Helping Your Child With Handwriting in Reception

Key points

- Reception is the first year of primary school, where children begin learning to form letters correctly.
- The 'tripod grip' is the most common way to hold a pencil, using the thumb, index finger, and middle finger.
- Learning to start and move a pencil in the right direction helps writing become easier and more automatic as children grow.
- Correct letter formation is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which is the official framework for learning and development for children from birth to age five.
- Every child develops at their own pace, and some may need more time or different tools to hold their pencil comfortably.
- Because every school may use a slightly different style of lettering, it is a good idea to ask your child's teacher for their specific guidance.

Things to try at home

- Play with play-dough or clay to help strengthen the small muscles in your child's fingers.
- Draw shapes, swirls, and patterns in a tray of sand or salt using a finger or a paintbrush.
- Encourage your child to 'air write' large letters in the air using their whole arm.
- Use chunky crayons or short pieces of chalk to make it naturally easier for them to use a tripod grip.

Find out more

- Your child's class teacher or the school's headteacher.
- The GOV.UK website for information on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework.