

Dear Teachers and Professionals,

Here are some tips I thought might be helpful as our students develop fine motor skills. As they begin to write, with your assistance, it is important that some basic guidelines are followed to promote an optimal learning experience.

Positioning for Hand over Hand Assistance

(For Staff AND Students)

When providing hand over hand assistance, try to position yourself directly behind the student. You want to be in the most natural position for writing. The more natural it feels for you, the more natural it will feel for the student. Students who stay away from physical guidance may more willing to receive your assistance if you slip yourself correctly.

Sitting is a chair directly behind the student...

1. Cup the student's hand in your palm.

Follow the natural arch of your writing hand.

2. Tilt your head to grab the pencil using the student's fingers.

*This is how you give the student sensory input that tells them,
This is how handwriting I grip my pencil.*

3. Make sure the student's elbow and forearm are on the table. Stabilize your elbow on the table.

This is why it is better to sit behind the student.

4. Extend your wrist back and apply the pencil to the paper.

*You are stabilizing their upper arm to
prevent mobility and control of their fingers.*

5. Focus on moving fingers and wrist.

The "fine" part of fine motor.

6. Assume "helping hand" is stabilizing the paper at the top corner.

Remember, hand over hand assistance is the most restrictive type of prompt used with a child. You may be physically helping the child but they are not actively participating in the task. This does not mean that hand over hand assistance is not effective. If done correctly, you can model proper letter formation (top to bottom, left to right and counter-clockwise strokes), correct amount of pressure, and appropriate writing speed.