NHS Lothian - University Hospitals Division
Children and Young People's Occupational Therapy

Reluctant Writers

Ideas for Younger Reluctant Writers



- Keep it fun! Ideas include;
  - Use a paintbrush and water to 'draw' on the ground or with a stick in some mud
  - Draw letters in the air with a ribbon or a wand
  - Draw shapes or letters in shaving foam
  - There are lots of apps which practise letter formations in a fun way



- Try of different positions when using a pencil;
  - Stick a piece of paper on the wall and draw standing up or in high kneeling
  - Draw or paint on an easel or chalkboard
  - Lie on your tummy and prop up on your elbows
  - Try a 'doodle den' – e.g. sitting or lying in a big cardboard box and drawing inside. Or if you have a low coffee table, they could lie underneath and draw on a piece of paper stuck to the underside. Use a cushion or pillow to support their head and shoulders.



- Try different pencils and pens to find which ones they find most comfortable to use.
- Keep activities short and achievable.

Older Reluctant Writers



- Keep the amount of writing they need to do to a minimum - provide work in different ways - e.g. filling in blank spaces on print outs, emailing work to them, allowing them to take a photo of homework tasks.
- Prepare them for writing tasks; let them know what's expected and how long it will last.
- Allow extra time if needed.



- Chunk work into manageable sections.
- Try mind maps or spider diagrams to help plan and organise work.
- Using technology might be a useful tool for longer pieces of work - e.g. stories or project work. See the resources at the bottom of this sheet for more information.
- Allow them to use their preferred writing style - e.g. cursive/ printed.
- Use practical tasks to encourage writing - e.g. shopping lists, writing postcards to friends or family.
- Make it fun - fill in the boxes of a comic strip with little drawings, words or short sentences
- Think about adjustments to their work that might make things easier - e.g. leaving a space between lines when writing, a highlighted margin or dot to indicate where to start to write.

Related Websites:

https://teachhandwriting.co.uk/: General advice regarding teaching handwriting

www.callscotland.org.uk/: General information about ways technology can support writing

https://www.callscotland.org.uk/downloads/posters-and-leaflets/mystudybar/: Information about free applications which can support literacy difficulties.

https://www.callscotland.org.uk/downloads/posters-and-leaflets/ipad-apps-for-learners-with-dyslexia/ : Information about apps to support handwriting (Android version available)