

PACT PROGRESS

The newsletter of Parents and Children Together  Volume 7 August 2006

The 2006 year is off to a great start with the arrival of our PACT manual "Reading is NOT Enough!" This 450 page book outlines the PACT program and is filled with practical information. The basic premise of the book is that if children learn, and adults go back and relearn, the fundamental academic basics to the point of *mastery*, they will become **confident, independent** learners. Some of these basics include: penmanship, sight words, phonics, structure in writing, math basics, and comprehension. "Reading is NOT Enough!" is a valuable resource for all educators and is useful for therapeutic, remedial, and enrichment purposes. It is excellent for homeschoolers and makes a great gift from grandparents.

Table of contents for Reading is Not Enough

assessments, teaching material, teaching procedures, games, questions and comments, timetables

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Written by Hellen Codling
Edited and Illustrated by
Deborah James

Mastering Education Basics
for Parents and Children Together



Great Summer Reading!

pact@canwan.com

parentsandchildrentogether.ca

306-484-2255

A Letter from our Creative Director

Preparing for Kindergarten

Children encounter so many new things when they enter Kindergarten. It may be overwhelming. There are things you as a parent can do to help them prepare. Doing a little bit of reading and writing every day, or every other day, can go a long way in boosting confidence.



Most parents think to teach their children the alphabet, usually in the song form, but not all think to teach the letter sounds which are actually more important. You can begin by teaching your child how to isolate one sound in a word. As you go about your day, point out a main sound in a prominent word. If your child is watching "Franklin" you can point out that "f" says /f/ in "Franklin". If your daughter's friend Ashley is coming over to play you can point out that "a" says /ă/ in Ashley.

Making sure your children hold their pencils properly is an important thing for parents to do because teachers don't usually have the time or consistency required to ensure this, and it is important! Just as there is a proper technique in a bow hold when playing the violin, there is a proven correct way to hold your pencil when writing. I still remember that when I learned to consistently hold my pencil correctly in grade one that my mom took me on a special date to McDonald's, just the two of us. Make goals with your children to motivate them!

Begin by having your child hold his pencil correctly when he is colouring. If he is interested in learning the letters use an interlined notebook which is important for visual-motor development. Have an alphabet card with arrows for him to trace or copy into his notebook. There are correct ways to form the letters, some are very important (e.g. when writing "b" draw the stick first, when writing "d" draw the circle first). Teach the difference between capital and lower case letters. You can enforce this even when spelling orally: "Canada" is spelled "capital C", a, n, a, d, a.

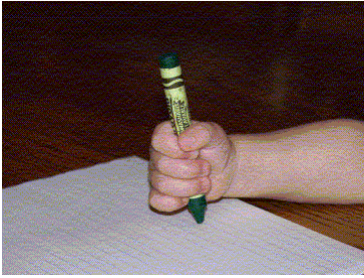
You can also begin teaching simple math. Count up when walking up the stairs and count down when walking down them. Skip one step in between and count by twos. Have your child show you on his fingers how many of an item you have given him when feeding him candies or other things.

These days the three "Rs" might be "reduce, re-use, and recycle", but we still ought to think about reading, writing, and arithmetic. Sitting down for a scheduled school work hour is not necessary, "sneak" learning into your day. Show your children that life is learning and learning is fun! Children only start to dislike schoolwork when they are not feeling successful, so help them set goals they can achieve, and help them achieve them!

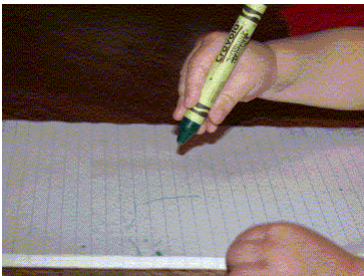
Sincerely,

Deborah James

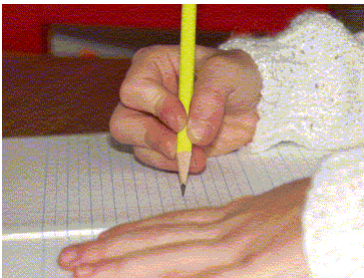
Pencil Hold Development Stages



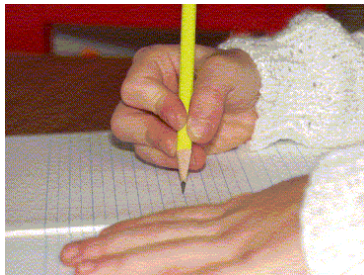
Stage One: This is the grip a child uses when he first learns to hold a pencil. This pencil grip is excellent for scribbling but not much more. This writing is almost solely from the shoulder.



Stage Two: Now the child's fingers are stronger but this writing still utilizes mostly the shoulder. Fatter pencils can be used if they help the child's grip.



Stage Three: A grip with the middle finger or thumb on top fall under the third stage of pencil grip. Many students never progress beyond this stage. Triangular pencils and pencil grips are available as aids to help train a child's hand to learn to hold their pencil correctly.

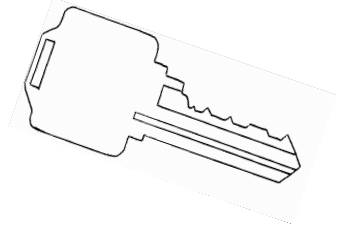


Stage Four: This is the proper way to hold your pencil. The bossy (index) finger is on the top and the middle finger and thumb support the pencil on either side. This grip grants the highest level of control and allows the greatest range of movement.

Exercises which help to develop fine motor skills used in writing include: cutting with scissors, tying bows and laces, building with Lego, stringing beads on a cord, and finger painting. Once a poor pencil grip has been established it is VERY difficult to change. Some Kindergarten teachers have noticed that students who cannot hold their pencil properly fall behind.

The pencil should be held 3cm above the tip and should not be clenched as this will tire the student's hand too quickly. The pencil needs also to be at least 8cm in length so that it can rest on the hand.

100 % MASTERY IS THE KEY!



Activities to teach Alphabet Skills

It is important for children to learn their alphabet well as this skill is needed for tasks such as looking up words in the dictionary and filing.

Divide the alphabet into four lines for organization and easier understanding. At first teach each line separately. Use magnetic letters.

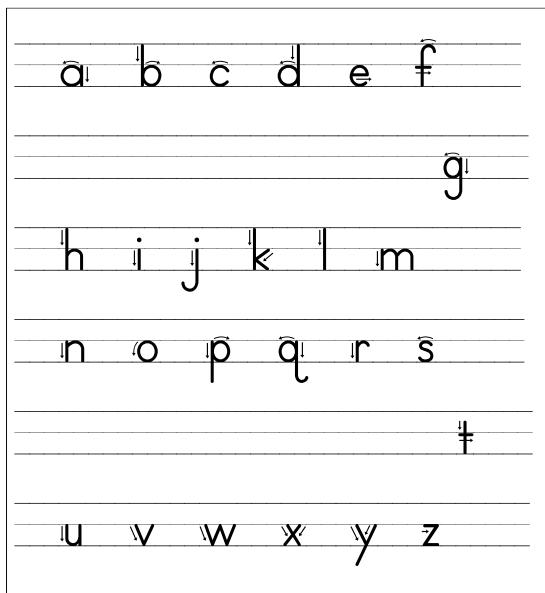
Line 1: a b c d e f

Line 2: h i j k l m g

Line 3: n o p q r s t

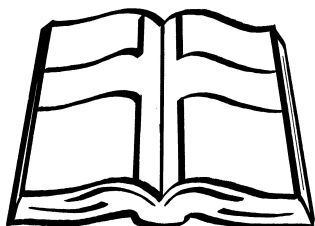
Line 4: u v w x y z

Students have mastered their written alphabet when they can write it neatly in less than two minutes (manuscript until grade three, cursive grade three and above) as shown below. The cursive letters can be joined.



- Ask your child before and after questions: "What comes before 'z'?"
"What comes after 'o'?"
- You can also make up a sheet with blanks to be filled in: a ____ c
____ r ____
- Question your child about things like:
"How many vowels are there?" "What are they?" (a, e, i, o, u, and sometimes y)
"Can you name all the consonants?" (say the whole alphabet without the vowels)
"Which line is the letter 'k' on?" (Line 2)

Bible Alphabet Mastery



Gg

G - Give us today our daily bread.
- Matthew 6:11

The Bible Alphabet

A - <u>Ask</u> and it will be given to you; seek and you will find. - Matthew 7:7
B - Be still, and know that I am God. - Psalm 46:10
C - <u>Cast</u> all your anxiety on Him because he cares for you. - 1 Peter 5:7
D - <u>Discipline</u> loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid. - Proverbs 12:1
E - Your kingdom is an <u>everlasting</u> kingdom. - Psalm 145:13
F - Honor your <u>Father</u> and your mother. - Exodus 20:12
G - <u>Give</u> us today our daily bread. - Matthew 6:11

Bible Alphabet Suggestions:

- Review the bible verses for the letters Aa, Bb, Cc, Dd, Ee, and Ff. Long term memory is developed through review.
- Review these verses regularly. Any words you do not know you can add to your personal spelling box.
- Notice the violet color used to trace the Bible verse. There are now red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. The children will learn the colors of the rainbow as we make the pattern.

Red, orange, yellow, green, and blue,
Don't forget indigo, and violet too!

Teaching Idea: Trace the Bible verse in the sand at the beach.
Cut out each word, mix them up, and have your child unscramble the verse.
Attempt to say the verse backwards just for fun!