

Emerge



A Child's Place

January 2010

Occupational Therapy
Speech Therapy

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Serving children from birth
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Disorders
Sensory Modulation
Disorders
Handwriting Impairments
Fine & Gross Motor Delays

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The Importance of Handwriting Skills to Children



Bonnie Hacker, OT
Founder / Director

Handwriting skills probably levy more influence on academic success than many people realize. Experts have discovered that children who have trouble with handwriting also demonstrate reduced composition skills such as using simple grammar and less fluid sentences.^{1,2} Consequently, handwriting difficulties affect overall academic achievement.³ Children develop the mindset that they cannot write, and self-esteem is affected.⁴

The foundations of handwriting skills should develop before children reach school age, but focused training can help children of almost any age. Some fine motor skill milestones related to handwriting are:

Ages 1 to 2:

- Scribbles
- Can turn pages 2 or 3 at a time

Age 3:

- Copies simple shapes, such as a cross or circle
- Holds pencil with thumb and forefinger, rather than fist (50%)⁵

Age 4:

- Copies a square
- Cuts out simple shapes
- Uses eating utensils skillfully
- Mature pencil grip

Age 5:

- Hand preference is established
- Draws a variety of recognizable pictures
- Can copy a triangle
- Writes his or her name
- Colors within lines



The foundations for
handwriting skills are
learned at home and at a
very young age.

Challenges with handwriting skills can be secondary to broader problems such as executive function disorders.⁶ The expert pediatric therapist at Emerge can screen for those problems. However, the stumbling blocks that prevent a child from developing handwriting skills as quickly as his peers are usually mild and surmountable. Occupational therapy intervention can prove beneficial for children as young as three. Occupational therapists at Emerge have training in assessment of handwriting challenges and in highly effective training techniques that children actually enjoy. Learning legible and fluent handwriting does not need to cause emotional distress for a child.

At Emerge - A Child's Place, children develop pre-writing and handwriting skills. As a child develops writing skills, assessment and fine-tuning of essentials such as posture, grip, paper placement, etc. go a long way toward achieving life-long handwriting skills.⁷⁻⁹ The research-based approach used at Emerge recognizes natural learning progression patterns and teaches skills along those natural patterns. In addition to individual therapy for children of all ages, Emerge offers handwriting groups for children in 1st through 4th grade during the school year and the popular Capable Kindergartners and Ready Writer summer programs for children entering kindergarten through 2nd grade.

Please tell parents about

Emerge - A Child's Place

Believing in a Child's Potential to Flourish

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