

Tips to Help Difficult Writers

Have students:

- work on their elbows on their stomachs to build shoulder strength.
- chew gum during writing – it helps with concentration
- try raised lined paper, paper with a colored baseline, “Handwriting Without Tears” paper, or graph paper for better spacing
- try an easel with approximately a 20 degree slant to achieve an upright posture while writing - a 3-inch notebook binder can be used as an easel
- use their finger or ice cream stick to space between words - a small sign taped to the top of their desk may help to remind them
- try pencil grips, dots placed on pencils to cue finger placement on the pencil, wrapping a rubber band around a pencil to allow for an easier grip
- appropriately positioned at his/her desk: resting against the back of the chair with feet touching the floor; knees, hips and ankles at a 90 degree angle; and elbows resting comfortably on the desk; desktop should hit 1 to 2 inches above the elbow crease; non-dominant hand holding the paper down
- use an alphabet strip on desk and at the black board
- use the blackboard or vertical surface to write on whenever possible
- copy less from the board - copy from a peer or from a piece of paper on desk (paper he/she is copying from should be placed opposite the dominant writing hand - if right handed, place source copy on the left towards the top of the desk)
- sit at the front of the room
- stop frequently to rest hands
- write less
- check angle of paper - use masking tape to assure this if necessary; bottom left corner should point to the stomach
- use scented markers to write spelling words - helps students remember them because the olfactory system has neuronal connections to the memory system
- use weighted wrist band or pediatric weighted pencils
- have bright stickers added to the left margins to cue them to start writing there for those who like to start writing at the center of the page
- utilize a study carrel - seating student away from the windows and doors to decrease auditory and visual distractions
- periodically move out of their seats during writing times
- write during a daily time to allow the student to practice handwriting frequently
- use dycem under paper to provide sensory feedback in writing and to prevent paper from slipping
- skip every other line for better spacing
- underline each word to help awareness of spacing between words
- use colored pencils/markers when writing for indicating word separation/spacing: different color for each word or alternate 2 colors only, different colors for each line written, draw colored “space” between words
- write with small piece of chalk - promotes using tripod grasp on pencils later