Get Ready for Writing & Reading

for
Teachers and Parents
of
Preschoolers and Kindergartners

We Write To Read

from

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Part One - General Instructions

Introduction
Modern research has identified new importance for motor learning as well as some of the differences between gross motor and fine motor patterns. Directed motor experiences provide the brain with challenges that stimulate changes resulting in improved abilities (Shadmir & Holcomb 1997).

Scientists like Dr. Jerre Levy and Dr. Hans-Leo Teulings have long been convinced that the brain responds to challenge. Conversely, they suggest that a lack of these challenges results in a different brain structure - one that reacts to learning activities in ways that differ distinctly.

Dr. Teulings suggests that children can learn how to relax and focus given the right kind of learning activity. He feels strongly that the increasing numbers of children labeled with learning disabilities related to attention and hyperactivity simply have not learned how to relax and focus. He suggests that directed handwriting lessons may be the only activity in the curriculum to offer this learning opportunity. We believe that learning how to move, when included as an objective from the beginning, is one of the most important reasons for the success of the Peterson Method.

This program is different from all others for scientific reasons. We are teaching a different type of movement. There is a reason behind the fact that most people say, "I can write neatly when I take my time... but I'm always in a hurry and it shows." Practical legibility at fluent speed is possible. Some people do learn to write beautifully and with easy fluency. The difference is identified as the type of movement control learned.

Adults often forget the fact that all written language is a totally learned human behavior. There is nothing "natural" about reading or writing. Take left-to-right tracking, for example. In the western world written language moves to the right....but in the Mideast, written language moves in the opposite direction. In countries that use "characters" instead of an alphabet, the direction of movement can vary widely.

Children in all cultures that have written language must learn a production process to make the symbols of that language. Our alphabet characters are relatively simple. The simplicity of the forms means that teachers can be successful with teaching the right kind of movement and enhance internalization in the process. Young children can learn to produce basic strokes fluently.

Monumental Research
For decades motor control scientists have been using computers that employ electronic tablets to study movement functions. Their research findings are very important, but unfortunately most educators have never learned of the implications for classroom activities. A teacher could easily invest a year to read and digest the studies referenced from only one chapter of a book published in 1994 by Academic Press, London, titled “Handbook of Perception and Action.”

In his chapter on “Handwriting Movement Control” in that publication, Dr. Hans-Leo Teulings writes: “Among the many motor activities - displacement of the body, maintaining posture, grasping and manipulating objects - handwriting distinguishes itself in that it is a learned and generally practiced human skill. For that reason, the motor control aspects of handwriting are both interesting and important.” The chapter explains the reasons for the considerable scientific interest in handwriting as a direct source of information leading to better understanding of the brain and our motor-control system. If you want to confirm our recommendations by digging into the research, that would be a good place to start.
Thanks to Dr. Teulings, we have been using computers and digitizing tablets to collect handwriting samples since 1993. As the subject writes on our tablet the computer measures ten process functions at a rate of 1000 points per second. Thousands of samples have allowed objective analysis of handwriting movements from an educational perspective. In a recent paper written by Dr. Teulings (1996), he discusses the movement processes revealed by computer analysis. He describes two different types of movement control strategy. The fluent movement used by good writers was revealed to be consistently rhythmic. The poor writers used an approach based primarily on visual feedback. The movement sequences were not consistent or rhythmic. Dr. Teulings concluded that “... training the correct (movement) strategy from the beginning is obviously the most efficient.”

The method of instruction provided in this manual is designed to provide you with a means of introducing your pupils to the symbols of our language and a "fluent" movement strategy from the beginning. Our focus on "Action Word" rhythm and gross-motor-movement process, stems directly from the latest scientific data and a wealth of experience in classrooms. Specific techniques like airwriting with action words, fingertracing with action words and gross-motor-sized writing with action words relate directly to the need for creating motor patterns that contain the correct movement information in a developmentally appropriate format.

**Learning Changes the Brain**

Science with new technology like PET Scans, suggests that as teachers we are actually responsible for forming the brains of our students. However, how often do we think of our efforts in this way? In these pages we have worked to interpret a wealth of scientific information to create specific activities that allow you to take advantage of the latest understanding provided by science.

**Things You Should Consider**

It has long been recognized that young children are seldom ready to handle fine motor activities. Gross patterns are not muscle group specific - information in the pattern is readily shared. Fine patterns are specific to muscle groups and do not share information.

**Implications**

- Gross motor activity is your pathway to the brain.
- Keep activities with crayons and pencils large to force arm movement.
- Poor position skills can block the use of the correct muscle groups and good movement.

Digital measures of writing movement show one important difference between fluent legibility and labored legibility as well as fluent but hard to read scrawl. Controlled fluent movement is rhythmic.

**Implications**

- If we hope to instill skills that will allow fluency later on, children must learn how to move with rhythm. This is one reason we start with simple, separate strokes for letter building.
- Rhythmic movement is an indication of internalization. Controlled fluent movement is guided with the use of the internal model. Writing with the eyes closed will demonstrate the fact. Inability to move rhythmically indicates that the sequence has not been internalized.
- Tracing models with a crayon or pencil blocks rhythm. Making lines match relies heavily on visual feedback for guidance suppressing the internal model we seek to build.
- Placing letters on lines demands visual feedback guidance. Establish rhythmic patterns first on unlined paper. It will make it easier for the brain to learn how to use the two systems in cooperation when you move to lined paper. Rhythmic movement on lined paper is a whole new challenge. It will require lots of directed practice to develop control skills.
What Is “Developmentally Appropriate” Handwriting Readiness?

Developmental specialists reported some time ago that young pre-schoolers, when asked to copy a circle, or a straight vertical stroke would, as a group, start the stroke at the bottom and “push up” away from the body to produce the copy. They indicated that the circular stroke would usually be made with a clockwise movement. It was also observed that somehow, between the ages of 5 and 7 children would automatically change the start points from bottom to top and circular movements would reverse to counterclockwise.

That was then! Teachers now report, and digital samples support the observation, that children no longer exhibit the innate changes in start point and directionality. Science has identified a reason. Once the movement is associated with a symbolic language pattern the child encodes visual and movement processes. It is clear that we should not ignore incorrect movement... even at the earliest ages.

Constant visual, aural, and cultural stimulation has established motivation that may be unprecedented in human history. Most children play with crayons, pencils, markers, and even pens long before they begin any organized “schooling.” Day-care and nursery school facilities continue encouragement and provide ample opportunity for experimentation. Consequently, a majority of preschool children have extensive experience with “symbolic language” long before readiness charts identify “appropriate” formal training.

Unfortunately, trial and error has been the only approach in most cases. Well-meaning but erroneous coaching has occurred in other cases. When the innate drawing movements of a 3-year-old are applied to frequent undirected practice of symbols, a recipe for conflict in the motor control system is recorded by the brain.

“... training the correct (movement) strategy from the beginning is obviously the most efficient.”

Dr. Hans-Leo Teulings
Ballistic Handwriting

In the beginning handwriting is not “penmanship”.....in the traditional sense. It is physical language. Everything about getting ready to learn to read can be enhanced by helping children develop “learned pattern modules” that contain correct movement information. Recent computer-assisted research by brain function scientists is compelling. It shows that the physical process training we provide to help children learn left-to-right tracking and the production of individual letters of the alphabet is essential to the development of fluent pathways for the brain. Scientists identify “learned pattern modules” as DYNAMIC information to help speed integration of visual memory and decoding of the symbols of written language.
So, the question about “developmentally appropriate handwriting instruction” is really a question about “developmentally appropriate reading instruction.” Answer these simple questions about what you do as reading readiness.....Do you:

1. Display and discuss letters of the alphabet?
2. Contrast capital letters and lowercase forms?
3. Model sounds of letters for phonemic awareness?
4. Label things the child sees in the classroom environment? (“door”...“window”...“table”...etc.)
5. Label color charts? (“yellow”...“red”...“blue”...“white”...etc.)
6. Prepare name cards for the children?
7. Discuss and model “words” for the children?
8. Introduce numerals?
9. Allow children to use crayons or other hand tools for marking things?
10. Ask pupils to perform paper activities?

It is likely that all teachers would respond “yes” to these questions. Production process training will help your students get ready for future needs in reading and composition. Now let’s identify important correlations between visual memory and physical, sensorimotor “learned pattern modules.”

What Is A “Learned Pattern Module”?
Putting thoughts on paper fluently, with a pencil or keyboard, requires fluent motor patterns for the movements needed to produce each symbol. If a child does not learn movement patterns his/her brain is forced to approach the task “cognitively.” Thinking about the physical movements means the brain must invent random steps based on visual feedback. This interferes with ideas or composition fluency.

“Motor” Control instruction is an efficient learning process if the child is taught how to:
1. Select Precise Starting Points
2. Identify Slow-down Points or “Stops”
3. Move In The Right Direction With Rhythm
4. Identify Left-to-Right Stroke Sequences In Letter Building
5. Make Multi-part Letters With A Rhythmic Movement Sequence

LEARNED PATTERN MODULES are like “recordings” encoded in several areas of the brain. They “playback” to make movement virtually automatic....so that children do not have to think about production factors. The most effective patterns are easy to establish using the following simple strategy:

Step 1: Illustrate and Describe “Action Words” - Giant Size
Step 2: Rhythmic Airwriting “Chorus Action Words” - Giant Size
Step 3: Rhythmic Fingertracing “Chorus Action Words” - Giant Size

All three steps use a rhythmic language of instruction....we call this “ACTION WORDS.” Teachers will note that in airwriting and fingertracing children will usually be able to combine movement and verbalizations very quickly. Exaggerate Stopping Points. The computer-assisted research indicates that control must be integrated with the movement (i.e. “motor control”). Monitor children carefully to be sure fluency is patterned.
The Bigger The Better, The Longer The Better

One very important consideration for “training the correct strategy from the beginning” is the importance of GROSS MOTOR practice. With young children who show interest and desire even though they lack good eye-hand coordination….or evidence immaturity….or appear to be lagging developmentally….do not attempt to practice with small muscles. We have a very good tenet when working with young children: THE BIGGER THE BETTER, THE LONGER THE BETTER.

We Do Not Recommend Pencil Tracing

Motor control findings indicate that when children try to “trace and copy” with crayons or a pencil (unfortunately a dominant strategy used by teachers and parents), the child is using the external, visual feedback system. The child is focused on making the lines match. When a departure from the desired trace occurs, movement stops and starts again in a new direction…the process becomes arhythmic. This start and stop process results in movement that is not fluent. Consequently, rhythmic motor patterns cannot form. Since rhythmic movement has been related to the internal model, it makes sense to conclude that tracing activity may very well block internalization for many children.

Scientists have a name for fluent movement. It is called "Ballistic." The term describes a smooth, rhythmic movement from start point to stop point. Airwriting-with-action words, fingertracing-with-action words, and eventually, writing-with-action words promote integration of fluent movement patterns.

"Visual Feedback" patterns cannot be scaled to faster writing speeds. The "visual feedback" methods of instruction lead people to say, "I can write neatly if I take my time, but..."

Use Basic Strokes To Achieve Movement Success

The basic strokes used in the production process for printwriting are deceptively simple as adults view them. However, please remember that nothing is natural about written language. And, you have children that have been experimenting. They could be making strokes that "look good" but are made with no consistent movement pattern. Since the objective is to establish fluent patterns, the movement is more important than the appearance of the product. Control and product appearance will improve with practice and/or maturity.

These strokes all start at the top (except for the slider). Think of each stroke as a fluent, rhythmic movement….establish the “start” and “stop” points then move smoothly from start to stop. Also, please remember that left curves and right curves are not as fast as a straight line.
Use Only Teacher-Directed/Monitored Techniques
After extensive airwriting and fingertracing has evidenced rhythm and control understanding, the next step is to begin helping children to hold “something” in their hand as they move. This is more difficult because gripping factors, visual feedback, and place-in-space perception come into play.

The Unwritten “Law of Form Constancy”
Symbolic language presents children with a new and potentially frustrating task....being able to understand that symbols of written language are dependent upon their position in our field of vision. Reversals of letterforms are to be anticipated, because prior to this point in their young lives children have learned that “a spoon is a spoon, is a spoon, is a spoon,” regardless of place in space. The law of form constancy is violated regularly in reading and writing.

For more information on the impact of “form constancy” Please work through the animated readiness presentation linked to the information directory on our web site.

\[ b \neq d \neq p \quad n \neq u \quad M \neq W \]

Gross Motor Practice
1. The first time a child tries to “make a letter” it should be no smaller than 6 to 10 inches tall. Many motor-control specialists start at the chalkboard, projecting the image of the letter (no screen) on the board from an overhead projector. The child can fingertrace the large image and chant the action words. Then, the image can be eliminated and the child can use a brush moistened with water or a piece of chalk to “write and say” the pattern using the “action words” to promote rhythmic movement. The image size allowed by the chalkboard will force arm movement and the easily renewable surface provides convenience for the teacher.

2. Then ask the child to play the game “Eyes Closed”....attempting to demonstrate the correct start point, movement direction, stopping point, etc., with no visual cues. EYES-CLOSED movement practice is a very revealing diagnostic tool. It is also magnificent as a “bad-habit breaking” technique as well as a “basic” training device. When eyes are closed the movement guidance must come from the internal model!

3. Please remember that the initial goal is correct process (start point, direction, and stroke sequence) rather than perfect product. The product will improve with control skills as practice of the pattern continues.
Handwriting Is Physical Language

Because young children are constantly bombarded with visual symbols of language that are shown as complete images, they have no clue about the *production process* needed to replicate those symbols. This teacher handbook identifies the important physical skills that children need to learn to receive maximum benefits that handwriting practice will provide in all written language. Remember, handwriting reinforces all areas of the curriculum.

Because it is a physical process, position skills can have great impact on the movements used. The computer samples revealed some surprising evidence.

Mirror writing like this is easy to spot and correct. Very few students made this miscue. A far more troublesome problem emerged as the digital samples were studied. There was a high percentage of children who were using a process that would be mind-melting to a reading specialist. Can you imagine the impact on left-to-right tracking caused by the movement pattern below?

This type of process would be very hard to spot and it was common. Often more than 70% of the class used this approach to create one or more letterforms.

Analysis linked this process to the position of the writing hand relative to the paper. One hundred percent of the students using this “reverse” process placed the writing hand beside the image area which blocked left-to-right movement.

Arm, Hand, Elbow Placement

One important key to developing left-to-right movement is to help each child develop good paper/arm position. *Writing Position Is Different From Reading Position.* There is nothing natural about symbolic language. All aspects of reading and writing are learned. Children tend to hold the paper at body midpoint. This works for reading position, but it blocks essential left-to-right movement required to write with fluency.

The illustrations above show poor arm/hand/elbow position...it leads to "hooking" for both left-handers and right-handers. When the writing arm and hand are positioned to the side of the image area, the correct movements are blocked. Ideally, the writing arm should enter the paper from the bottom to place the writing hand under the image area.
Teach Children To Use Writing Position

You are providing countless coloring activities for the children before, during and after you begin formal reading and writing activities. These experiences offer a great opportunity to help pupils discover the movement advantage offered by good writing position because they are relaxed and non-threatening. They can also be great for helping kids learn good pencil holding skills - particularly if you provide triangular pencils and crayons instead of the usual variety.

**Right-Hand Placement**

Note the corners of the pages in the illustration. Cut the top corners at a 45° angle. Pupils align the cut corner with their name tag.

**Left-Hand Placement**

Special Information About Left-handed Movements

Many children who come to pre-first and Kindergarten classes may not have established hand dominance. Apparently about 5-6% of pupils at age five are strongly left-sided. That is, all manipulative activities are performed exclusively from the left side (throwing, drawing, kicking, scissoring, eating, pointing, etc.). There appears to be another 5-10% of pupils that vacillate between their left and their right.

In addition, many of the pupils who have some left-handed tendencies are right-eyed. Ideally, the left-handed pupil would also have a dominant left eye so that the paper would be held to the left of the body midpoint. Writing left-handed can be very efficient if a child can learn to hold the paper so that "down" strokes move leftward, away from the body.

Unfortunately, pupils who color left-handed may have been completely blocked in their unschooled coloring movements because no one knew they should be sidestroke oriented. The Kindergarten teacher can help to establish correct movements.

Note the position of the left arm. This position forces the child to rely on a "pulling" movement. **Leftward sliding movements**, pushing away from the body, are completely blocked.

To learn more about the difference between left and right handed process work through the animated position presentation linked to our web site information directory.
Pulling downstrokes leads to hooked-wrist writing.

This "incidental" learning establishes an inverted movement that soon becomes a habit. When the preschooler begins to experiment with handwriting symbols, the inversion continues and the child is forced to use a pulling movement for downstrokes, just like right-handers! If the child tries to reproduce a series of letterforms using a left-to-right process, the left hand covers the symbols on the left side of the paper and the stage is set for establishing a habit that interferes with the nonsmearing movement process that we should use in first grade! As a result, most left-handed children never have the opportunity to learn the correct way to write.

All bad habits feel good. Therefore, when the child comes to school the teacher faces a difficult problem. Left-handed children require special attention and gentle persuasion. If we are to succeed in helping the left-handed children we must direct their practice very carefully. Most children will need to learn a completely new approach to coloring and writing.

When a left-hander colors, be sure to establish leftward orientation. Notice arm, elbow, hand position. The writing hand is under the image and lateral movement for coloring can be natural and easy.

Teach a Leftward Pushing Movement

In printwriting the predominant movement pattern is "downstroke" oriented - the pencil moves from the top of the letter downward toward the baseline. This is exactly why many left-handers have difficulty. They never learn to move leftward for those downstroke movements. The arm/hand/paper relationship is the key. Exercise this movement every day, and do not hesitate to exaggerate the paper position to help pupils establish the sideward movement.

The illustration to the left shows the paper is turned almost upside down! When the table surface is high it forces the arm wide. To push strokes leftward, from the top line toward the bottom of the page, the paper must be turned like this. The arm position causes the problem. Is it any wonder most left-handers learn inverted movements for writing and write with a hooked wrist?

Learning to use good position can move your students several steps ahead. They may begin to produce letters that slant forward if letter fluency begins to emerge. Consistent forward slant shows good lateral movement.

The combination of good position and good movement may produce slant naturally.
Pencil/Crayon Position

Many five-year-old pupils use bizarre pencil/crayon position. Poor position usually results in excessive pressure. Children squeeze and pinch, which overburdens the small muscles. The single most important pencil-holding objective is to develop a habit of holding the pencil away from the point. Always encourage pupils to keep fingers back on the painted part of the pencil. Avoid touching the sharpened part of the pencil.

Because of the extensive fingertracing activities in this program, children should learn that the index finger is the writing finger. The index finger should rest, from tip of finger to the fist knuckle, on the pencil. The following illustration shows that the index finger is gently rounded and the back of the pencil crosses on the finger side of the fist knuckle. Notice the position of the thumb. Have pupils bend the thumb and place the tip of the thumb in back of the index fingertip (farther away from the pencil point), on the side of the pencil. Thumb forward causes the pointer to “bunch up” in a cramped, pinching position.

Devices to help establish correct finger/thumb position -

1. Use thick triangular pencils and crayons. Teach pupils to put the index finger on one side, thumb tip on the second side, and the side of the middle finger on the third side of the triangle. We offer jumbo triangular pencils in two varieties - with and without an eraser.

2. Put a 3/4” piece of masking tape together to form a nonsticky loop that fits around the pencil and index finger.

3. Place a rubber band about 2 inches from the point of the pencil. Have pupils place the index finger in front of the rubber band and the thumb behind it.

If you must use ordinary, standard pencils, Peterson sells several styles of pencil grippers that can help. Please see the catalog for information or visit our web site to browse our products.

The Squeezles Song/Poem

Watch out for the squeezles,  
They're worse than the measles.  
Watch out for the slumps,  
They're worse than the mumps!

Watch out for elbow-itis -  
It's worse than arthritis!  
Watch out for pinchitis -  
It's worse than laryngitis!

Stay back on the paint,  
Stay back on the paint all day.  
Stay back on the paint!  
And pinchitis will go away!
Body/Desk Position

Most preschool and kindergarten classrooms use group tables instead of individual school desks. This practice evolved because many teachers want to establish an informal environment. For most socialization activities this reasoning is valid. However, teaching a child to manipulate symbols of language is very difficult if children are placed in a position that taxes their developmental level. If tables require children to sit at various angles as they observe teacher demonstrations, the children will be hard pressed to develop correct directionality and sequencing concepts, place-in-space awareness, and good physical position skills. Teachers will be exhausted because they must model so many times for the entire group to get the correct perspective.

*We strongly urge teachers to establish a table seating placement pattern that will enable each child to sit directly facing the modeling area for all language activities.* It is most helpful for left-handed pupils to sit at the right side of the room for visual discrimination and handwriting activities (as they face the chalkboard). This "structuring" of seating will greatly improve your chances to help pupils get ready to learn written symbolic language. Please remember that our symbols are probably the first thing children encounter where directionality makes a huge difference.

Many children develop bad habits when attempting to draw, color, or write. Healthful posture is an important factor. Also, the eyes should not be close to the paper - keep at least 12 inches between eyes and desk. This is one of the important reasons for teaching good pencil position.

Comfortable posture will enable the child to work easily for longer periods of time. The height of the chair and desk are important considerations. Body position that will assist the child can be described as follows:

1. Hips well back touching back of chair
2. Feet on floor to support torso
3. Body leans forward toward writing surface
4. Elbows just off the edge of the desk/table
5. About 6 inches between body and desk
6. Eyes at least 12 inches from writing surface
7. Desk height should not be higher than the bottom of a child's rib cage

Many teachers describe their group as being "wiggle worms" or "jitterbugs" because of constant jumping up and down. If you find the children are forever standing up to accomplish tasks at the table, check the height of the chairs to make sure that the table surface is not too high. See item 7 above.

Readiness activities provided in the following section will help greatly to develop skills needed to focus, use rhythmic movement and relate directionality and position objectives to the individual work space. Poor posture caused by high tables could interfere with important learning for these activities.
Part Two - Readiness Lesson Plans

Directionality Concepts and Sequencing
Physical Patterns for Reading Readiness
Tool Skills for Enhanced Progress
Rhythmic Patterns for Future Fluency

Six Week Outline

Week One - Movement Fingerplays

Week Two - Activities to support correct direction flow for movement of pencil for both right and left-handed students

Week Three - Activities to support correct positioning and movement for both right and left-handed students (left-right movement)

Week Four - Activities to support correct positioning and movement for both right and left-handed students (top-down movement)

Week Five - Activities to support correct positioning of paper and holding of writing instrument for both right and left-handed students

Week Six - Activities to support and review (Weeks One - Five) skills to prepare to write

Note: Each weekly lesson contains measurable student objectives. The abbreviation SWBAT stands for “The Student Will Be Able To” and is followed by the lesson objective for that particular day.

Writing Readiness for Preschoolers & Kindergartners

To the Teacher:
Since movement fluency and the process of writing are more important as long-term objectives than the initial product in writing, our goal is to provide a specific sequence of lessons for the first six weeks of preschool and/or kindergarten that address the concepts and skills identified as critical by our digital research. During this time, the students will develop and strengthen gross motor skills, learn to use rhythmic movement in conjunction with visual feedback response, directionality concepts, and position skills - the building of an internal model to assist them in the beginning skill of writing. While also building hand-eye-coordination, preschoolers/kindergartners will learn to relate directionality concepts to, and focus on, their personal work space. They will learn to listen and participate together as they establish beginning patterns for movement fluency. Since new skills build upon previously learned skills in this program, it is important to follow the lesson plans in the correct weekly sequential order.

This readiness lesson sequence was prepared by Rand H. Nelson, Peterson Directed Handwriting in cooperation with Heather Potthoff and Jacqueline Colland as part of a Curriculum and Systems Design Mini-Consulting Project at St. Vincent College, Latrobe, Pa. The excellent illustrations for the readiness lesson reproducibles were created and donated by Carol A Potthoff.
Week 1

Day 1

Objective:
SWBAT identify and execute a pattern of movements in the correct sequence.
SWBAT make movements with spoken “action words.” (Move with the sound of the voice.)
SWBAT march while verbalizing, “left-right” to a rhythmic beat.

Materials:
- tape or CD containing song with rhythmic beat (Our audio cassette offers a simple rhythm.)
- may eventually want to use “When the Saints Come Marching In”
- tape or CD player

Direct the students to turn their chair so that all can face you when seated.

1. The teacher will model showing his/her left and right foot to the students. Then the teacher will instruct the students to show him/her their left and right foot. (You want to face the students so you will have to use the opposite foot to elicit the correct foot from your students. Your right will be their left.)

2. The teacher will model as follows:
   Lift the left foot (your right foot) and then put it down as you say, “up, left.”

3. Have the children lift the left foot with the word “up” and put it down as they say, “left” in unison. Repeat until all are able to chant and move together with you.

4. Repeat with the right foot.

5. Now put the two moves together and demonstrate the pattern: “up, left (your right)” then “up, right (your left)” saying the words as you move the foot, “up, left, up, right.” Verbalize slowly at first to allow everyone to organize the correct movements.

6. Now the teacher and students (while seated) will march in place while the teacher and students together verbalize “left-right”. The teacher should monitor students to make sure that they are using and verbalizing the correct left-right movement. Note that we are now putting two movements together while saying only the action word for the step. To accomplish this objective children will need to integrate rhythm which will allow anticipation and preplanning of the sequence. This is a critical learning for the future use of fluent movement.

7. Step 6 will now be repeated, using the tape or CD, to march and say, “left, right” to a rhythmic beat. If time permits, have the children stand and march in place. Correlate to learning how to get in line and then march in line; around the room, down the hall, etc.

Note: The Peterson cassette would be easy to establish an initial rhythm because the beat can be easily used at full, half and double time. Once rhythm has been established the children should be able to march to different songs that offer more demanding rhythms.
Week 1

Day 2

Objective:
SWBAT identify and execute a pattern of movements in the correct sequence.
SWBAT make movements with “action words.” (Move with the sound of the voice.)
SWBAT move up, down, left and right rhythmically while verbalizing words of a song.

Materials:
- Movement Song:
  “Up to the Ceiling”
  “Down to the Floor”
  “Left to the Windows”
  “Right to the Door”

This lesson is designed with the usual classroom in mind. Most have the door on one side of the room and windows on the other. If this is not the case in your classroom you can locate a poster, chart or some other “landmark” at the left side of the room to substitute for the “windows.”

Stand in a position that will provide the proper directional reference and have the students stand to face you for the exercises.

1. The teacher will lead the students in an introductory stretching exercise to identify the up, down, left, and right directions.

2. The teacher will need to model and sing/say the movement song while having the students observe the movements that go along with the words to the song. The teacher should model stretching in the direction of the target movement (up, down, left, right) in the song as she/he sings. (A move to your right will be to their left as you face the class.)

3. The students will then be instructed to sing and move in the correct direction while singing the song with the teacher.

4. The song will be repeated as needed to review and reinforce the up, down, left, and right movement directions.

5. Add some marching-in-place to the exercise session to review and reinforce the lesson from day one.
Week 1

Day 3

Objective:
SWBAT identify and execute a pattern of movements in the correct sequence.
SWBAT make movements with “action words.” (Move with the sound of the voice.)
SWBAT identify and use their pointer finger and thumb in isolation while finger exercising.

This exercise, like those presented in the previous lessons, can become part of a daily routine aimed at long term goals. In this case the exercises are designed for building and coaching motor skills for pencil holding. The exercise will also involve learning and executing a pattern with three different moves. Close observation will quickly identify those children who have initial trouble perceiving and executing pattern sequences.

1. The teacher will ask the students to show her/him that they are number one. The teacher will make sure that all students are using their pointer/index finger. (Move # 1)

2. The teacher will verbalize a rhythmic beat using the words, “tap, tap, tap”. While verbalizing, the teacher will tap her/his pointer finger on the tip of the thumb with each word.

3. The class will then be asked to verbalize and demonstrate “tap, tap, tap” to the teacher led verbal rhythm.

4. Steps 1, 2, and 3 will now be repeated using the thumb instead of the pointer finger (Move # 2). I like to use “thumb” as the action word here. Bend the thumb to tap it on the side of the middle finger.

Some of the children will have trouble moving the thumb in isolation. A little practice will bring improvement and this learning relates directly to pencil grip.
5. The teacher will model holding her/his pointer finger and thumb together (a little pinch) and “waving” with the other three fingers. (Move # 3) Use “wave” or “wiggle” as the action word. This movement will be very difficult for the majority of youngsters to organize and execute at the outset. They will be able to learn to do this with practice over several days.

You may have to show some children how to hold the pointer and thumb with the opposite hand to isolate them and then wave with the remaining three fingers.

* You might also use a sock with holes cut for the index finger and thumb. This may help with understanding of the three groups here and it can also be used as a crayon/pencil holding helper.

6. The pattern we want to teach is:

Tap, Tap, Tap - Thumb, Thumb, Thumb - Wave, Wave, Wave

Have the children execute the pattern (as best they can) to the beat of the music. Practice will improve the child’s ability to execute the isolated movements which will help with pencil holding in the future.
Week 1
Day 4

Objective:
SWBAT review and reinforce directionality for up and down movement while participating in the “Itsy Bitsy Spider” song/fingerplay.

1. The teacher will model and sing “Itsy Bitsy Spider” for those students who may not already know this fingerplay (tricky spider walk = thumb to index, index to thumb).

2. The class will then be asked to participate in the “Itsy Bitsy Spider” fingerplay with their teacher.

3. The teacher will monitor to make sure the students are demonstrating the crawl-up and rain-down movements in the correct direction.

Week 1
Day 5

Objective: SWBAT review and reinforce pointer, thumb, and remaining three finger movements.

Materials:
• tape or CD containing song with rhythmic beat (Peterson Audio Cassette works well.)
• tape or CD player

1. Using the pointer finger, thumb, and wave movements from Week 1 Day 3, the teacher and students will verbalize the pattern in unison and demonstrate finger motions to a rhythmic beat.

2. The teacher will monitor the students to make sure that all are verbalizing and executing the correct finger movement sequence. Pointer movement should be easy for all. Work on the thumb next and finally the “wave.”

3. Repeat as necessary for review and reinforcement of rhythmic movement.

Action Words:
1. Tap, Tap, Tap.
2. Thumb, Thumb, Thumb.
Week 2
Day 1

Objectives:
SWBAT color cutouts using left-right lateral movements. (Pp. 38, 39, 40, 41)
SWBAT hold the picture to be colored with the nonwriting hand at the top of the page.

Materials:
- copies of barn and animal pages for each student
- crayons for each student
- scissors for each student (Please remember to supply left-handers with correct scissors)

Preparation:
Copy the barn picture from the reproducible page for each student. If you are able, enlarge a copy to use as you demonstrate paper holding and the coloring movement in front of the group.

Please note: It is a good idea to have left-handers seated at the right side of the viewing area. This will help to convey the “away-from-body” start point that is out to the left.

1. Using the barn picture, the teacher will model how to hold the picture and color in a left-right lateral motion. Note the hand drawings at the top of the page - one for the right hand the other for the left hand. Emphasize hand placement for paper holding. Demonstrate for both right and left handers. The hand at the top should stimulate paper rotation into “writing position.”

2. The students will then color their own barn cutout using the left-right lateral motion. The goal is to keep the writing hand under the image area, filling from the top to the bottom.

3. The teacher will monitor to help students reinforce the left-right lateral motion. Pay particular attention to those writing with the left hand. This learning is critical if a left-handed student is to be able to use efficient left-handed process. Please review the presentations on readiness and position skills on our web site information directory if you need more information.

4. The students can then cut out the barn. Demonstrate how to cut along the dotted lines.

5. As time allows, the students can continue to color and cut the barn animal cutouts for use in subsequent lessons.
Week 2
Day 2

Objective:
SWBAT color cutouts using a left-right lateral movement.
SWBAT hold the picture to be colored with the nonwriting hand at the top of the page.

Materials:
• copies of school and bus pages for each student (Pp. 47, 48)
• crayons for each student
• scissors for each student (Check your lefties please.)

1. This lesson will repeat procedures from Week 2 Day 1, but will involve the coloring of the school and bus cutouts.

2. If time allows after coloring, the students can cut out the drawings for use in subsequent lessons.

Week 2
Day 3

Objective: SWBAT color cutouts in a left-right lateral movement to practice paper holding skills.

Materials:
• cloud, raindrop and child picture/cutouts for each student (Pp. 44, 45, 42, 43)
• ladder work sheets for each student (Pg. 46)
• crayons and scissors for each student

1. This lesson will repeat procedures from Week 2 Day 1, but will involve the coloring of the cloud, raindrop, boy, girl and ladder cutouts as time and attention span permits.

2. If time allows, the students could do the cutting to prepare the pictures for use in future lessons.
Week 2
Day 4

Objective:
SWBAT identify and demonstrate top, bottom, middle, left, and right within the personal work area.

Materials:
- 1 bus cutout for each student (Pg. 48)
- 1 raindrop cutout for each student (Pg. 45)
- 1 cloud cutout for each student (Pg. 44)
- 1 school house cutout for each student (Pg. 47)
- 1 ladder cutout for each student (Pg. 46)

1. The teacher will model each of the following cutout placements before students place their own cutouts in their work area. (top, bottom, middle, left, right)

2. The students will be instructed to place the cloud on the top of their work area.

3. The students will be instructed to place the bus on the bottom of their work area.

4. The students will be instructed to place the raindrop in the middle of their work area.

5. The students will be instructed to place the ladder on the left side of their work area.

6. The students will be instructed to place the school house on the right side of their work area.

7. Using their pointer finger, have the students touch their cutouts and verbalize positions with the teacher.

8. As time permits, repeat lesson procedure for review and reinforcement of positions. You will find that some pupils need personal attention and help with position identification.

Teaching directionality can be difficult in the typical setting due to the furniture that is better suited to socialization than to language instruction. The fact that the children are facing each other around tables heightens the level of difficulty. We need to teach them to focus on their own work area, relate basic directionality to that space and develop confidence in their own knowledge. Too often they watch a child opposite them and reverse directions as a result of that comparison.
Week 2
Day 5

Objective:
SWBAT move in a rhythmic left-to-right motion while verbalizing action words.

Materials:
- 1 barn cutout for each student and teacher (Pg. 38)
- 1 cow cutout for each student and teacher (Pg. 39)
- 1 horse cutout for each student and teacher (Pg. 40)
- 1 pig cutout for each student and teacher (Pg. 41)

1. Direct the placement of the 3 barn animal cutouts at the left side of each student’s work area. Have students place the barn on the right side of the work area. Monitor each child carefully.

2. Demonstrate and instruct the students to place their “pencil holding” hand in number one position and to use the pointer finger to touch the cow on the left side of their work area when it is named. Direct the pupils to touch each of the animals as you say the name.

3. Model the movement of the cow by sliding it with the pointer finger over to the barn on the right. Say the action words, “left-to-right” as you move the picture. Instruct the students to help you to move the cow, pig, and horse by pointing to the cutouts on your display and verbalizing the action words aloud (airwriting). It is important to establish a rhythmic pattern during the airwriting activity.
   Teacher says, “The cow moves.”
   All say, “Left-to-right.” and airwrite the movement.
   Repeat several times with each animal until you establish a verbal rhythm.

4. Use the same verbalization pattern used in step 3. Instruct pupils to move the animals on the workspace. Repeat left-to-right movements with animals as needed to reinforce movement direction and movement rhythm. Work to get everyone moving and chanting in unison.
Week 3
Day 1

Objective:
SWBAT move in a rhythmic left-to-right motion while verbalizing action words.

Materials:
• 1 barn cutout for each student and teacher (Pg. 38)
• 1 cow cutout for each student and teacher (PG. 39)
• 1 horse cutout for each student and teacher (Pg. 40)
• 1 pig cutout for each student and teacher (Pg. 41)

1. Direct the placement of the 3 barn animal cutouts at the left side of each student’s work area. Have students place the barn on the right side of the work area. Monitor each child carefully.

2. Review the use of the “pencil holding” hand in number one position to touch the animal on the left side of their work area when it is named. Direct the pupils to touch each of the animals as you say the name.

3. Review the activity from Week 2, Day 5 by modeling and airwriting. Move directly to the workspace and direct the movement activity:
The teacher says, “The cow moves...”
All chant, “left-to-right” while moving the animal from the left to the right side.

4. Use the same command/response sequence to pupils as they move the animals to the barn. Repeat as needed to reinforce movement direction and movement rhythm. Once rhythm is established try to get everyone chanting and moving in unison to the lines below.

“Pig moves left-to-right.”
“Cow moves left-to-right.”
“Horse moves left-to-right.”
Clap, Clap, Clap
“Animals out, ready count.”
“1, out”
“2, out”
“3, out.”
“This is fun.”
Repeat several times and finish with
“Now we’re done.” in place of “This is fun.”
Week 3
Day 2

Objective:
SWBAT move in a rhythmic left-to-right motion while verbalizing action words.

Materials:
• 1 school cut out for each student and teacher (Pg. 47)
• 3 bus cut outs for each student and teacher (Pg. 48)

1. Direct students to place the 3 bus cut outs on the left side of each student’s work area. Place the school cut out on the right side of each student’s work area.

2. Instruct the students to use their “pointer finger” on one of the bus cutouts on the left side of their work area.

3. Review the command/response sequence by airwriting. Once again the goal is rhythmic movement starting at the left on command, and moving with the vocal to the right. The teacher will model and say, “The bus moves...” Students touch. All say, “left-to-right” while moving the bus to the school. The teacher will monitor students to make sure children are moving in the correct left-to-right motion and are utilizing their “pencil holding” hand.

4. Use the same procedure in step 3 to move the other 2 buses in the left-to-right motion to the school. Repeat the left-right movements with the buses as needed to reinforce.

Once you have established the pattern use a song/parody to the tune of “The People on the Bus.” (The people on the bus go “left-to-right.”)

Teacher sings, “The people on the bus go...”
The children sing, “Left-to-right.” repeating as they move each bus.
All sing, “The people on the bus go left-to-right, on the way to school.”

Teacher sings, “The children get off and...”
Children sing, “The bus goes back” for each bus.
All sing, “The children get off and the buses go back, to bring more kids to school.” Repeat as often as you wish.
Week 3
Day 3

Objective:
SWBAT airwrite left-to-right motion to review and reinforce position and movement sense.
SWBAT demonstrate start-point and directionality on the work space for “Start left, Slide right.”

Materials:
- tape or CD containing song with rhythmic beat
- tape or CD player
- bus and school pictures for demonstration on chalkboard (3 buses) (Pp. 47, 48)
- ladder cutouts for students (Pg. 46)

1. The teacher will have students face the demonstration and review Week 2 Day 5 when students moved the buses to the school.

2. Without moving the visuals, but verbalizing, “touch, left - slide, right” the students will be instructed to pretend to move the objects in the air. The teacher will model and verbalize this movement for the students. The teacher will also monitor the students to make sure that they are using their “pencil holding” hand and moving the arm for a large motion. Please note: It is a good idea to have left-handers seated at the right side of the viewing area. This will help to convey the “away-from-body” start point that is out to the left.

3. Step 2 is now repeated to the beat of a tape or CD. Make sure students are verbalizing and moving together in the left-to-right motion.

4. Direct the students to sit in “writing position” at the work space. Instruct students to pretend the pointer finger is a pencil that writes invisible ink on the table. Have the children perform the “touch, left - slide right” activity with the pointer on the work surface. Repeat with the action words and music.

5. The teacher will instruct students to close their eyes and repeat step 4, “Touch, left - slide, right.”

6. To close the lesson the teacher will instruct the students to place the ladder cutout at the left side of their work area. Monitor the placement for each student and leave the cutouts in place. During the rest of the day have students “check” the ladder cutout to make sure it is in place at the left side of the work space.
Week 3
Day 4

Objective: SWBAT review and reinforce the rhythmic left-to-right motion.

Materials:
- 1 barn cutout for each student (Pg. 38)
- 1 cow cutout for each student (Pg. 39)
- 1 horse cutout for each student (Pg. 40)
- 1 pig cutout for each student (Pg. 41)
- tape or CD containing song with rhythmic beat
- tape or CD player (If you can’t find suitable music, record the poem - 4-5 repetitions.)

1. This lesson will repeat procedures from Week 3 Day 1, but will involve the addition of rhythmic movement to music. See Week 3 Day 1 for specific lesson plan steps. Keeping up with “the beat” for several iterations of the pattern provides a powerful challenge for focus and concentration.

2. Please be sure to monitor the students to make sure that they are verbalizing the left-to-right motion and moving the animals to the music or chant with their “pencil holding” hand.

Week 3
Day 5

Objective: SWBAT review and reinforce the rhythmic left-to-right motion.

Materials:
- 1 school cut out for each student (Pg. 47)
- 3 bus cut outs for each student (Pg. 48)
- tape or CD containing song with rhythmic beat (may want to use “People on the Bus” song)
- tape or CD player

This lesson will repeat procedures from Week 3 Day 4, but will use the school and bus cutouts. See Week 3 Day 2 (Pg. 25) for specific lesson plan steps.
Week 4
Day 1

Objective: SWBAT move in a top-down rhythmic motion while verbalizing the words, “top-down.”

Materials:
- 3 cloud cutouts for each student and teacher (Pg. 44)
- 3 raindrop cutouts for each student and teacher (Pg. 45)

1. Place the cloud cutouts at the top-left, top center and top right of each student’s work area. Place the raindrops directly under the clouds in each child’s work area.

2. Instruct the child to use the “pointer finger” to touch the raindrops sequentially; top-left, then top-center and then top-right. Make sure that all students are using the left-to-right sequence.

3. Demonstrate the movement with the “down” action word. Touch each with the action word “top.” Establish a rhythmic pattern through airwriting.
   The teacher will model and say, “The raindrops go...”
   All say, “top” to touch and “down” to move the three raindrops from the top to the bottom. Demonstrate a left-to-right sequence. Monitor students to make sure that the children are moving in the correct top-down motion and are utilizing the “pencil holding” hand.

4. Use the same procedure in step 3 to direct pupils through the movement of the raindrops on the work surface.
Week 4
Day 2

Objective:
SWBAT move in a top-down rhythmic motion, while verbalizing the words, “top-down.”

Materials:
• 1 ladder worksheet for each student and teacher (Pg. 46)
• 1 child cutout for each student and teacher (Pp. 42, 43)
• ladder and child cutouts for display and airwriting

1. Place the ladder worksheet in the center of each student’s work area (you may want to tape it in place with masking tape). Instruct pupils to place the child cutout at the top of the ladder in front of each student. Monitor to be sure everyone has identified the top correctly.

2. Instruct the students to place their “pencil holding” hand on the child at the top of the ladder in their work area.

3. Instruct the students to move the child down the ladder in a top-down motion. It is important to keep all students together during this activity to establish a rhythmic pattern. The teacher says, “The child moves...” All say, “Top-down” while moving the child from the top to the bottom of the ladder. All say, “Climb back up” to reposition the child at the top. Repeat as needed to monitor all students making sure that the children are moving in the correct top-down motion and are utilizing their “pencil holding” hand.

4. Have the children pretend to move the child on your model down the ladder by airwriting. Elicit at least one minute of repetitions. Alternate eyes open and eyes closed.
Week 4
Day 3

Objective:
SWBAT airwrite top-down motion to review and reinforce position and movement sense.

Materials:
• tape or CD containing song with rhythmic beat
• tape or CD player

1. Teacher will instruct students to recall Day 1 and 2 when they moved the raindrop and child in the top-down rhythmic motion.

2. Without the use of visuals, but still verbalizing, “top-down” the students will be instructed to pretend to move the objects in the air. The teacher will model and verbalize this movement for the students. The teacher will also monitor the students to make sure that they are using their “pencil holding” hand.

3. Step 2 is now repeated to the beat on a tape or CD. Make sure students are verbalizing, “top-down” and moving together in the top-down motion. Alternate eyes open and eyes closed.

4. While the music is available, review and practice the #1 Exercise: Tap, Tap, Tap - Thumb, Thumb, Thumb - Wave, Wave, Wave. Note the children who are still having trouble with the thumb and wave moves.

Week 4
Day 4

Objective: SWBAT review and reinforce the rhythmic top-down motion.

Materials:
• 3 cloud cutouts for each student (Pg. 44)
• 3 raindrop cutouts for each student (Pg. 45)
• tape or CD containing song with rhythmic beat
• tape or CD player

1. This lesson will repeat the procedures from Day 1, but will involve the addition of rhythmic movement to music. See Week 4 Day 1 (Pg. 28) for specific lesson plan steps.

2. It is important that the teacher monitors the students to make sure that they are verbalizing the top-down motion and moving the raindrops to the music with their “pencil holding” hand.
Week 4
Day 5

Objective:
SWBAT review and reinforce the rhythmic top-down motion.

Materials:
• 1 ladder worksheet for each student (Pg. 46)
• 1 child cut out for each student (Pp. 42, 43)
• tape or CD containing song with rhythmic beat
• tape or CD player

1. The teacher should tape the ladder worksheet down to each individual student’s work area.

2. This lesson will repeat the procedures from Day 4, but will involve the addition of rhythmic movement to music. See Week 4 Day 2 (Pg. 29) for specific lesson plan steps.

3. As mentioned before, it is essential for the teacher to walk around the classroom to make sure students are moving in the correct rhythmic top-down motion and utilizing their “pencil holding” hand.
Week 5
Day 1

Objective:
SWBAT demonstrate correct practice of holding position for a writing instrument for both right and left handed students.

Materials:
- 1 spoon for each student
- 1 empty cup for each student
- 1 cup of dry beans for each student (A few spoonfuls per cup is plenty)

1. The teacher will model the “spoon” way to hold the spoon for the students. This configuration of fingers and thumb will also be a very effective way to hold a pencil. The teacher will model for both the right and left handed students how to hold the spoon in the “spoon” way. The activity will allow manipulation practice using the effective pencil grip position without using a pencil.

2. The students will now correctly pick up the spoon with their writing hand and hold it the “spoon” way.

3. Using the spoon and the cup of dry beans, the teacher will model spooning the beans from one cup to the other.

4. The students will be instructed to use their spoon and cup of beans to spoon the beans from one cup to the other. It will be easy to spot and assist those who are having trouble.

5. As time permits, repeat to review and reinforce the correct holding position as you circulate.

Practice the “spoon” way of holding a spoon.
Week 5

Day 2

Objective:
SWBAT demonstrate correct holding position of writing instrument for both right and left-handed students.

Materials:
• 1 spoon for each student
• 1 paper bowl with dry cereal for each student
• Player and tape with music for “#1” exercise (Pg. 17).
• A list of the student names for use as a checklist.

1. Conduct the “Number One” exercise and as children move to the beat, use the check list to indicate those who are still having trouble with independent thumb and wave movements. Be sure to monitor and assist these children as they perform the “spoony” activity.

2. Teacher will ask the students to recall from Day 1 how to hold their spoon the “spoony” way.

3. The teacher will then instruct the students to hold their spoon the “spoony” way and eat their dry cereal. Relate the holding positions to those finger groups used in the “#1” exercise.

4. The teacher will monitor to make sure that students are holding their spoon with the correct writing hand and positioning.

Week 5

Day 3

Objective:
SWBAT position paper correctly and identify areas on the page when holding the paper in “reading position” and “writing position.”

Materials:
• worksheet with directional icons (cloud, ladder, grass, pg. 49)

1. Teacher will pass out one worksheet to each student.

2. Teacher will model correct paper positioning (both reading and writing) for the right-handed and for the left-handed students. Note “hand” icons as used for “writing position.”

3. The students will be instructed to position their own paper correctly in response to your request for reading/writing positions. Monitor students carefully. You may want to have the pupils pick up a pencil to make handedness identification easier.

5. Using their pointer finger, students will correctly touch positions verbalized by the teacher. (For example, touch the cloud on the top of your paper)
Week 5
Day 4

Objective:
SWBAT position paper correctly and identify sections of the paper using a pencil.

Materials:
• Worksheet with directional icons (cloud, ladder, grass - Pg. 49)
• Spoon for each child

1. This lesson will repeat the procedures from Week 5 Day 3 (Pg. 33) but students will use the spoon to touch the section on the paper as you direct. We will practice the “writing” paper position and “spoony” position at the same time.

2. Try adding demand for interpretation of location on the page, (i.e. touch at the top-left, touch at the middle-left). Check for “spoony” position and paper position.

Week 5
Day 5

Objective:
SWBAT position paper and pencil correctly while pointing to, and marking, areas on worksheet.

Materials:
• 1 worksheet for each student with shapes in directional positions (Pg. 50)
• 1 pencil for each student
• Music and tape for # 1 exercise.

1. Review and conduct a minute or two of the #1 exercise to the beat of the music.

2. Model pencil position. Then name and mark each shape as you verbalize the different positions on the paper. (For example: say, “Top, the circle is at the top of the paper.”)

2. The teacher will instruct the students to hold the paper in writing position and mark the shapes as they are named. Have children verbalize the name and position of the shape as above.

3. The teacher will monitor to make sure that all students are identifying the shapes correctly. Ask for verbal responses to indicate correct position understanding. “Who can tell me what shape is at the left side?”

4. Repeat various questions to review and reinforce paper locations with all pupils.
Week 6
Day 1

Objective:
SWBAT apply rhythmic movement, paper holding and pencil holding by producing lines from left-to-right across the worksheet to a verbal cadence.

Materials:
• Tape and music for #1 exercise and march-in-place.
• Pencils and worksheet (Buses and schools, Pg. 51)
• Chalkboard or overhead projector for demonstration and airwriting.

1. Have children take their seat at the workspace, facing your demonstration area. Conduct #1 and marching exercises for a short time as an intro for the lesson to get them moving with the voice and in unison.

2. Explain and demonstrate the objectives: pencil holding, paper in writing position, write and say. Direct the class in airwriting to draw a line from the bus at the left to the school at the right. Say, “Touch left top and slide to the right. Touch left middle and slide to the right. Touch left bottom and slide to the right.” Repeat the airwriting until all are chanting and moving together.

3. Have children turn their seat to writing position and get out a pencil as you pass out the worksheets.

4. Emphasize writing position once more and direct the pupils through the exercise with the pointer finger first. Then repeat with the pencil. Multiple iterations can be done producing several lines across the page from each bus.
Week 6
Day 2

Objective:
SWBAT apply writing position and good pencil position to produce downstrokes with rhythmic movement.

Materials:
• Worksheets and pencils for demonstration and for each student (Pg. 52)

1. Introduce the lesson with the Up, Down, stretching exercise and song. (Week One Day 2)
2. Demonstrate and direct top-down airwriting. Progress from left-to-right.
3. Direct the Write and Say activity using the worksheet.
   Alternative grammar of action correlates for counting:
   Count - “one, down” - “two, down” - for all ten raindrops.

Week 6
Day 3

Objective:
SWBAT apply writing position, and good pencil position to produce slide-right strokes with rhythmic movement.

Materials:
• Worksheets and pencils for demonstration and for each student (Pg. 53)

This lesson will repeat the lesson steps from the previous day but will use lateral strokes from horse to barn instead of downstrokes.

Week 6
Day 4

Objective: SWBAT apply writing position, and good pencil position to produce slide-right strokes and top-down strokes with rhythmic movement.

Materials:
• Worksheets and pencils for demonstration and for each student (Pg. 54)

Follow the established lesson procedure to illustrate and describe, direct airwriting, and write & say. Use the grammar of action from the previous two lessons.
Week 6

Day 5

Objective:
SWBAT apply good position skills for pencil and paper.
SWBAT demonstrate understanding of top-down and left-to-right directionality by applying strokes in a set sequence to produce a predetermined shape.
SWBAT apply rhythmic movement to produce iterations of a box shape on the paper.

Materials:
• pencils and worksheet (Pg. 55) for demonstration and for each student.

1. Teacher will use the above materials to direct the students in an activity to review, reinforce and apply the position skills in a totally new activity while introducing the concepts of vertical and horizontal. Use gross-motor, airwriting with action words to direct airwriting of the strokes prior to directing student production.

2. Demonstrate the production of a vertical stroke, moving top-down at the left side (leave a wide margin) of your image area to connect the circles. Repeat at the right side. Direct student airwriting, “touch, down.”

3. Demonstrate the production of a horizontal line moving left-to-right to connect the two down-strokes at the top. Repeat at the bottom. Direct airwriting. Say, “Touch left” at the top and “Slide to the right” as the stroke is produced. Repeat the sequence several times, “Touch-down, touch-down, top slide-right, bottom slide-right.”

4. Model the production of the stroke sequence to form a smaller box at the left side of the image area. Use action words as you make the strokes. Exaggerate the timing to show a definite touch and a definite move with the action words. Sequence = left down, right down - top slide, bottom slide. Have pupils write in the air with action words several times to establish a rhythm of movement.

5. Direct the production of boxes, one at the left, one in the middle and one at the right. As time permits direct the production of more boxes on the other side of the paper - three at the top, three in the middle, and three at the bottom for example.

Please note that this simple activity can be used over and over to introduce many concepts for writing readiness - tall/small, wide/narrow, close together/far apart (letter spacing), pairs/sets of boxes (word spacing). These objectives should involve the application of critical thinking also. Children can learn how to judge their effort and set goals for improvement without the distraction of more complex letter strokes and sequences.
Barn Cutout
Horse Cutout
Pig Cutout
Cloud Cutout
Drop Cutout
Bus Cutout
Part Three - Getting Started with Letterform Writing

Everything you do in your class to promote reading readiness can be reinforced by including concepts and activities from the "psychomotor" domain. *Handwriting Readiness Is Reading Readiness Too!*

1. Left-to-Right Tracking
2. The Importance of Lowercase Letterforms
   
   * Using likenesses and differences to enhance visual/muscle patterns
   * Consistent top-down movement orientation
   * Sizes and Proportions/Spatial relationships
   * Place-in-space applied to "word packaging"

In these areas, helping children to understand and relate to concepts, such as: *Left-Side/Right Side, Tall/Small (Big/Little), Top/Middle/Bottom, Down/Up, In/Out,* and similar factors that relate to identification and process are important. Most of these concepts are included in reading readiness activities.

If youngsters are given ditto worksheets, with instructions to "circle" a choice of objects, you have a splendid opportunity to provide the necessary instruction concerning physical position, oval or circular movements that start with the "hook around" round tops.

Many movement reversals become bad habits in pre-first pencil/paper activities because children have not received the help they need to learn efficient motor patterns from the outset.

**Basic Strokes Build Motor Patterns and Control - Anchoring**

Motor control experts have analyzed the movements and control processes that affect the development of "learned pattern modules" and how they create fluent pathways as humans relate visual/muscle memory in reading and physical language.

They identify the value of *exaggeration* in initially teaching discrete basic strokes that systematically help the young learner to 1) start strokes at the right place, 2) make stroke movements in the correct direction - generally downward, 3) see, understand and learn left-to-right sequences of strokes in multipart symbols that will reinforce left-to-right tracking for reading and writing.

This stroke-by-stroke production process is called "anchoring." The building method enhances control because the child first learns exact starting and stopping points. This is the way we have prepared the COLOR/RHYTHM letterform models in the "ABC's and 1 2 3's" book and the beginner's wall alphabets.

\[
\begin{align*}
a &= c + \text{i} \\
d &= c + \text{i}
\end{align*}
\]

The illustration teaches the child to lift, then anchor the second stroke to the first with rhythmic fluency. Obviously the anchoring process is dependent upon visual skills...and because eye-hand coordination is a relatively high order skill, this means that the teacher must be very "forgiving." The objective of the anchoring technique is to develop specific movements and pause control...not perfect looking letters. The process is more important than the product. Once start point and stroke sequence is established, we will move on to the next developmental step toward fluency. We will introduce a skill named threading.
Basic stroke movement practice provides an excellent opportunity to master rhythmic movement, position skills and other important concepts at the same time. Counting (sets of 2, 3, 4, etc.), spacing (set members are close together and sets are spaced apart), size (tall-small), top/middle/base, left vs. right, alike vs. different can all be mastered using the six basic strokes - first on unlined paper and then with lined paper. Remember, the introduction of lines presents a whole new challenge. Check the reproducible pages for some special paper masters.

Mastery of movement and position with basic strokes will pay huge dividends during letterform and numeral instruction. The child will know how to move and can focus on the new sequences.

**Stroke #1  "Tall" and "Small" Downstrokes (Top starts)**

**Stroke #2  Rightward Sliding Strokes (Start on left side)**

**Stroke #3  Slant Left Strokes (Top starts)**

**Stroke #4  Slant Right Strokes (Top starts)**

**Stroke #5  Hook-around left curves (top first)**

**Stroke #6  Roll-around right curves (top first)**

Use for tall and small practice also.
Name Writing
Avoid writing names using only capital letters. If name writing cannot be delayed, make large name cards using the COLOR/RHYTHM sequences shown in the book, carefully marking start and stop points. Use the name cards for finger tracing practice. Also, any labels you prepare for charts, word recognition readiness, etc., should be made using lowercase letters.

Unlined Paper
We recommend the use of unlined paper for an extended period of time. Remember our tenet - "The bigger the better, the longer the better." However, this does not imply that you cannot use lines in illustrations and as "training wheels." The concepts of TOP-MIDDLE-BOTTOM can be learned without pain when illustrated and discussed frequently without actually expecting children to use lines for pencil practice.

Place In Space
The use of lined paper at this level does have important objectives. It helps children learn start points and stop points in relation to the concepts of "tall-small" as applied in word recognition. It also allows the child to learn how to use the internal model for rhythmic movement in cooperation with the external visual feedback system demanded by the lines. Small spaces between lines must be avoided. Reproducibles for very large spaced ruled paper for finger tracing and introductory pencil work are provided in this handbook.

Please remember, touching lines accurately is not necessary. Lines are only references. We must jump back and forth between product and process. The child will be quick to abandon rhythmic movement and position to achieve more accuracy. The major objective is to develop fluent motor-control patterns: Start Points, Direction of Movement, Stop Points, and Left-To-Right Tracking. Build confidence through practice and comparison. Keep the voices working!

Here is a "Lines" Poem for your use!
1. I have three friends who are very fine,
   They help me learn to see the lines!
   ————  Topsy Topline,
   —— — — — Mopsy Middle Line,
   ————  Buddy Baseline.

2. I have three friends who are very sweet.
   They help me make my sizes neat!
   ————  Topsy Topline,
   —— — — — Mopsy Middle Line,
   ————  Buddy Baseline.
Unique And Sensible Materials

Nonconsumable Student Book:  ABC’s and 123’s
Color/Rhythm models for letters and numerals are presented at gross-motor size on 62 pages; plastic spiral binding, 8.5” x 11”.  See page 67 of this manual for an illustration of pages and objectives. Pictures make it easy to show letter/sound connections. The alphabetic arrangement correlates instantly with any reading or language program. “Action Words” provide a grammar-of-action for directing rhythmic movement. ASL Manual Alphabet signs are also illustrated. Call toll free (8:30 - 4:30 Eastern Time) for more information: 800-541-6328.

Classroom “Big Book”
ABC’s and 123’s flip-chart style “big book” for the classroom provides huge ABC’s and 123’s pages for direction of lessons and teacher demonstration (page size: 17.5” x 23”). Letter models are gigantic. Pictures match ABC’s and 123’s pages for letter sounds. ASL Manual Alphabet signs are also illustrated as in the student text. Call the toll-free number below for information.

Reproducible Lesson Sheets
The set of lesson sheets provides blackline versions of the pages of the student text plus some additional goodies. It makes sense to use the text nonconsumably. These blackline versions of the pages will give better results than using the color pages of the book as a master on your copier.

Reinforcement With Blackline Practice Sheets
As you are using supplemental blacklines, please monitor their use carefully. Independent use of practice sheets is usually not recommended. Young children need teacher direction.

However, blacklines are excellent for "close-up" visual/motor fingertracing. Some pupils need time to learn how to transfer from models presented as chalkboard, overhead, or easel models. Sheets for desk use during teacher-directed lessons can make it easier to make that transition.

The reproducible pages that follow, as well as those in the reproducible lesson sheets mentioned above are licensed to you personally for use with your students. We sincerely hope that you will find good reason to recommend the purchase our products to other teachers you know and respect.

For long-distance Technical Support, Call Our Handwriting Helpline: 1-800-541-NEAT (6328)
You may also send Email to: mrpencil@peterson-handwriting.com
Visit our web site: www.peterson-handwriting.com

A specialist is generally available to answer your questions and provide suggestions and support from 9 AM to 4 PM Eastern Time, Monday-Friday.
Basic Stroke # 1 Reproducible

Practice moving left-to-right with action-word rhythm.

"Slide Right "
Basic Stroke # 2 Reproducible
Practice moving left-to-right with action-word rhythm.

"Slide Right "

"Slide Right "

We Write To Read from Peterson Directed Handwriting
**Tall & Small Reproducible**

Use "action words" to control the movement. Basic stroke movement practice should focus on position skills and movement rhythm.

Say, “Tall” or “Small” to touch start point and “Down” as you move. Fingertrace first to establish a rhythm then use the pencils to move with voices.

"Tall Down"

"Small Down"
Basic Strokes # 3 & # 4 Reproducible

Practice "hook around" and "roll around" strokes. Use action words to control the movement. Basic stroke movement practice should focus on position skills and movement rhythm.

Note that start dots are provided to allow several iterations each a little smaller.

Hook Around

Roll Around

Roll Around
Basic Stroke # 5 Reproducible

Practice "Slant Left" basic strokes. Use "action words" to control the movement.

"Slant Left"
Basic Stroke # 6 Reproducible

Practice "Slant Right" basic strokes. Use "action words" to control the movement.

"Slant Right"
Letter Formation Instruction

A 4-Step, Developmentally Appropriate, Teaching Method

Plan to provide your students with production process exercises as part of all instruction related to letter images/sounds presented in your reading readiness program. Initial modeling can be done with large group instruction. This is particularly easy when you have the ABC’s and 123’s Big Book.

**Step One: Illustrate and Describe**
Place the ABC’s and 123’s Big Book on chalkboard or easel so that all the pupils can face the display. Point out the starting point, direction of movement and stop point for each stroke. Demonstrate the movement rhythm by chanting the “Action Words” as you fingertrace the model. The "Action Words" are very efficient because they can be "chanted" in a rhythmic process that increases fluency and control. Always keep in mind that some children will have experimented without good process instruction. You will have to be sure start points, direction of movement, and stop points are recognized and learned.

**Step Two: Airwriting/Rhythm**
Ask students to write in the air and say the action words along with you. Patterning rhythmic control using airwriting helps children develop correct muscle patterns. One minute of directed airwriting can produce 30 or more gross-motor repetitions. As you watch your pupils you will be able to identify those who may need individual attention. You may want to bring students forward to fingertrace the giant model on the Big Book page.

When everyone is moving correctly and able to verbalize the action words, you can begin other time-efficient exercises that lead to developing fluent learned pattern modules: Fingerwriting in sand, wetting the finger for chalkboard "finger letters," big muscle "rug-writing," etc.

**Step Three: Fingertracing Models On Paper**
If you are using our pupil book "ABC's and 123's" or the blackline models we prepared especially for fingertracing rhythm practice, you'll note we put corner markings on each sheet to help you explain and monitor "writing position." The pages of the workbook could be removed and laminated to assure long life. Lamination also makes the "write and say" side of each page reusable with erasable crayons or dry-erase pens.

Direct the children to use their "writing finger" to trace the large color/rhythm models as they chant the strokes with fluent movement and control. One minute of directed fingertracing provides 30 or more replications. Be sure everyone uses arm movement.

**Step Four: Write and Say**
The actual application of the readiness steps 1, 2, 3 may vary, depending upon the pacing of your reading readiness program and pupil abilities. The time for Step 4, pencil application of letterform writing practice, should coincide with any paper activities you require. Children shouldn't use worksheets and pencils without receiving teacher direction about physical process skills, particularly the patterning of left-to-right progression, letterform start points, movement, stop points, and sequences.

Model all position skills, emphasizing how important they are to everything we will learn to read! Always stress the partnership between reading and writing. With unlined practice paper in writing position, review the start point, movement, stop points, and stroke sequences. Rhythm and Control are the process objectives. Be sure pupils don't tense up and start to draw.

When using the "start-dots" on the "write and say" side of the workbook pages you will have to make sure pupils wait for you to start the "action word" descriptions. Work for fluent movements.

You will note that children who verbalize quite easily when fingertracing, suddenly lose their voices as you encourage them to continue "saying" the action words. Don't despair! With your gentle persuasion they'll soon be comfortable. When the brain is able to make the voice work in conjunction with pencil movements, it's a good sign that the pattern is beginning to work.
Using The *ABC's and 123's* Pupil Book

The letterform patterning pages are plasticoil bound and sturdy stock for lasting value. Each “develop” page is designed for gross-motor, directed, rhythmic fingertracing. "Action Words" are printed on the page to make teacher direction convenient. Strokes are numbered with arrows and color-sequenced to help improve perception of start points, direction of movement and rhythm control.

The binding makes it easy for children to fold back unwanted pages and hold the target page in good writing position. Right-handed pupils point the right top of the paper to the top of the desk, left-handers point the left top of the paper to the top of the desk, to allow good arm/elbow placement. The precise degree of rotation will vary with table height relative to each child. Take a look at our self adhesive position guides. The student aligns the top of the book with the edge of the triangular shape.

![Pictures for letter sounds and also pictures of the ASL manual alphabet are shown on each fingertrace page.](image)

The page should be held “high” on the table so the hand is under the image rather than beside it.

A flip chart/big book is also available to make direction of practice and all-day correlation easy.

The second side of each letter or numeral page places the form within wide-spaced lines and starting points are provided to help develop the movement/control patterns. If the pages are laminated, children can use this side repeatedly for "Write and Say" practice as presented on page 12 of this handbook, and the inside cover of the pupil book. Rather than use the book for writing a few letters, we offer a set of reproducible pages for copying. Write invisible letters with the finger on book pages and then move to the blackline.
Numerals:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9


The Numeral Song: The tune is

"Mulberry Bush."

Start at the top, hook around to the left,
Start at the top, hook around to the left,
Start at the top, hook around to the left,
This is the numeral zero.

Start at the top, make one stroke down,
Start at the top, make one stroke down,
Start at the top, make one stroke down,
This is the numeral one.

Make half a heart and slide to the right,
Make half a heart and slide to the right,
Make half a heart and slide to the right,
This is the numeral two.

Roll around and round again,
Roll around and round again,
Roll around and round again,
This is the numeral three.

Down, slide right and down again,
Down, slide right and down again,
Down, slide right and down again,
This is the numeral four.

Down, roll around, and slide the top,
Down, roll around, and slide the top,
Down, roll around, and slide the top,
This is the numeral five.

Curve down to the left and loop a toe,
Curve down to the left and loop a toe,
Curve down to the left and loop a toe,
This is the numeral six.

Slide right on the top, slant down to the left,
Slide right on the top, slant down to the left,
Slide right on the top, slant down to the left,
This is the numeral seven.

Hook snake, curve up to the top,
Hook snake, curve up to the top,
Hook snake, curve up to the top,
This is the numeral eight.

Make a balloon and then the stick
Make a balloon and then the stick,
Make a balloon and then the stick,
This is the numeral nine.

From the kindergarten teachers of the Whitehall Elementary School, Baldwin-Whitehall School District
Practice Groups Based On Movement
The six basic strokes used to build letters/numerals provide an opportunity to economize instructional time by combining letters that use the same movement patterns.

Lowercase Groupings:

- Straight Line Family
  - li
  - fcadesou
- Clockwise Family
  - hrnmb
  - kvwxz
- Slants Family
  - jgqpy
- Counterclockwise Family
  - nmkz

Uppercase Groupings:

- Straight Line Family
  - LTIFEH
- Clockwise Family
  - PBRDJ
- Counterclockwise Family
  - CGSOQU
- Straight Plus Slants Family
  - NMKZ
- Slant to Start Family
  - AYVWX
Adding Developmental Movement Integration - Threading

The second step for building fluency was first introduced by Peterson consultants in 1972 as "THE NO-LIFT" Technique. It has been recently proposed by a number of commercial handwriting books as a "continuous stroke" method. It is accurately named "THREADING" by the motor control scientists.

It is not, and never should be called "continuous" movement. The monumental computer-assisted research has shown that CONTROL is absolutely necessary for the development of effective "learned pattern modules."

The "threading" process or "no-lift" technique is compatible with movements of the one-stroke-at-a-time "anchoring" method, and as soon as letterform visual/muscle pattern benefits of the exaggerated lifts between strokes in lowercase letters has been demonstrated by a child, you may permit him or her to take advantage of the increased speed threading may provide. If you choose to use the threading process (i.e. connect strokes within lowercase letters), emphasize control pauses before the threading (or retracing) movement begins. It is also important to be sure the first stroke of each letter continues to start correctly.

* Note that threading requires a new stroke sequence for lowercase £.

The "no-lift" technique requires less hand/eye coordination and sometimes makes it easier for a child who has been overcorrecting movements and drawing too slowly. Again, the reason for the alternative is to develop fluent but controlled movements that become automatic. Be sure the pupils understand that they can move and stop, and move again, in the new direction.

(Note: Since capital letters were originally designed for hammers and chisels, and are used so infrequently in composition, we suggest using the "no-lift" technique for lowercase letters only.)