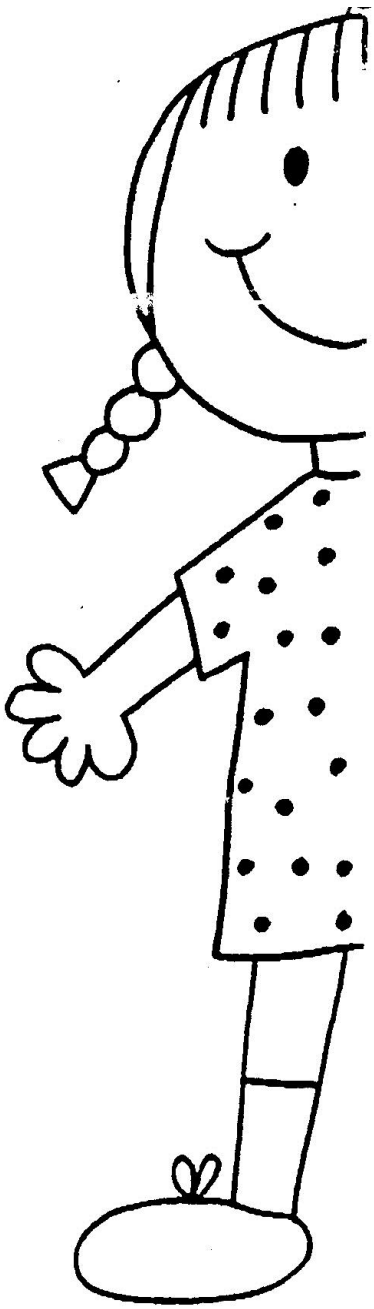
6. Worksheet H

7. Tell children that this is the end of the programme
   Ask them if they feel they have gained any benefit
   Find out if there is anything that they still want to improve

Worksheet G – Right hand

Name …….. Date ……

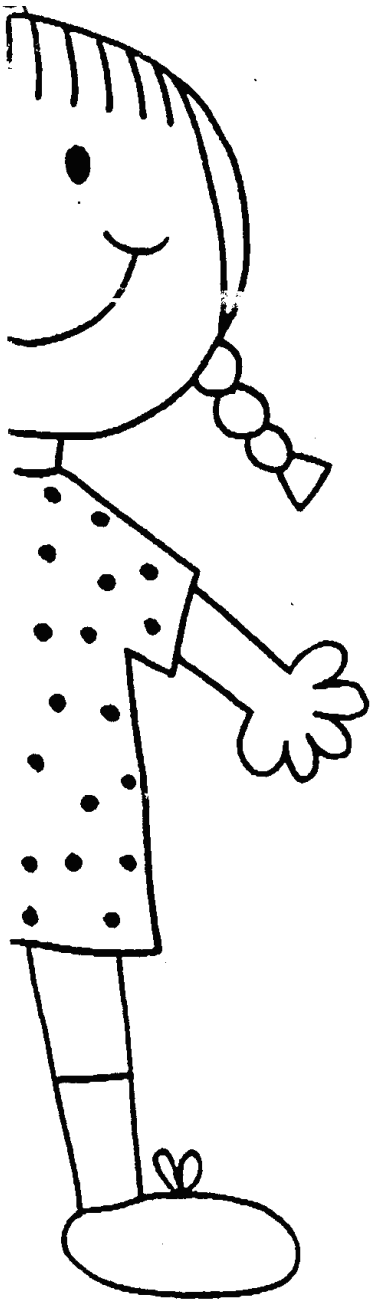
Complete the picture



Worksheet G – Left hand

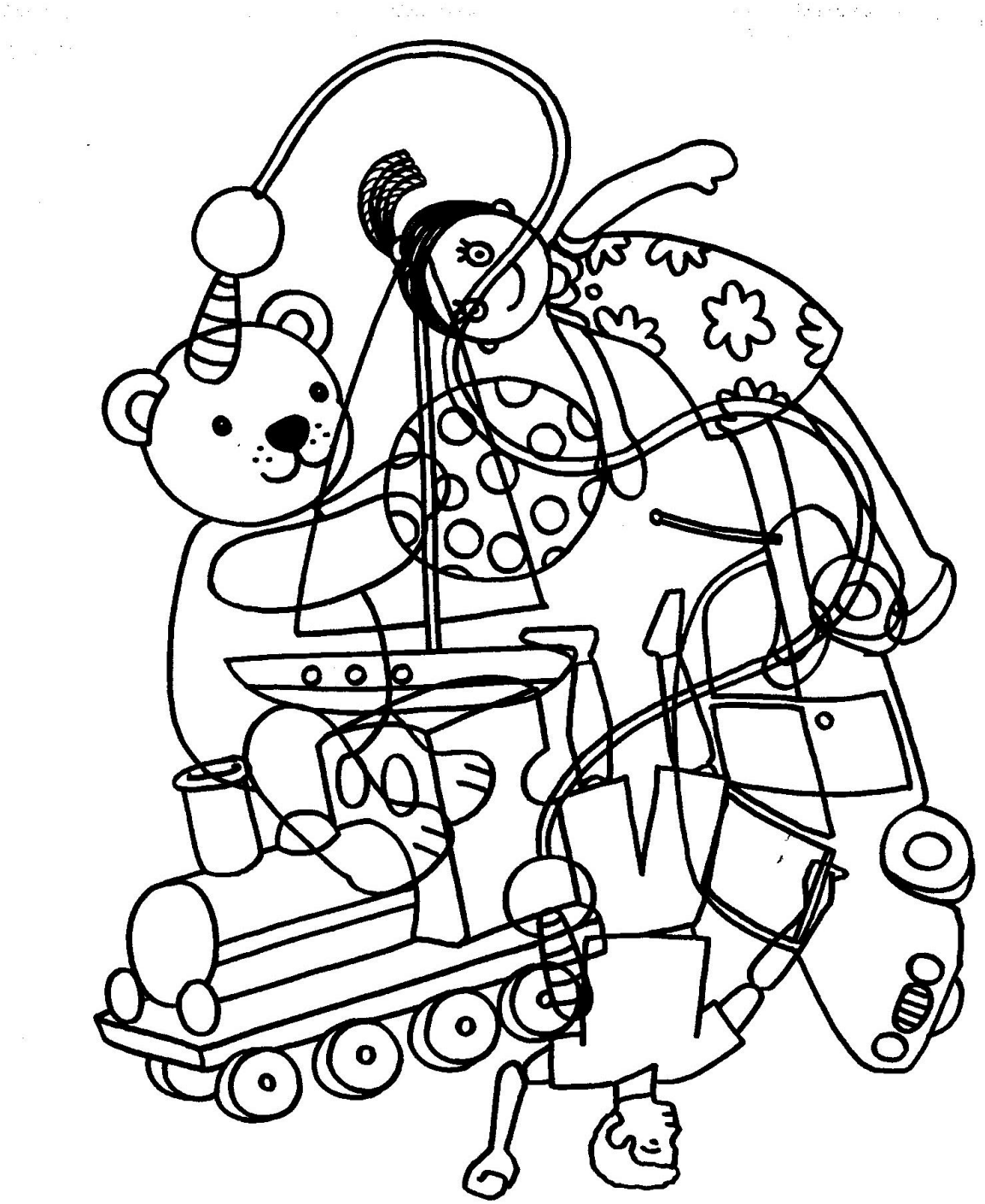
Name …….. Date …….

Complete the picture



Worksheet H

How many toys can you see?



Ending the Programme

The programme is now completed and some progress should be seen. Children often gain confidence following a small group programme. It is important to continue to encourage the skills that have been highlighted as needing more input.

Using the initial and final assessment checklist, writing samples, worksheets and trainer's notes, staff will be able to identify the areas that still need to be developed.

The following suggestion sheets are included to help provide ideas to improve individual skills.

Programme Evaluation

Child has difficulty with:	Activities to improve skills
Initial gross motor skills exercises	Use ABC and progress to Clever Bodies from Schools Therapy Resource Pack in PE or a small gross motor skills group.
Tommy Thumb game, other pencil grasp activities, fortune teller and other fine motor tasks.	Use a variety of fine motor activities including: • picking small objects out of a tray of rice • plasticene or playdoh modelling • play games using small counters • dealing cards • playing with construction toys e.g. lego • sewing • popping plastic bubble wrap • doing up buttons
Maintaining a mature tripod pencil grasp	Continue with activity in programme during class work Colour on sugar paper with very short chunky wax crayons Identify thumb / fingers needed. Place writing hand palm down on table, lift named finger in turn: Tommy Thumb (1), Peter Piper (2), Toby Tall (3), then tap each separately on table Reinforce with rhyme / song (tune as in 'Here we go round the Mulberry Bush' or 'Twinkle twinkle little star').

	Repeat last 2 lines *On my pencil can you see* *Thumb and fingers 1, 2, 3* *Hold your pencil just like me* *Thumb and fingers 1, 2, 3*
Visual discrimination tasks (this is the ability to distinguish similarities and differences between shapes, objects or letters)	Play visual discrimination games with child • find the odd one out using objects • find 'one the same' activities • 'What's wrong?' / 'What's missing' pictures

Visual discrimination tasks continued …..	• 'Draw what I draw' – take it in turns to draw simple pictures gradually encouraging child to add more detail
Visual closure activities (the ability to recognise a shape when it is presented in an incomplete form)	• Worksheets with simple shapes to complete • Worksheets with familiar objects with parts missing e.g. cat with one ear • Dot to dot activities • Give child partly completed drawing and ask them to add details e.g. features on a face
Visual figure ground (the ability to focus attention on an object or a shape and separate it from it's background)	• Use figure ground worksheets to encourage child to find different objects • Teach the child to look methodically left to right using a finger to guide vision • Discuss pictures with child and ask them to find specific items, beginning with the more obvious and moving to detail
Kim's game (sequencing tasks and letter sound / name correspondences)	• Copy pegboard patterns • Identify hidden words within words e.g. pie in piece • Thread beads following a card pattern • Copy a sequence of coloured cubes • Play 'Pick up Pairs' • Try auditory reinforcement by verbalising a sequence of letters or pictures • Draw or write a sequence of events from a television programme or reading book • Use kinaesthetic reinforcement e.g. tracing a letter sequence with a finger in sand, rice or shaving foam with eyes open and then eyes closed • Learn rhymes to aid sequences • Develop strategies to learn word shapes e.g. mnemonics, cues like deliberate mispronunciation of words e.g. skissors, wed-nes-day

Kim's game continued	• Try playing 'Pick up Pairs'. Ask child to name or sound letters as you play. Gradually increase the letters used as child gains confidence
Copying shape patterns and / or letter formation of some letters	• Practise diagonals with pegboards, elastic bands and geo boards, dot to dots, tracing mazes and lacing activities • Using chalkboard, teach child to use correct letter formation tracing over a letter that has already been written, firstly with his finger, then with a wet sponge, then a dry sponge and then form letter with chalk • Teach tricks – little b is the same as big B without the top circle • b = bat and ball • d = drum and stick • c comes before d, so write a c and add a stick • Worksheets – pick out correctly formed letters from reversed ones • Encourage child to look at own work and ask them to circle or underline reversed letters • Encourage child to look around the classroom / school and identify diagonal lines • Use worksheets such as putting rays on the sun, spokes on a wheel, roofs on houses