

Mrs. Atkinson's



Handwriting Workbook

An OT Approach to Handwriting

Composed by Amanda M. Atkinson MS: OTR/L

Name: _____

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Dear Grown Ups, 

Over the years, I have seen the “handwriting curriculum” disappear. The educational system has shifted its focus to reading and math. While those skills are obviously essential to academic growth – there are some fundamental principles that are taught through handwriting that are lost in the shuffle. Concepts such as “big and small” – “left to right” – “across and down” – are just a few examples of how handwriting turns our three dimensional reality into a one dimensional pencil and paper world.

In addition to language concepts, handwriting works on finger movement and eye hand coordination skills. Working on size, alignment and spacing is how a child develops control of their movements. And finally, while handwriting is quickly disappearing from those early school years, it makes a re-appearance in the “state testing years”. Children are required to print legible, lengthy answers to reading and math questions. Without a solid handwriting foundation, this task can be both frustrating and fatiguing for a child. Having a strong academic base means relatively nothing if it cannot be reflected on paper.

As a school-based therapist, most of the referrals I receive from teachers are complaints of “bad handwriting”. But the fact is, handwriting **needs to be taught**. If it is not taught, then “bad handwriting” turns into an epidemic. Working closely with kindergarten and first grade teachers, both in the general education and special education settings, I developed this modified version of Handwriting Without Tears® with my own creative spin. My goal was to provide teachers with common language, simple concepts and center-based activities that they could easily integrate in their classrooms. This workbook is a 10-year work in progress.

That being said, I receive absolutely **NO** profit from this creation. This is my resource gift to you. However, 10 years is a long time on any project, so I ask that if you choose to utilize this tool, you keep my name as it is on what you use.

All it takes is 15-minutes a day to develop a solid handwriting base. Children can easily be motivated by “play” – simple sensory mediums, like playdoh, chalk and paint can become part of your handwriting routine. Movement patterns eventually become movement “habits”. The motor skills for handwriting are typically established by 2-3rd grade. Teaching a child how to correctly draw and position letters in their early years will last them a lifetime.

Sincerely,

Amanda M. Atkinson MS; OTR/L

Amanda M. Atkinson MS; OTR/L

Steps To Teaching Handwriting

1. *Develop a **strong fine motor base**.*

In order to move a pencil to form letters, the child needs good hand and finger strength. Never underestimate the importance of “play” tasks like coloring, drawing, cutting and crafts. Have the child get off their LeapPads, iPads, Smartphones, Wii games and etc. Do some old school play activities with crayons, scissors and glue. In Appendix A at the back of this workbook, you can find a list of activities that work on developing fine motor strength, control, precision and coordination.

2. *To write a letter, the child must **know** the letter.*

Before a child can write a letter, they must be able to recognize and name it consistently (regardless of the size or font). This concept of “letter memory” is the very first step to handwriting. If the child cannot consistently recognize all of the letters of the alphabet, they are not ready for printing.

3. *Start with the **writing line**.*

Before you even think of showing the child how to “draw” the letter, introduce them to a writing line. Show and explain the top, middle and bottom components. Make sure that the child can consistently name and identify these components. This part of handwriting is **so important**, because it is the basis of the child’s understanding of where to start and end letters. Spend as much time as the child needs on understanding the purpose and parts of a writing line.

4. *Start with a **sensory experience**, **NOT** pencil and paper.*

Start teaching letter formation by “building” the letters. Use the **Sensory Writing Line Model**, **Letter Formation Pieces** and **Letter Formation Blueprint** in this workbook to build upper case letters. Roll playdoh into “snakes” to make the letter strokes for upper case and lower case letters. Teach how to position the sensory mediums correctly on the writing lines, making sure that the letters start and end in the correct places.

5. *Introduce pencil and paper.*

For younger children, use larger three lined paper. As the child improves the control of their pencil, decrease the size of the writing lines. Be consistent with what kind of paper you use. It is unfair to use one type of lined paper for one task, and a different kind for another task. Remember to use the same type of lines for your visual models.

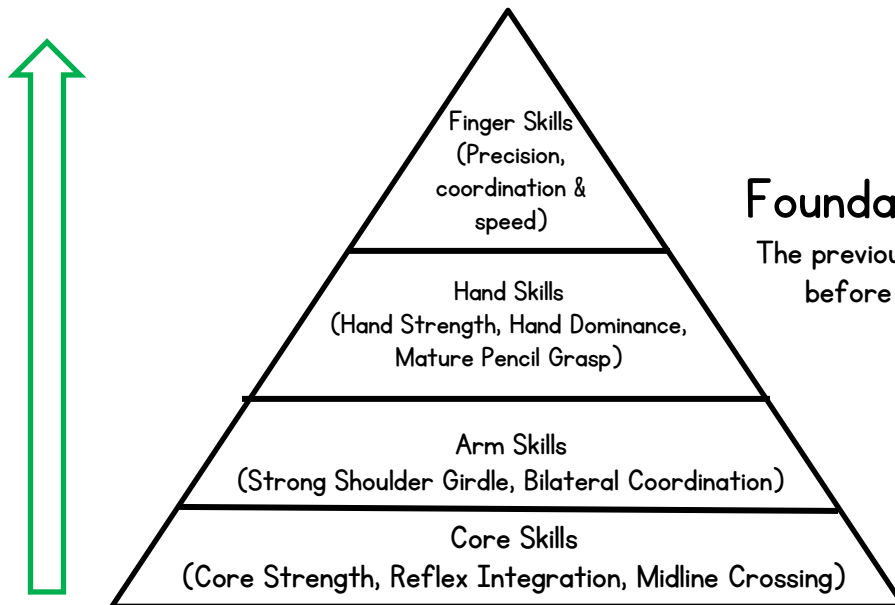
6. *Practice makes perfect.*

Once the child can form the letter, encourage them to do independent work by completing each letter worksheet provided in this workbook. Make sure to monitor that the child is forming the letter correctly. To master handwriting, the child should spend 15-minutes a day practicing how to form letters.

Foundational Motor Skills

We are no longer primates. Unlike our hairy ancestors, we have this great thing - an **opposable thumb**. Despite our computers, smart phones and other gadgets that are slowly turning reality into virtual reality - we were created to use our hands, we were made to use tools. One of the most underestimated and overlooked tool is the pencil. It is our primary means of written communication. And just like any other tool, it takes strength, control, coordination and practice to use it.

Being able to hold and move a pencil is a motor task. Motor skills typically follow a linear developmental pattern, where the child improves strength and control from the inside outward.



Step 1: Foundation Motor Skills

The previous step should be mastered before moving up the triangle.



In order to successfully manipulate a given tool (in this case, the pencil) the child needs:

1. A strong core in order to sit upright and hold that position for as long as needed
2. Good arm strength to hold their shoulder stable so that their fingers have the base of support to move upon
3. Strong hand muscles, particularly in their opposable thumbs, for holding the pencil with appropriate pressure and control
4. The ability to move one finger at a time to guide the pencil to make appropriate size and shape strokes.

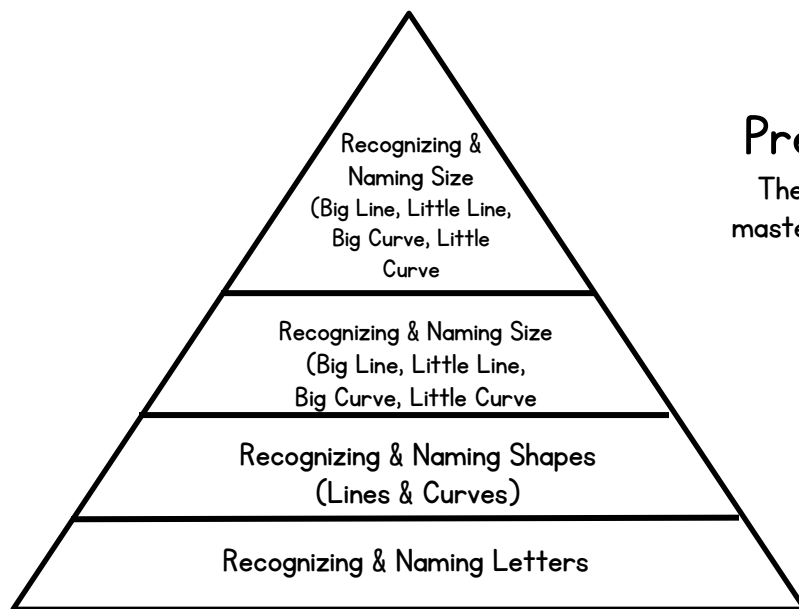
The best way to build a solid foundation in motor skills is to simply **play**. And I mean old school play - no LeapPads, no iPads, no Smartphones. Just those seemingly ancient things - hitting up the playground, riding a bike, playing tag, drawing on the sidewalk, coloring and cutting, Legos, blocks, and board games. For an extensive list of **Home Motor Activities**, refer to **Appendix A**. If your child seems to be having difficulty developing a strong motor base, speak to your pediatrician. Physical or occupational therapy assessment or treatment may be appropriate.

Pre-Writing Skills

Once a child has developed their underlying motor skills, they are ready to transition on to “*pre-writing skills*”. To begin teaching how to print, the child **must be able to recognize and name the letter they are printing**. Without this essential step, handwriting is built on a faulty foundation. I can assure you, without this piece, the child will not be able to produce legible written work independently. You will have a child that can copy from a model all day long. But that connection between what a letter is and how it is draw will not be automatic. While you can walk without crawling, I would not suggest it.

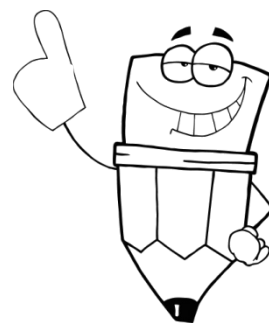
All upper case letters are made of just **two** shapes – lines and curves. The first step in teaching handwriting is teaching the child what these two shapes look like so they can recognize and name them consistently. To build upper case letters, we need **big and little** versions of lines and of curves. So once the child can recognize and name the shape, they need to be able to understand the difference between a big curve, a little curve, a big line and a little line. Finally, once the child understands shape and size – the last step is direction. The child needs to understand that shapes can go “up and down” (vertical lines); from “left to right” (horizontal lines); and “slide” (diagonal lines). This is the second step in the printing process. Again, do not skip on to drawing letters until the child demonstrates a good understanding of shape, size and direction. Spend as much time as he/she needs on this concept. The rest will come naturally.

Once these two foundational steps are establish, bring in the motor component – you are ready to teach handwriting. Think of handwriting as “drawing”. The child sees letters in shapes and lines – not symbols. Train yourself to see them this way too.



Step 2: Pre-Writing Skills

The previous step should be mastered before moving up the triangle.



The Writing Line

I always find it funny that the first lesson I do when teaching my students handwriting is so often skipped over by teachers and parents - the concept of a writing line. It seems to be assumed that the child understands what a writing line is and what it is used for. This is definitely not the case. The first time I ask most kindergarten students what the picture below is, I get at least half of the class yelling out "A ROAD!".....Nope.

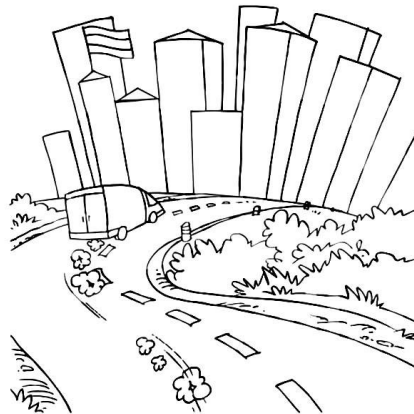
I start by explaining that a writing line has three parts: a top line, a middle line and a bottom line. I have the children orient these *directionality* concepts to their own bodies. For example, I have a "Silent Writing Line" game where I point to one of the three parts of the writing line. As I point to the part, the child must show me the corresponding part on their own bodies (i.e. "the top" = the head; "the middle" = the belly/hips; "the bottom" = the feet). Again, understanding *the language* and *the terms* is such an important part of teaching handwriting. Be consistent in what you call these parts - don't switch over the "the sky line" one day and "the top line" the next.

To provide a helpful visual cue, I like to highlight the parts of my writing line. You will see throughout this workbook, I like to make my top line green, my middle line yellow and my bottom line red. I myself am a visual learner, so I understand how helpful these little things are in the beginning. As the child gets the hang of orienting to the parts of the writing line automatically, feel free to remove the highlighting.

The other suggestion I have at this point is to stick to **one** writing line at a time when you are demonstrating how to "draw" a letter. Have a page full of writing lines is extremely confusing. Think about it..... you tell the child to start on the top..... but every line technically has a top.....doesn't it? *Well, I mean, start on the top on the top line.* Wait, what?! On the following page, you will find an example of my **Sensory Writing Line Model**. This model can be photocopied and laminated so that you can use *sensory mediums* (paper pieces, playdoh, wikkisticks or dry erase markers) to "build letters". In **Appendix B**, you will find three-lined-paper that has larger spaces between each line. These spaces help to emphasize where one writing line ends and another begins.



What teachers see...



What children see...

Sensory Writing Line Model

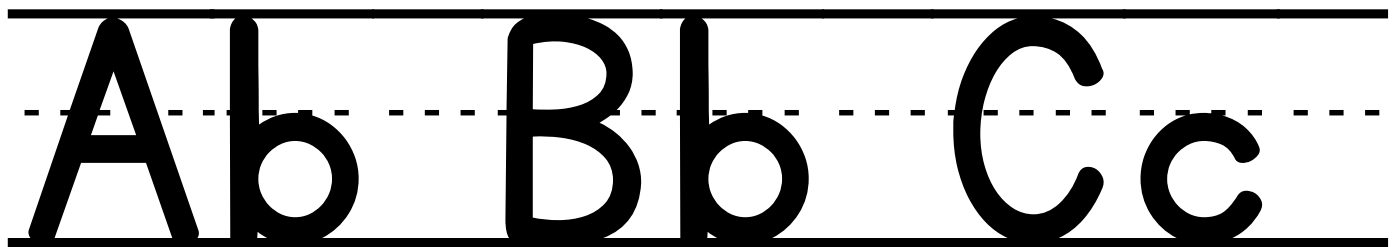


Printing Part I: Upper Case Letters

I am just going to come out and say it – I teach upper case letters first. Now remember, before I even think about teaching the child how to draw the letter – I have already ensured that they can **recognize and name** all the letters of the alphabet (both upper case and lower case). This concept of teaching upper case letter formation first makes many of my kindergarten teachers uneasy. “But they can’t write in all upper case letters!! That’s not correct!!” Point taken. Printing in all upper case letters is not the correct way to write. But either is scribbling some crazy wave that looks like an upside down 6 for the letter “e”; or making a big candy cane for the letter “r”. Lower case letters have many, many complex **visual motor** concepts – retracing lines (r n m b h), hook components (f j), and crazy diagonals (q). Not to mention, some start at the middle line and some start at the top. Some sit on the bottom line, some dip down below it. That is a lot of spatial concepts for a little one to understand. As we already discussed, all upper case letters are made up of only two shapes – lines and curves. All upper case letters start at the same place – the top line. And lucky for us, they all sit on the same line too – the bottom.

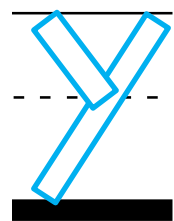
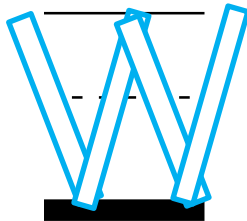
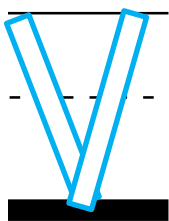
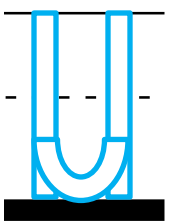
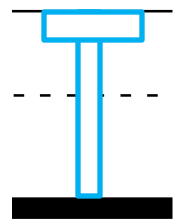
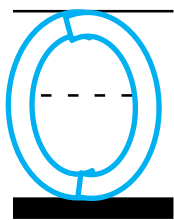
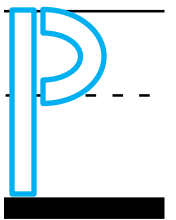
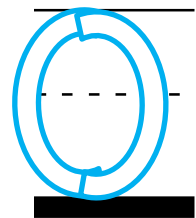
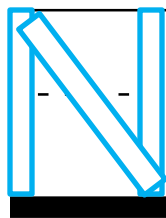
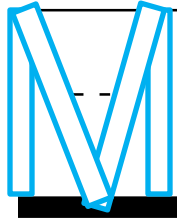
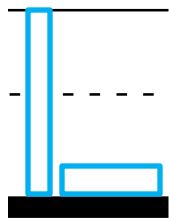
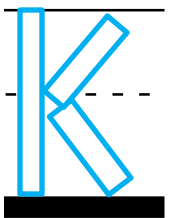
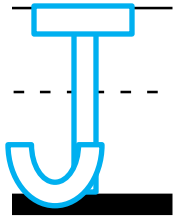
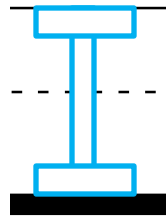
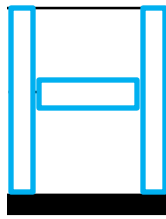
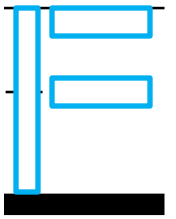
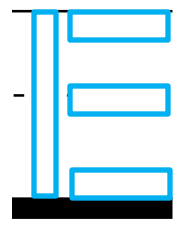
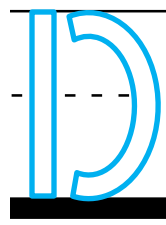
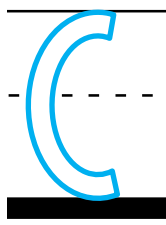
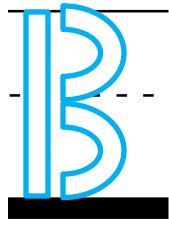
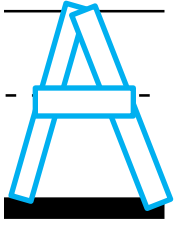
All upper case letters can be built by putting four basic forms together – a big line, a little line, a big curve or a little curve. On the following page, you will find my **Upper Case Letter Formation Blueprints**. You can use this to see how each upper case letter is built. In the pages that follow the **Upper Case Letter Formation Blueprint**, you will find the **Letter Formation Pieces: Big Lines & Little Lines** and **Big Curves & Little Curves**. To build every upper case letter, each student will need 4 big lines, 3 little lines, 2 big curves and 2 little curves. Both sets of **Letter Formation Pieces** can be photocopied and laminated so that you can “build” letters.

I encourage teaching how to draw upper case letters first simply because it is more *developmentally appropriate* – and frankly, easier. Yes, this does mean that your kindergartener will write in all upper case letters for a period of time. But, more importantly, your kindergartener will be able to WRITE. You will be able to recognize the letters they are producing, and maybe even get an idea of what they are trying to portray to you as a writer. I promise you faithfully, that as long as you continue on to teach the formation of lower case letters once upper case letters have been mastered, they will transition right along. But at the end of the day, you are the educator. Do what you feel is best for each individual student.



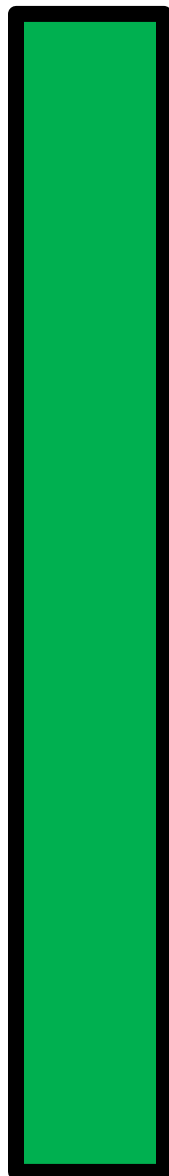
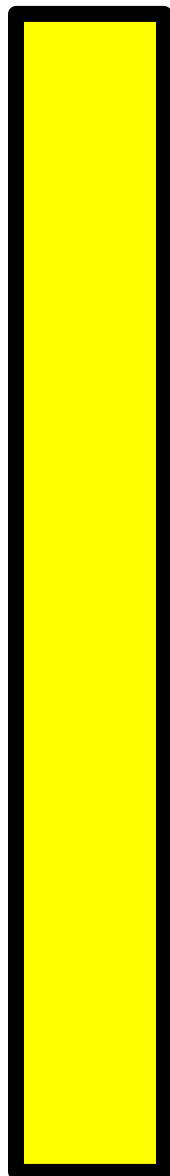
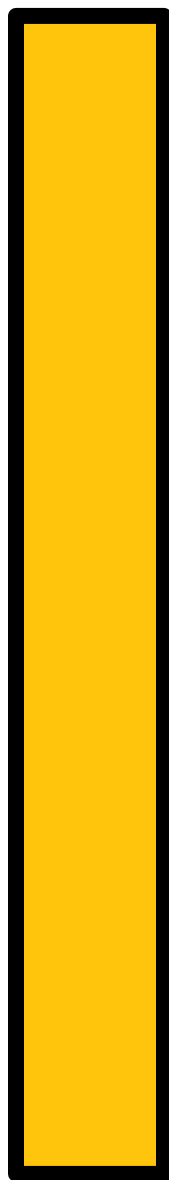
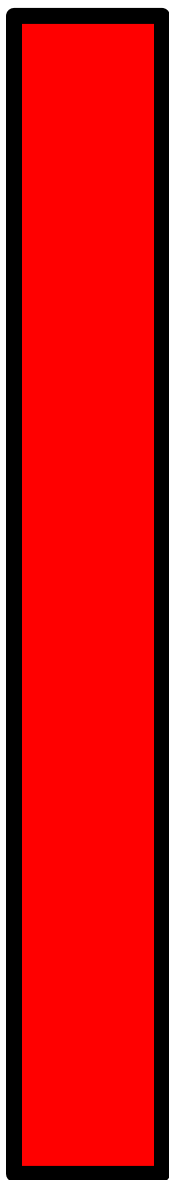
We are ready to begin teaching letter formation. Here we go.....

Upper Case Letter Formation Blueprints



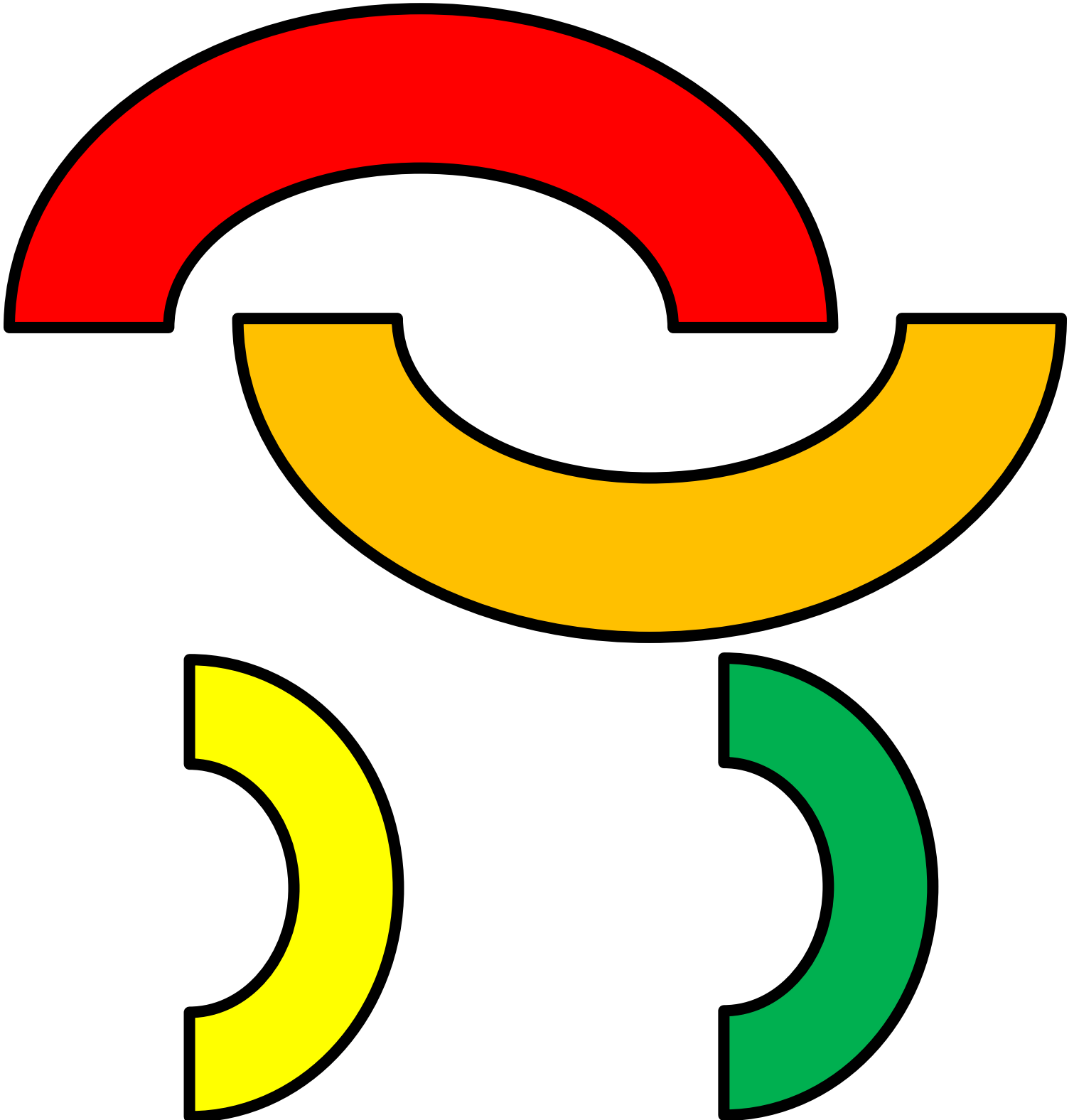
Letter Formation Pieces: Big Lines & Little Lines

Laminate & cut out the big lines and little lines below. These lines can be used to “build” upper case letters on the **Sensory Writing Line Model**. Use the **Upper Case Letter Formation Blueprints** to determine what shapes to use & how to put them together.



Letter Formation Pieces: Big Curves & Little Curves

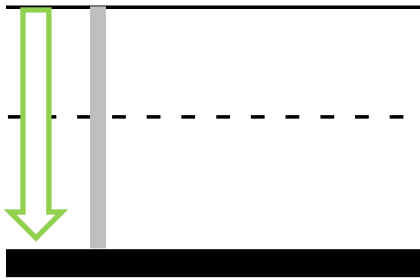
Laminate & cut out the big curves & little curves below. These curves can be used to “build” upper case letters on the **Sensory Writing Line Model**. Use the **Upper Case Letter Formation Blueprints** to determine what shapes to use & how to put them together.



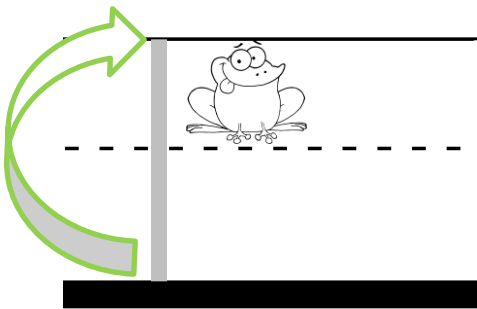
Set 1: Frog Jump Upper Case Letters

F E D P B R

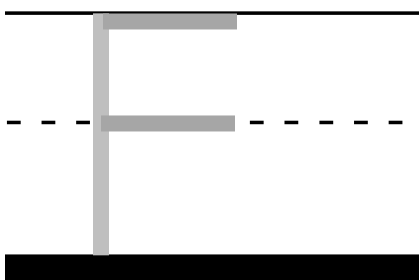
Frog Jump Upper Case letters all start the same. I found that it is easier to teach the Frog Jump letters that have diagonal components **after** the ones that do not. Diagonal lines are more difficult to draw.



1. Start at the top, make a big line down to the bottom and STOP!

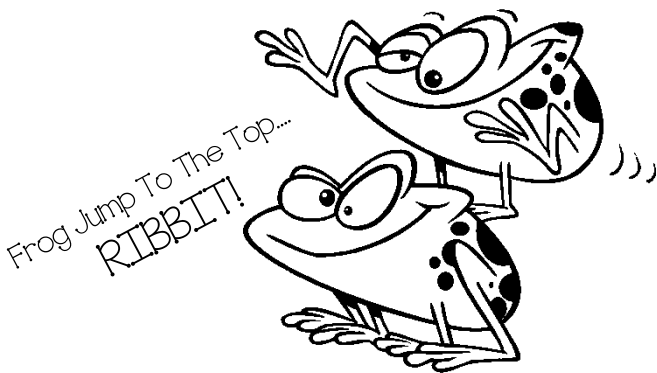


2. Pick up your pencil and **FROG JUMP** back to the top - Ribbit!



3. Finish the letter by making....

- F: A little line on the top and a little line in the middle
- E: A little line on the top, a little line in the middle and a little line on the bottom
- D: A big curve from the top to the bottom
- P: A little curve from the top to the middle
- B: A little curve from the top to the middle and another little curve from the middle to the bottom
- R: A little curve from the top to the middle and a little diagonal line from the middle to the bottom.



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Name: _____



Frog Jump Letters

F

E

D

P

Name: _____




Frog Jump Letters

R

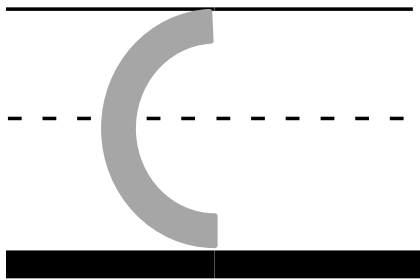
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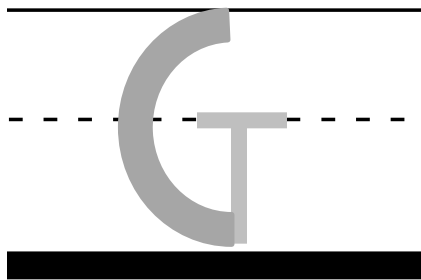
Set 2: Magic C Upper Case Letters

C G O Q 

Magic C Upper Case letters all start with a BIG CURVE (or “**Magic C**”). With the help of Magic C Bunny, this big curve can magically be changed into three other upper case letters.

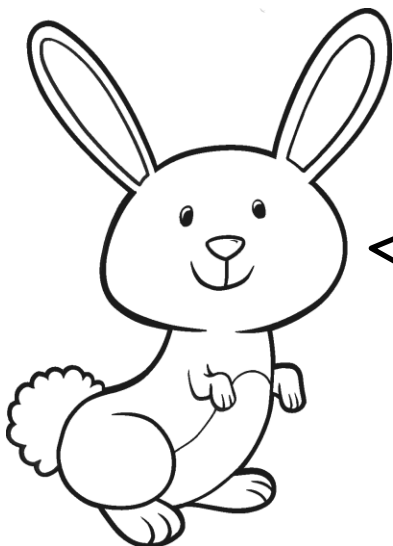


1. Start at the top, make a big curve down to the bottom.



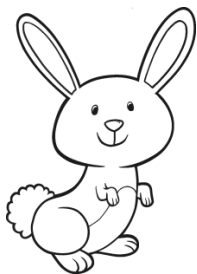
2. Finish the letter by making....

- **G**: A little line up to middle, then another little line across the middle
- **O**: Another big curve back up to the top
- **Q**: Another big curve back up to the top, then a little diagonal line from the middle to the bottom



Hi! I'm Magic C Bunny! I come back to play when we do lower case letters too!

Name: _____



Magic C Letters

C

G

O

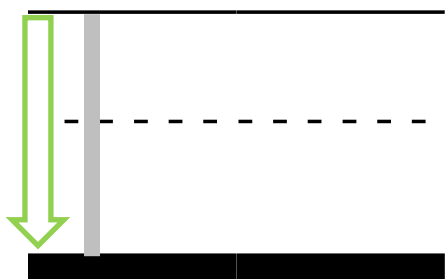
Q

Set 3: Big Line Down Upper Case Letters

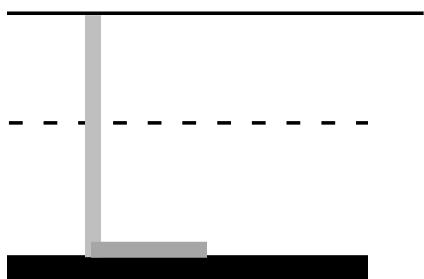
Left Side Starters: L H K U

Big Line Down Upper Case letters all start the same way - start at the top, draw a big line down to the bottom. Unlike the **Frog Jump** letters, for **Big Line Down** letters, you **DO NOT** jump back to the top line. **Big Line Down** upper case letters are grouped by whether they start towards the left side of the top line (left side starters), or more towards the center of the top line (center starters).

Left Side Starters:



1. Start at the top, make a big line down to the bottom.



2. Finish the letter by making.....

- **L:** A little line at the bottom
- **H:** Another big line next to the first big line, then a little line across the middle
- **K:** A little diagonal line from the top to the middle, then another diagonal line from the middle to the bottom
- **U:** A little curve at the bottom, then another big line up to the top



A Big Line Down, Just Like A Tree!

Name: _____



Big Line Down: Left Start

L

H

K

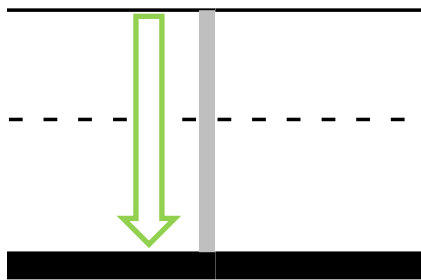
U

Set 4: Big Line Down Upper Case Letters

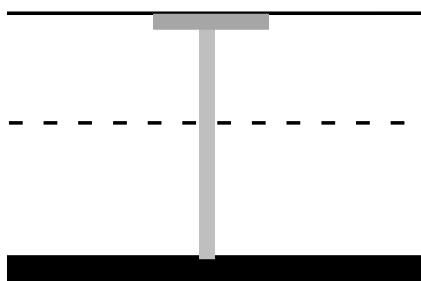
Center Starters: T I J

Big Line Down Upper Case letters all start the same way - start at the top, draw a big line down to the bottom. Unlike the **Frog Jump** letters, for **Big Line Down** letters, you **DO NOT** jump back to the top line. **Big Line Down** upper case letters are grouped by whether they start towards the left side of the top line (left side starters), or more towards the center of the top line (center starters).

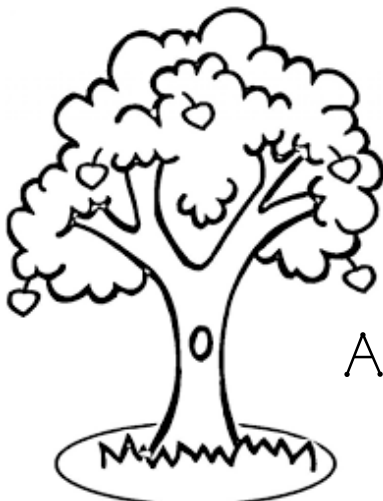
Center Starters:



1. Move slightly towards the center of the line and make a big line down



2. Finish the letter by making.....
 - **T**: A little line at the top
 - **I**: A little line at the top, then a little line at the bottom
 - **J**: A little curve at the bottom (and a little line on top if you want to add the "hat")



A Big Line Down. Just Like A Tree!

Name: _____



Big Line Down: Center Start

I

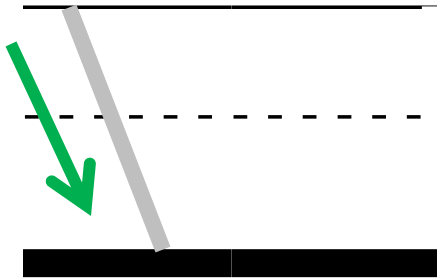
I

J

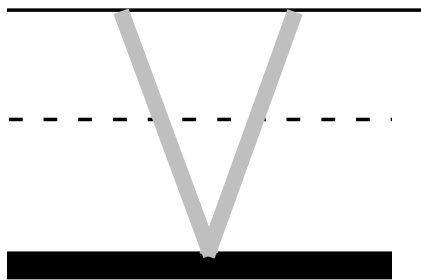
Set 5: Slide Right Diagonal Upper Case Letters

V W X Y 

Slide Right Diagonal upper case letters all start with a **big diagonal line** that slides from the top to the bottom.

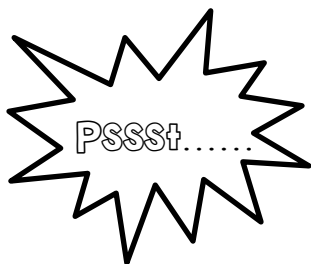


1. Starting at the top, make a big line sliding down to the bottom



2. Finish the letter by making....

- **V**: Another diagonal line sliding from the bottom to the top.
- **W**: Another diagonal line sliding from the bottom to the top, another diagonal line from the top to the bottom and finally, another diagonal line from the bottom to the top.
- **X**: Another big line sliding to the left, starting at the top and sliding to the bottom
- **Y**: Stop your diagonal line at the middle (so it is actually a little diagonal line). Then starting from the top, slide to the right to the bottom.



Diagonal Lines are a very difficult thing to draw. In fact, most children do not master drawing diagonals correct until they are at least 5 years old. So if you have younger kindergarten students, be patient - it's a developing skill!

Name: _____



Diagonal (Slide) Letters
Sliding Right

V

W

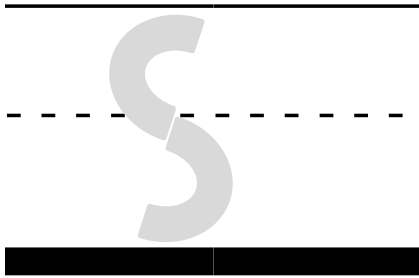
X

Y

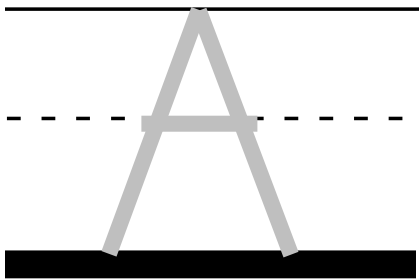
Set 6: Silly S & Sliding A Upper Case Letters

S A 

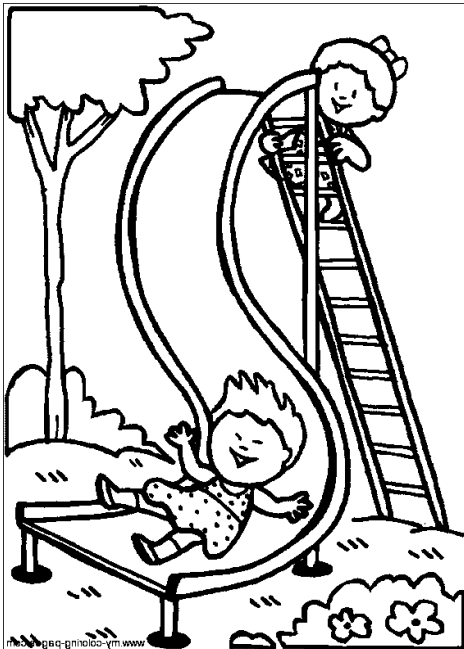
The last two upper letters fall into their own category.



1. **S:** Starting at the top, make a little curve to the middle, then turn around to make a second little curve the other way to the bottom.



2. **A:** Starting at the top, make a diagonal big line sliding to the left to the bottom. Go back to the top and make another diagonal big line sliding to the right to the bottom. Make a little line across the middle.



I like to pretend **S** is the slide. The top part of the slide results in a sliding to the left. This is exactly how the letter **A** starts, with a diagonal line sliding to the left. So to me, they are buddies.

Name: _____



Silly Slide: Letter S &
Letter A: Sliding Left

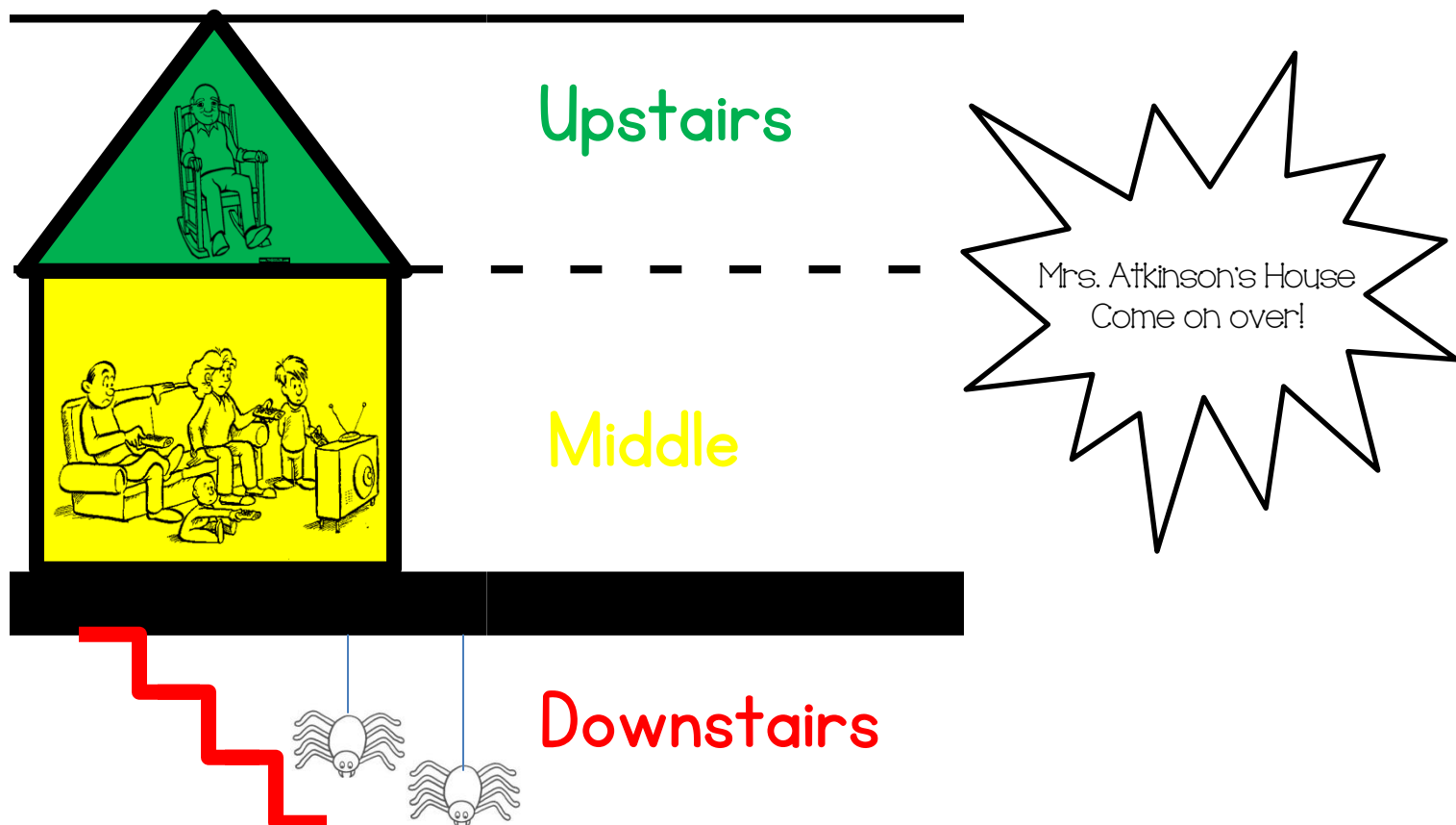
S

A

Alignment Concepts: Mrs. Atkinson's House

Congratulations, you have finished the upper case alphabet! That's the good news. The bad news? Lower case letters are much trickier. For starters, they do not all start in the same place. Some start on the top - I call them "upstairs" letters. Some start in the middle - I call them "middle" letters. "Upstairs" and "middle" letters sit on the bottom line. But some lower case letters dip under the bottom line - I call them "downstairs" letters. The position of the letters on a writing line is called *alignment*. Just like being able to identify and name a letter, the child also should be able to recognize and name the alignment of the lower case letter on the writing line trying to write it.

What I have found works well with teaching alignment is comparing the writing line to a house. The top line is the attic. If a letter goes into this area, it is called an "upstairs" letter. If a letter sits in the living room area, it is called a "middle" letter. If a letter goes below the bottom line, into the "stinky" basement, is called a "downstairs" letter. If your child is in Occupational Therapy with me, there's a whole story that goes along with "*Mrs. Atkinson's House*". Grandpa is upstairs in the attic, reading the newspaper. Lower case letters *b d f h k l t* like to go up and visit him. I play Wii with my sons and Mr. Atkinson in the living room. Letters *a c e i m n o r s u v w x z* come over all the time and play Wii with us. It's a real party. And then there is the stinky basement, downstairs with the spiders. Only the few and the brave go down there. It's a good thing *g j p q y* are brave enough. Won't you come and visit Mrs. Atkinson's house?



Alignment Concepts: The Alphabet Stretch

Just like when we use the **Letter Formation Pieces** to make Upper Case letters in three dimensions before moving to one dimensional pencil and paper – it is also important to teach alignment concepts in three dimensions. The best way? Relating directionality and alignment concepts to our own bodies!



























The Alphabet Stretch is a movement activity that corresponds to the lower case alphabet *alignment*. Using the concepts of top, middle, and down – the child moves their hands to the corresponding areas of their body. On the next page, you will find a visual of the **Alphabet Stretch**. The movements are easy.....

- “upstairs” letters = putting your hands in the air
- “middle” letters = putting your hands in your middle (your hips/belly)
- “downstairs” letters = putting your hands on the floor

These cute Alphabet Stretch people will help guide your movements!



The Alphabet Stretch

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				
					

Set I: Shrinking lower case letters

C O S V W X Z 

Let's start simple. The first set of lower case letters are the "shrinking letters". **Shrinking lower case letters** look (and are formed) the same way as their upper case counterparts. The only difference is that *THEY SHRUNK!* This means that while upper case letters start on the top line, these shrinking lower case letters start on the middle line. Since the child already learned how to **form** these letters when we worked on upper case letters, their lower case counterparts should be super easy.

Cc Oo Ss

Vv Ww Xx Zz



www.Vecto.rs · 13605

Name: _____



Shrinking Letters

c

o

s

v

w

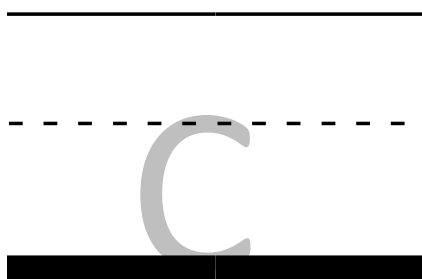
x

z

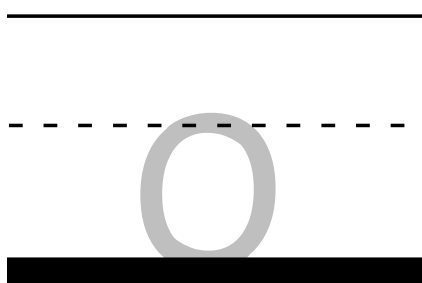
Set 2: magic c lower case letters

c e o a d g q 

Just like **Magic C Upper Case** letters, **magic c lower case letters** all start with a curve. However, **Upper Case Magic C** letters start with a big curve. **Lower case magic c** letters start with *a little curve*, starting in the middle and sitting on the bottom line. Some magic c lower case letters stay in the middle (c e o a), some go upstairs (d) and some go downstairs in the stinky basement (g q).

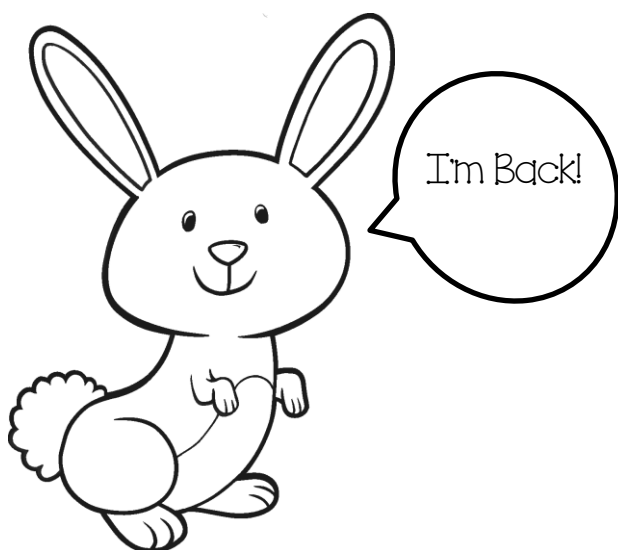


1. Start in the middle, make a little curve to the bottom line

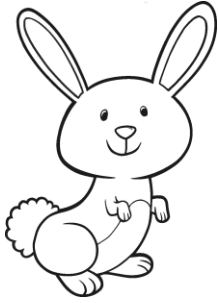


2. Finish the letter by making....

- **e**: A little line from the top of the curve to the belly of the curve
- **o**: Another little curve back up to the top
- **a**: Another little curve back up to the top, then a little line from the middle to the bottom
- **g**: Another little curve back up to the top, then a big line from the middle down to the stinky basement and a fish hook at the end



Name: _____



Magic c

c

e

o

a

d

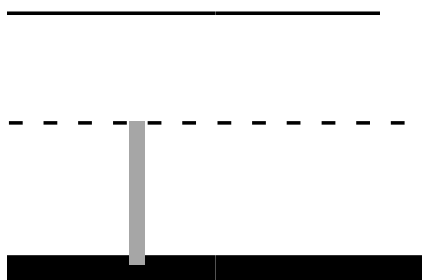
g

q

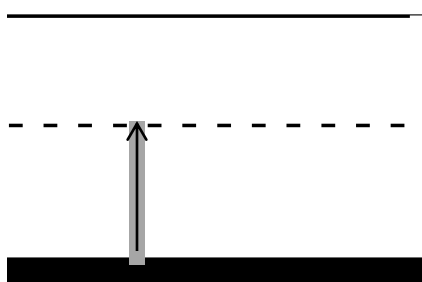
Set 3: diving lower case letters

low dive: r n m

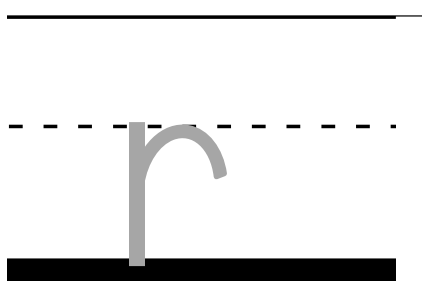
Some lower case letters are tricky to form correctly because they involve a “re-tracing” stroke. Re-tracing simply means that you draw a line down, then come **back up on that same line** to make the next stroke. This step is often neglected, and as a result, letters like r n m lack that first line. I tell my students that if they don’t make that “diving line” - their letters look like candy canes, rainbows and bat wings. The diving letters are broken up into three subsets - the low dive letters (letters that start in the middle and sit on the bottom line), the high dive letters (letters that start on the top and sit on the bottom line) and deep sea divers (letters that start in the middle but go under the bottom line). Re-tracing is a hard concept, so take your time practicing the stroke.



1. Start in the middle, dive down to the bottom



2. Swim straight back up to the middle to get some air.



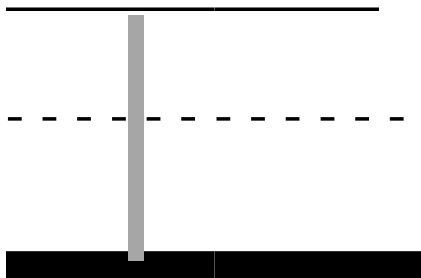
3. Finish the letter by.....

- r: swimming in a small curve to the right
- n: swimming to make a little hill
- m: swimming to make two little hills

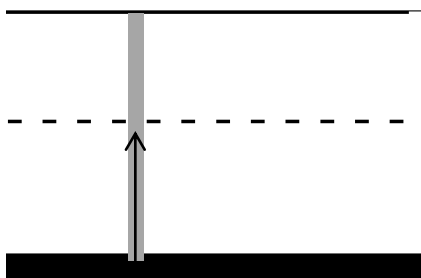
Set 3: diving lower case letters

high dive: h b

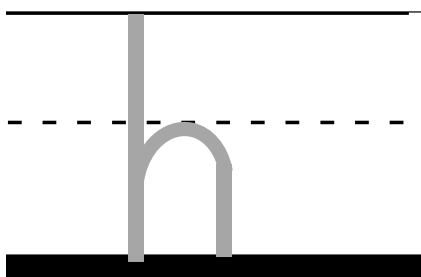
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1. Start at the top, dive down to the bottom



2. Swim straight back up to the middle to get some air.



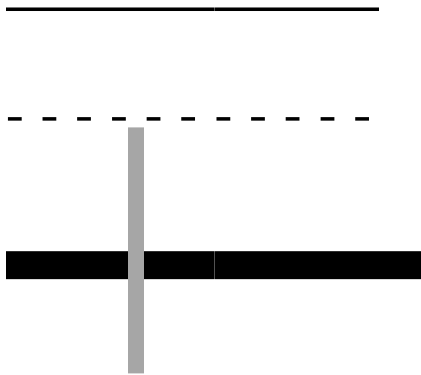
3. Finish the letter by....

- h: swimming to make a little hill
- b: swimming to make a little circle

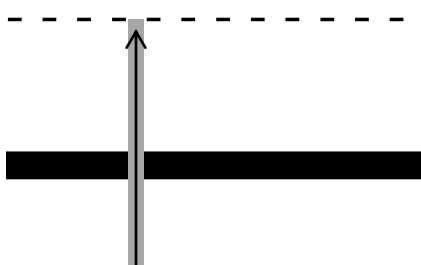
Set 3: diving lower case letters

deep sea dive: p

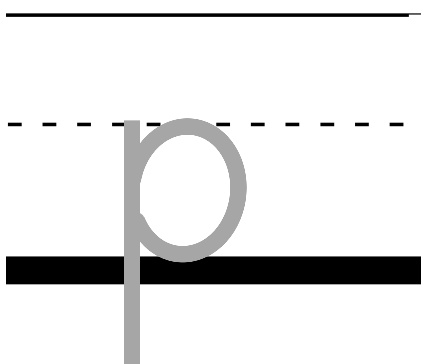
Some lower case letters are tricky to form correctly because they involve a “re-tracing” stroke. Re-tracing simply means that you draw a line down, then come **back up on that same line** to make the next stroke. This step is often neglected, and as a result, letters like r n m lack that first line. I tell my students that if they don’t make that “diving line” - their letters look like candy canes, rainbows and bat wings. The diving letters are broken up into three subsets - the low dive letters (letters that start in the middle and sit on the bottom line), the high dive letters (letters that start on the top and sit on the bottom line) and deep sea divers (letters that start in the middle but go under the bottom line). Re-tracing is a hard concept, so take your time practicing the stroke.



1. Start at the middle, dive WAY down till you see a whale



2. Swim straight back up to the middle to get some air.



3. Finish the letter by.....

- p: swimming to make a little circle

Name: _____



Diving Letters

r

n

m

h

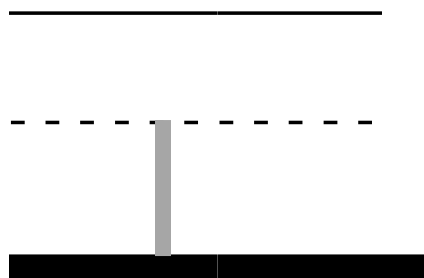
b

p

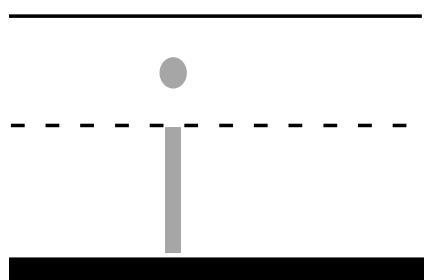
Set 4: line down lower case letters

little line down: i u

We're in the home stretch now! **Lower case line down letters** (just like **upper case line down letters**) start with a simple line going down to sit on the bottom line. Some line down letters start with a **little line**, others start with a **big line**.



1. Start at the middle, make a little line to sit on the bottom.



2. Finish the letters by making....

- i: a dot for an eyeball
- u: a small curve, then back up to the middle



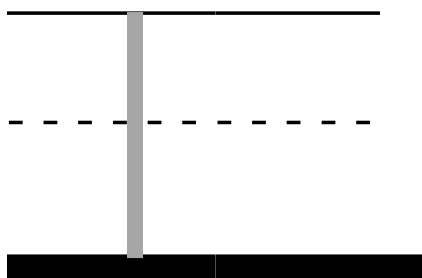
Little Lines are
like Little Trees!



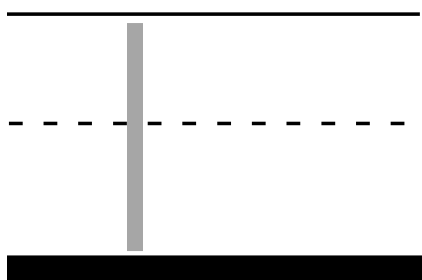
Set 4: line down lower case letters

big line down: l + k

We're in the home stretch now! Lower case line down letters (just like upper case line down letters) start with a simple line going down to sit on the bottom line. Some line down letters start with a **little line**, others starts with a **big line**.



2. Start at the top, make a big line to sit on the bottom. Look it's a lower case L.



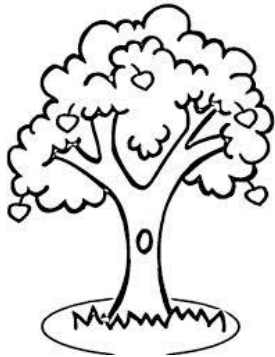
2. Finish the letters by making....

- t: a little line across the middle
- k: a diagonal line from the middle to the big line, then another diagonal line from the big line to the bottom

Mrs. Atkinson thinks that lower case k is the most difficult letter for kids to form - so take your time when teaching & practicing!



Name: _____



Line Down

i

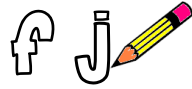
u

l

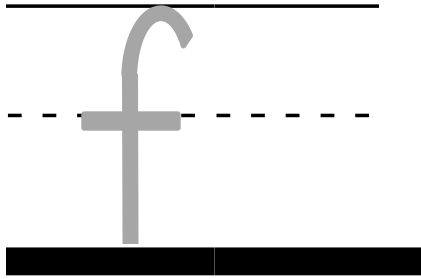
t

k

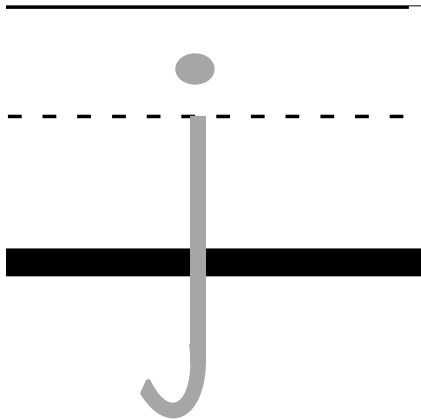
Set 4: hook lower case letters



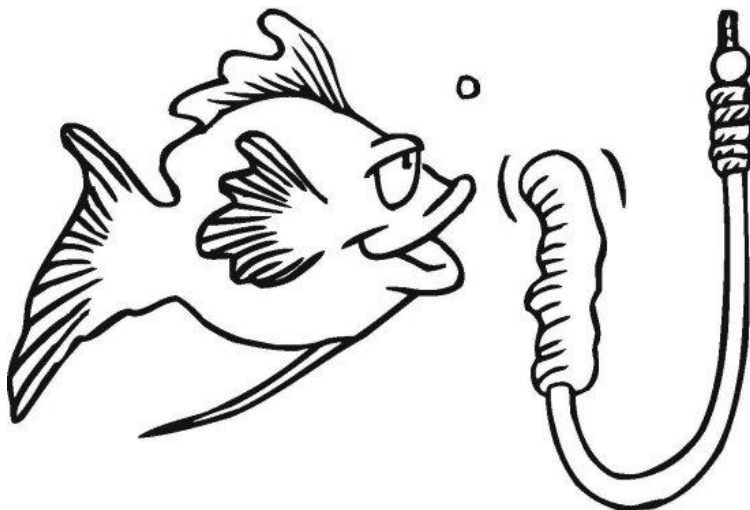
The last set of lower case letters are the **hook letters**. As their name suggests, you form the letter by making a hook. Lower case letter f and j are often reversed, so take your time orienting the child to left and right as you demonstrate how to form the letter.



1. f: Start with a hook, then make a big line down to the bottom. Finish the letter with a little line across the middle.



2. j: Start in the middle and make a big line down to the stinky basement. Finish the letter with a hook and a little dot for an eyeball.



Name: _____



Hook Letters

f

j



APPENDIX

Home Motor Activities

WHAT ARE MOTOR SKILLS?

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS involve the “big muscles” of your body – like your stomach, back, legs & shoulders. You must first develop strong “big” muscles before you develop fine motor skills.

FINE MOTOR SKILLS are any finger & hand movement used to perform a task. They involve strength & coordination of small muscles in the fingers, hands & wrists.

As we get older, our brain becomes more involved in planning out our movements. We use our vision to determine how to move. Your **VISUAL PERCEPTUAL SKILLS** help you understand things like direction, size & space. Using fine motor skills with visual skills is known as **VISUAL MOTOR SKILLS** or “eye hand coordination”. Your visual skills also work with your brain to help you understand what you see.

All of these skills are needed to do everyday tasks – sitting tall at your desk, printing on paper, cutting on a line, understanding a graph, reaching in your desk to find materials, etc. Here are some activities to help improved these skills:

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

Gross motor skills are the skills needed for you to use your body to perform tasks that require balance, coordination & strength.

- ☆ Hop Scotch
- ☆ Playing Kick Ball & Catch
- ☆ Riding a bike or scooter
- ☆ Balancing
- ☆ Jump Roping
- ☆ Hula Hooping
- ☆ Climbing
- ☆ Playing on Playground Equipment (slide, monkey bars, etc)
- ☆ Swinging on a swing
- ☆ Dancing or Stepping
- ☆ Basketball, Baseball or any other sport
- ☆ Hobbies like Karate or Gymnastics

SHOULDER GIRDLE STRENGTHENING ACTIVITIES

Shoulder girdle strength is important to provide stability for your hand when you are doing fine motor tasks.

- ☆ Weight bearing activities
 - Working on stomach while propping self on elbows
 - Supporting self with arms to wheelbarrow walk
 - “Animal walks”: crab walking, bear walking, commando crawling, etc.
 - Riding on a scooter board on belly using arms to navigate
- ☆ Working on an incline
 - Taping worksheets on a wall or blackboard
 - Using a 5-inch binder as “incline board” at desktop
 - Writing on a blackboard
 - Painting on a easel
- ☆ Resistive activities using arms
 - Erasing/washing a blackboard
 - Washing a table
 - Vacuuming or sweeping
 - Chair, wall or floor push ups
 - Pushing, pulling or carrying
 - Tug of war
- ☆ Playground Activities
 - Monkey bars
 - Climbing

FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Fine motor skills are the skills needed for you to use your fingers & hands for smooth, quick, accurate movements. Strength, Stereognosis, Grasp & Precision are all a part of good fine motor skills.

☆ Strengthening

- PlayDoh activities (hiding small objects in PlayDoh then finding them)
- Cutting through thick paper, like Oak Tag or Cardboard
- Using a manual pencil sharpener
- Making cookies/pizza out of dough
- Chinese “stress” balls

☆ Stereognosis (the ability to recognize what an object is JUST by feeling it)

- “Mystery” Box/Bags : Place various small items (coins, toy cars, blocks, keys, paperclips, cotton ball, etc) into a box or bag. Have the child reach inside & feel the object with their hands. Have the child try to guess what the mystery object is without looking at it.
- “Hidden” Objects: Place various small items (coins, toy cars, blocks, keys, paperclips, cotton ball, etc) into a container of rice, sand and/or beans. Have the child dig through the container to find hidden objects with their hands. Have the child try to guess what the hidden object is without looking at it.

☆ Grasp (the ability to handle medium to large objects) Skills

- Stacking blocks
- Legos & Tinker Toys
- Using PlayDoh & SandBox tools (i.e. shovels, rakes, “pasta” makers, rolling pins)
- Water Toys
- Dominoes
- Using rubber & sponge stamps

☆ Precision (the ability to handle small objects) Skills

- Opening & closing markers, twist containers (i.e. Bubble bottles or soda bottles)
- Using tweezers or an eye dropper
- Manipulating clothespins
- Playing with toy/real tool sets (screws, bolts, washers, etc)
- Playing with marbles
- Using push pins to make “designs” in paper (place flashlight behind paper & turn off lights to create “star designs”)
- Using “Cheerios”, macaroni, small beads or sequins for making necklaces.
- Creating candy sculptures with toothpicks
- Popping “Bubble Wrap” (packaging wrap)
- Placing coins into a piggy bank
- Mosaic Tile crafts & Parquetry designs
- Games that focus on finger movement
 - “Connect 4”
 - “LiteBrite”
 - “Checkers”
 - “Chinese Checkers”
 - “Hungry Hippos”
 - “Ants in the Pants”
 - “Don’t Break the Ice”
 - “Pick Up Sticks”
 - “Trouble”
 - “Sorry”
 - “Jenga”
 - “Operation”
 - “Bed Bugs”
 - “HiHo CherryO”

BILATERAL COORDINATION SKILLS

Bilateral coordination skills are the skills needed for you to use the two sides of your body together, especially your two arms & hands, to perform tasks.

- ☆ Stringing beads or macaroni to make “jewelry”
- ☆ Lacing Crafts
- ☆ Playing cards
- ☆ Folding tasks (laundry, paper, etc)
- ☆ Hand-over-hand tasks (such as tug of war, climbing a rope, pulling a rope while on a scooter, etc.)
- ☆ Lacing & tying shoes
- ☆ Sport activity – catching & throwing
- ☆ Cutting out shapes, pictures, coupons or “snowflakes”

VISUAL PERCEPTUAL SKILLS

Visual perceptual skills are the skills needed for you to understand what you see in terms of its size, shape, direction & distance from other objects. Visual perceptual skills can be broken down into many “sub-types” of skills, each important to using visual information to understand your environment.

- ☆ Form Consistency (the ability to accurately recognize & understand that an object remains the same despite changes in its size, direction, orientation, color, texture or context – i.e. recognizing a number in a different fonts)
- ☆ Figure Ground (the ability to filter out unimportant visual material in order to concentrate on the important stuff)
- ☆ Visual Discrimination (the ability to identify differences & similarities between shapes, symbols, objects & patterns – i.e. matching & sorting skills)
- ☆ Spatial Relationships (the ability to understand the position of two or more objects in relation to oneself & in relation to each other - i.e. “behind”; “between”, “in front”, etc.).
- ☆ Position in Space (the ability to understand an object's position in space in relation to oneself or to understand which direction an object is turned – i.e. understanding the difference between b's, d's, p's & q's)
- ☆ Visual Memory (the ability to remember what is seen for immediate recall)
- ☆ Visual Sequential Memory (the ability to remember & recall a sequence of visual images such as letters, shapes, numbers, symbols & objects in the correct order)
- ☆ Visual Closure (the ability to identify a form or object from an incomplete presentation) This involves visualizing & mentally "filling in" the visual information that is missing. *When we're reading, Visual Closure perception helps us recognize sight words. It is a foundation skill for fluency & speed in reading & spelling. Efficient reading relies on this skill because with each fixation of the eye only part of the letters of a word or phrase is actually perceived.*
- ☆ Visual Analysis (the ability to see that certain parts make a whole)

Visual perceptual activities:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| ☆ Card games (Solitaire, Go Fish, Rummy, Crazy 8's, Uno, etc.) | ☆ Pattern activities |
| ☆ Memory | ☆ Construction activities from model |
| ☆ Puzzles | ☆ Simon or Bop It |
| ☆ Word searches | ☆ Checkers & Chinese Checkers |
| ☆ Where's Waldo & other “find the hidden picture” worksheets | ☆ Crossword Puzzles |
| ☆ Finish the picture worksheets | ☆ Playing “I Spy” |

VISUAL MOTOR SKILLS

Visual motor skills are the skills needed for you to use your eyes & hands together to complete tasks.

- ☆ Copying or forming shapes, letters & numbers:
 - On Lined paper
 - In Shaving Cream
 - With finger paints
 - In Sand
 - On paper with sandpaper behind it
 - On MagnaDoodle
 - On Blackboard
 - With spaghetti noodles
 - With PlayDoh
 - Out of small balls of crumbled tissue paper.
- ☆ Cutting Tasks
 - Coupons
 - Paper dolls
 - Snowflakes
 - Cutting PlayDoh
 - On straight/curved lines
- ☆ Eye Hand Coordination Tasks
 - Block Designs
 - Peg Designs
 - Mazes
 - Finish the Picture
 - Find the Hidden Picture
 - Connect the Dots
 - Puzzles

GRAPHOMOTOR (HANDWRITING) SKILLS

Graphomotor (handwriting) skills are the skills needed for you to produce legible work with correct capitalization, punctuation, size & spacing. Handwriting is a very advanced skill. In order to have good handwriting, all the above skills must be in place.

- ☆ Writing stories or poems
- ☆ Writing notes & cards to friends & relatives.
- ☆ Practicing making letters out of
 - Playdoh
 - Shaving Cream
 - Sand
 - Pipe Cleaners
 - Noodles/Macaroni
 - Paint/Markers or Crayons

ATTENTION

Attention is the most important part of the school setting. It involves all of the skills needed for you to listen, understand & use information to complete tasks, without becoming distracted or distracting others.

- ☆ “Red Light, Green Light”
- ☆ “Mother May I?”
- ☆ “Simon Says”
- ☆ Taking turns with Board Games
- ☆ Organizing & Sorting Toys
- ☆ Playing “Snap”
- ☆ Following a pattern for making “jewelry”, Legos, or construction tasks

HERE ARE SOME FUN GAMES THAT THE WHOLE FAMILY CAN PLAY

- ☆ Operation
- ☆ Bed Bugs
- ☆ Connect 4
- ☆ Bingo
- ☆ Ants in the Pants
- ☆ Don’t Break the Ice
- ☆ Topple
- ☆ Twister
- ☆ Concentration
- ☆ Battle Ship
- ☆ Hi-Ho CherryO
- ☆ Chutes & Ladders
- ☆ Elefun
- ☆ Pick Up Sticks
- ☆ Pictionary
- ☆ Taboo
- ☆ Scrabble
- ☆ Jenga

CHECK OUT MY WEBSITE

- ☆ For weekly information, activities and resources on fine motor, visual motor, visual perceptual, graphomotor and sensory processing skills, check out my personal website at: www.AnOTMom.weebly.com
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HERE ARE SOME AWESOME WEBSITES

- ☆ www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com
- ☆ www.mamaot.com
- ☆ www.dltk-kids.com
- ☆ <http://www.puzzlemaniakids.com/>
- ☆ <http://eyecanlearn.com/>
- ☆ Uptoten.com
- ☆ OTplan.com
- ☆ http://www.abcteach.com/abctools_home.php
- ☆ www.handwritingworksheets.com
- ☆ <http://www.first-school.ws/preschool/printable-activities/index.htm>
- ☆ <http://www.hwtears.com/aplus/player>
- ☆ <http://www.atozteacherstuff.com/>
- ☆ www.Enchantedlearning.com
- ☆ <http://donnayoung.org/penmanship/>

Handwriting practice lines consisting of four sets of horizontal lines. Each set includes a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line, providing a guide for letter height and placement.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline, repeated six times across the page.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of multiple sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid) for tracing and writing practice.

Instructions: Highlight each line a different color (i.e. top = green; middle = yellow; bottom = red). Laminate the page. Cut out a square for each child. Use tactile manipulatives to “build” lower case letters on the square (for example: playdoh, dry erase markers, Wikki Sticks or cooked spaghetti noodles).

