

SENSORY STRATEGIES TO HELP WITH HANDWRITING

- At the beginning of the day, take down chairs from desks and push them to correct places in the room
- Erase the chalkboard
- Wash desks/dry erase board
- Sharpen pencils with a manual pencil sharpener
- Chewy food breaks (fruit leather, licorice)
- Crunchy food breaks (vegetables, popcorn, pretzels, dry cereal)
- Cut materials from oak-tag or heavy paper
- Carry books with both hands, hugging the books to their chest
- Weight down the student's chair by taping weights to the chair legs
- Pad the feet of the chair to add extra resistance
- Climb playground equipment
- Carry books and supplies to other classrooms
- Hand fidget toys and squeeze toys
- Brain Breaks
- Wall push-ups
- Chair push-ups
- Animal walk breaks
- Try a variety of pencil grips.
Wrap the tip of the pencil in clay and tell the child that if the clay is misshaped, then he is pressing too hard on the pencil.
- Try various proprioception in handwriting modifications.
- Tilt the child's writing surface to a slightly inclined position using a 3 ring binder.
This positioning provides improved wrist positioning and will decrease the force the child presses through his wrist.
- Try writing with carbon paper under the paper to show the child that he needs to press harder or lighter through the pencil.
- Copy written work from a his desk instead of from the chalkboard or overhead.
- Write with a grease pencil to provide more resistance and feedback.
- Remove distractions from the classroom and seat the child away from windows and doors.
- Provide the child with written and verbal instructions.
- Provide a quiet space in the classroom.
- Provide movement breaks.

PARENT & TEACHER CHECKLIST FOR SENSORY INVOLVEMENT RELATED TO HANDWRITING

Handwriting Issues Related to Poor Registration of Sensory Input (Under-Reactive Response)

- ☐ The child may be unaware that he drops his pencil.
- ☐ Shows a weak grasp.
- ☐ Difficulty maintaining an effective writing posture.
- ☐ Tires easily in writing tasks.
- ☐ Doesn't notice details (Misses letters when copying words or sentences).
- ☐ Desk and writing area are disorganized and sloppy.

Handwriting Issues Related to Sensory Avoiding (Low Threshold for Sensory Input)

- ☐ Difficulty with changes in the routine of writing: new paper or type of worksheets
- ☐ Low frustration level with errors in letter formation
- ☐ Anxiety: wants to make letters and numbers correctly the first time
- ☐ Stubborn in handwriting concerns
- ☐ Avoids touching pencil shavings, the wooden part of the pencil tip, or the eraser.
- ☐ Avoids erasing mistakes

Handwriting Issues Related to Poor Registration of Sensory Input (Over-Reactive Response)

- ☐ Avoids smells (pencil or paper) in the classroom.
- ☐ Easily distracted during writing tasks.
- ☐ Difficulty paying attention to a writing task.
- ☐ Cannot work silently.
- ☐ Visually distracted by others, including noises, scents.
- ☐ Difficulty focusing on one section of a chalkboard or one part of a worksheet.

Handwriting Issues Related to Sensory Seeking (High Threshold for Sensory Input)

- ☐ Seeks movements by moving the chair, wiggling in the seat, bouncing legs and arms and distracts other students with the movements.
- ☐ Overly excited after recess and is difficult to settle down.
- ☐ Always touching the desk or parts of the chair during writing tasks.
- ☐ Craves scents or tastes: chews the pencil for it's taste, smells the paper or pencil shavings.
- ☐ Chews the pencil or eraser and clothing.
- ☐ Bites hair/shirt/nails when writing.
- ☐ Writes with heavy pencil pressure.