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# Handwriting Strategies Pack

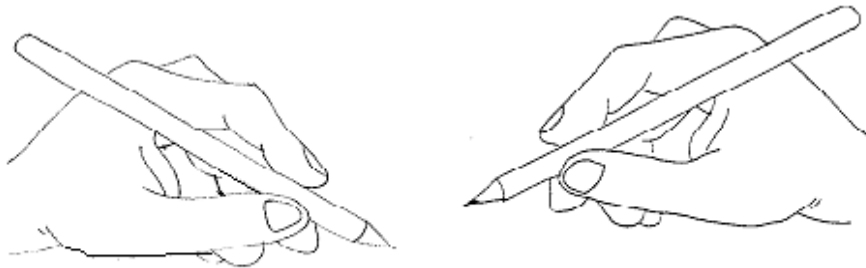


## **Pencil Grasp**

Ideally children should develop a dynamic tripod grasp. This is the most functional grasp in which the fingers make the small dynamic movements necessary for efficient handwriting. If the grasp does not allow for dynamic movement of the fingers, the wrist and arm have to make the movements necessary to form letters. An awkward grasp can effect both the presentation and efficiency of the child's work.

### **Tripod Grasp**

1. Pinch the pencil between tip of thumb tip and index finger, with the pencil resting on the middle finger.
2. Make sure that fingers are curved.
3. The space between the thumb and middle finger should make a 'c' shape (the 'webspace').
4. The thumb shouldn't be overlapping the other fingers.
5. Hold the pencil 1-3cm from the tip.



6. Avoid sharp pointed pencils, as these are likely to jab or pierce the paper.
7. A pencil / pen with a thick barrel can help to position the fingers and to provide more feedback to the joints and muscles about the position and movement of the fingers (proprioceptive input).
8. A triangular pencil may be useful for positioning the fingers correctly.
9. Putting a piece of tape around the pencil in the correct place can provide a visual cue for where the fingers should be positioned.

### **Activities to Encourage Tripod Pencil Grasp**

The following activities use similar actions to those in a tripod grasp and can be fun ways to warm up.

1. Use tweezers pick up small beads and sort them into containers. Try this with soft objects too.
2. Place clothes pegs around the very edge of a container.
3. Try pulling off pieces of playdoh and roll them between thumb and fingers to form a ball, then squeeze it flat.
4. Practice using the correct pencil grasp during activities such as colouring, writing on a vertical surface e.g. a blackboard, whiteboard, paper stuck on the wall or make a rubbing by placing a textured object under a piece of paper and rubbing over it.

## **Formation**

It is advisable to teach letters with similar movement patterns first. In our sessions we focused on:

The magic c group

a c d g o q s

The diving letters group

Tall divers (starts from the top diving board):

b h

Middle divers (starts from the side of the pool)

r m n

Deep divers (dives deep down into the pool)

p

Please find attached some sheets to practice these groups with. Remember to also practice these letters within short words and sentences.

**Placement**

Please see the attached 'blue sky green grass' paper. Encourage your child to remember that the letters should sit on the green grass and not float above or below the line. Tall letters should start in the 'blue sky' and letters with 'tails' should hang below the line. The dots can also be useful to know where to start letters from

**Sizing**

Please see attached an activity sheet to practice sizing. Encourage your child to try and keep their letters within the blocks as they get progressively smaller. You could also ask your child to spot their own errors in their writing to draw attention to sizing differences.

**Pressure**

Practice writing on tissue paper and carbon paper for your child to identify the difference between pressing 'hard' and 'soft'.

## Things to remember before I start writing:

### Posture



- Is my chair pulled right in?
- Are my feet flat on the floor?
- Are my knees bent to make a right angle (like the picture)?
- Is my back straight?

### Hand warm ups

- Before I start writing I might like to shake my hands or try the below
  - Praying position: push hands together, holding hands close to chest
  - Monkey grip: pull hands apart
  - Finger taps: tap a sequence quietly onto the table

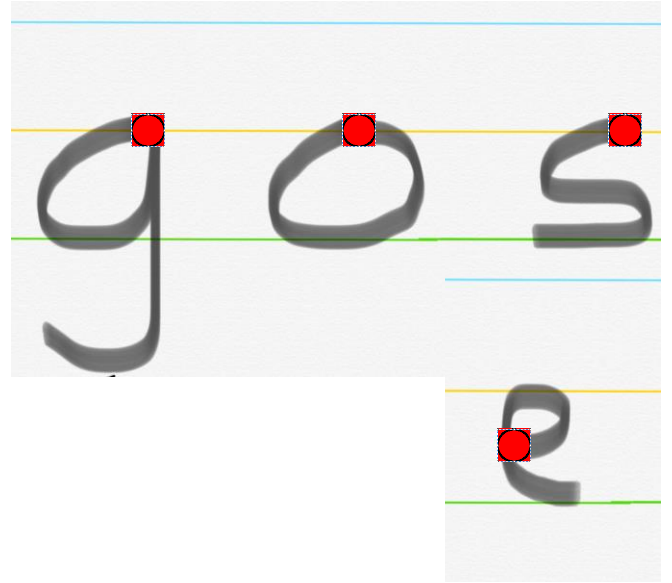
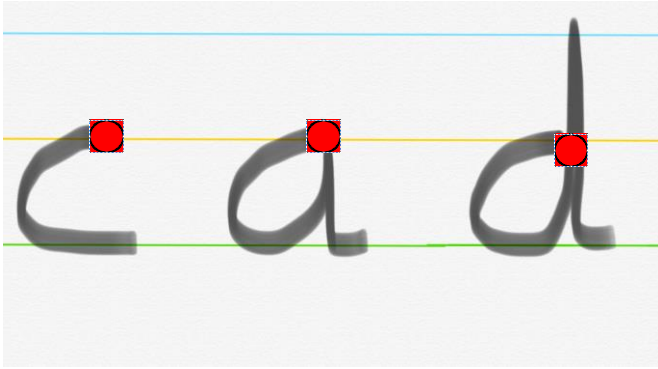
### Pencil grip



- If I have a pencil grip, is it on the right way round? (The fatter bit of the guard near the pencil tip)
- Am I holding the pencil with the mum and dad in the front and the children in the back? (see picture)
- Am I holding it with my fingers not too close or far away from the pencil tip?
- Is my wrist flat on the table?

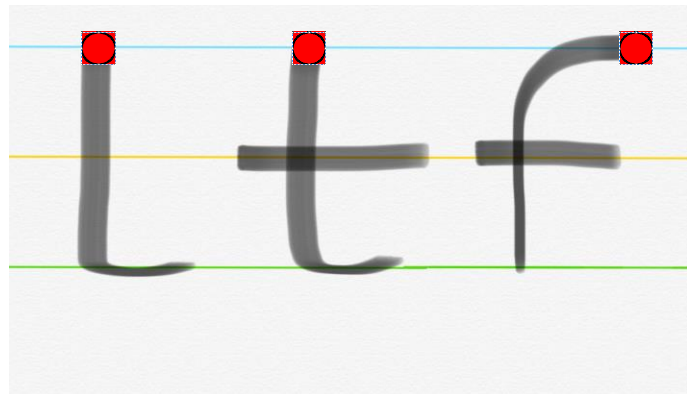
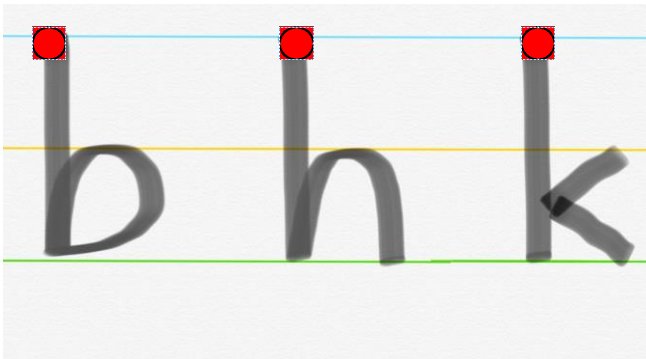
It is ok to take a quick break and shake my hands if they start to hurt when I'm writing!

Magic C:  
Start on the red dot

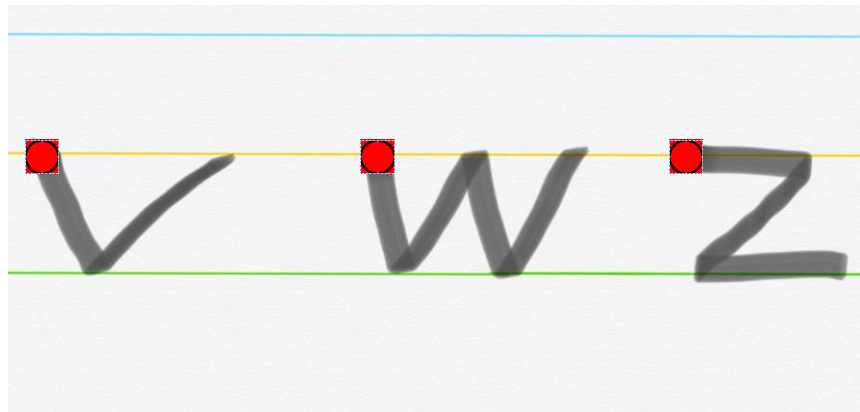
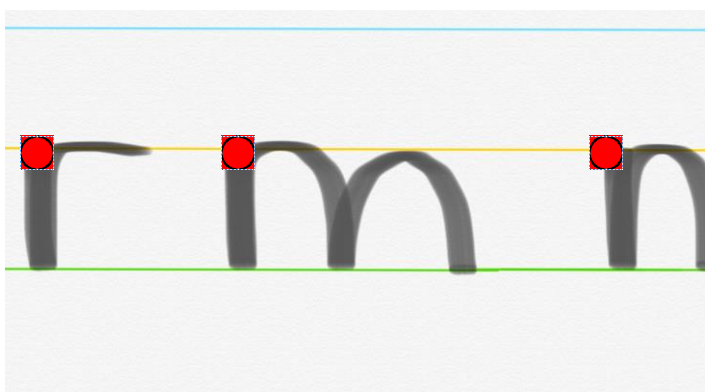


Diving club:

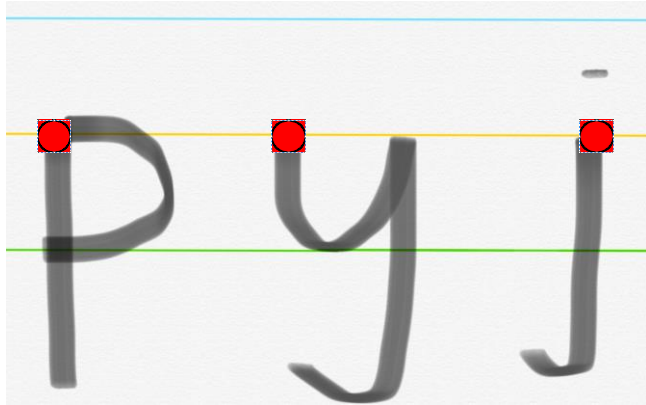
Tall divers



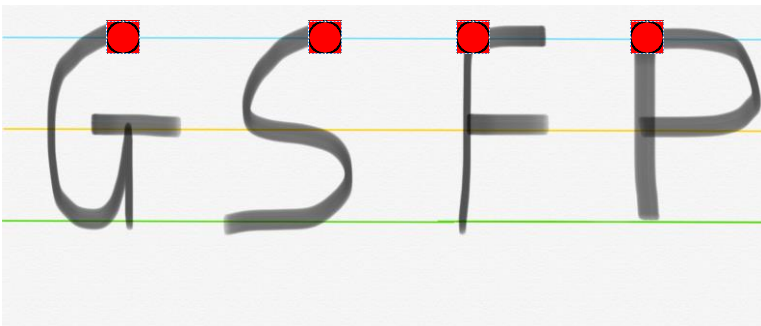
Middle divers



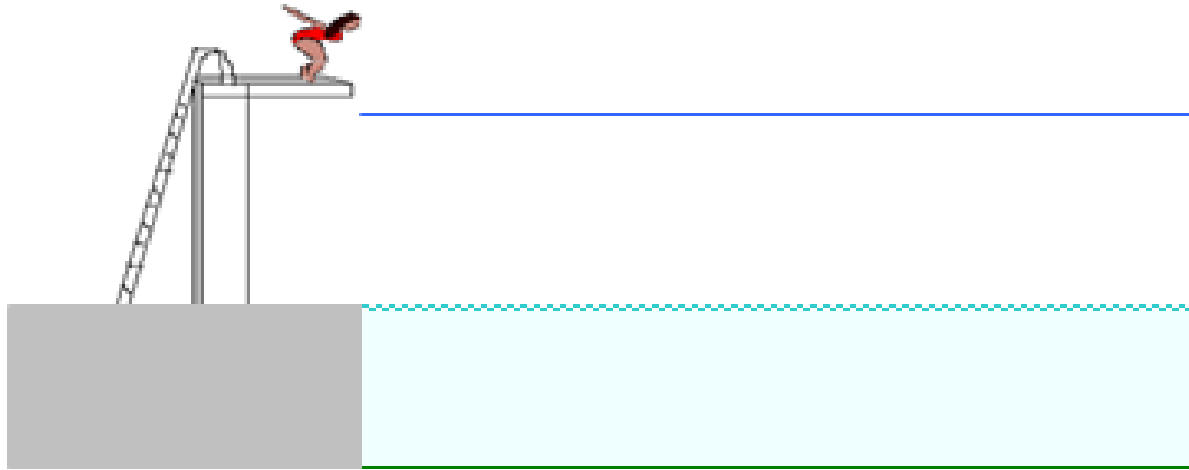
## Deep divers



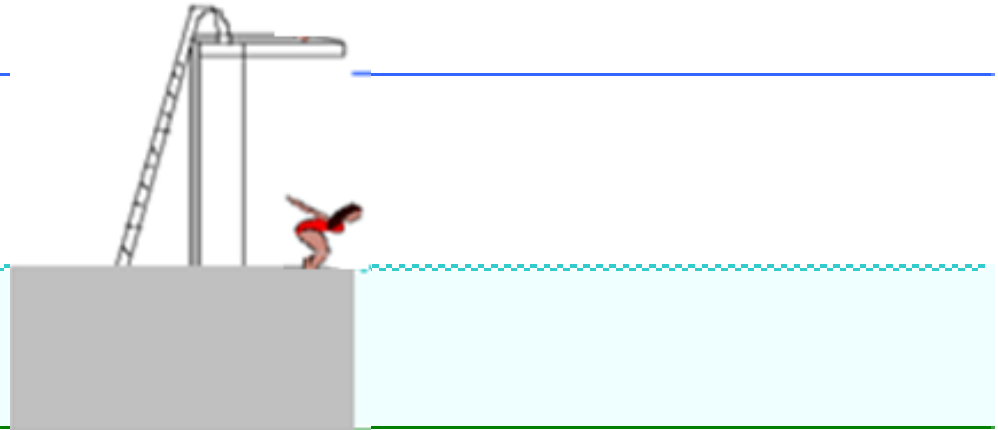
## Capitals (all capitals start at the blue sky)



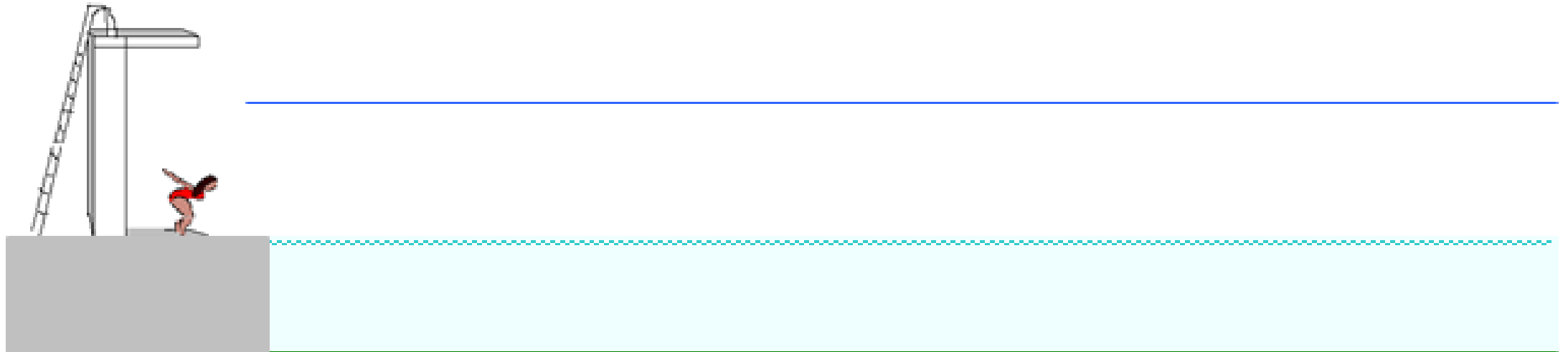
tall divers



deep divers



middle divers



**Start your letters at the dot .**

Make sure your letters bump on to the **green grass** and reach up to the **blue sky**





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