

Learning letter formation

It is very important that a child holds their pencil in the correct way. The pencil should be held in the 'tripod' grip between the thumb and first two fingers. If a child's hold starts incorrectly, it is very difficult to correct later on.

A child needs to form each letter the correct way. The letter c is introduced in the early stages as this forms the basic shape of some other letters, such as d.

Particular problems to look for are:

The o (the pencil stroke must be anticlockwise, not clockwise)

d (the pencil starts in the middle, not the top) - often confusion between a 'b' and 'd' can be due to incorrect formation (they are easier to confuse if they start at the same place),

There must be an initial downstroke on letters such as **m and n**.

The Jolly Phonics DVD, Jolly Stories and Finger Phonics books show the correct formation of each letter. A good guide is to remember that no letter starts on the baseline.

The grip is the same for both left- and right-handed children. In time a child will need to learn joined-up (cursive) writing. It helps the fluency of writing and improves spelling. When words are written in one movement it is easier to remember the spelling correctly.

Jolly Phonics uses the Sassoon Infant typeface which is designed for children learning to read and write. Many of the letters (such as d and n) have an 'exit' stroke at the end to make it easier to transfer into joined-up writing.

