

Strategies to Promote Motor Planning Used in Pencil Use

These strategies are tools that help the child learn how to move the pencil to execute the desired shape or letter. These are fundamental teaching tools that can be used individually, in combination with each other, or in combination with other drawing or printing activities in this resource. THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE TEACHING TOOLS CANNOT BE OVER EMPHASIZED.

Activity	Description	Why?
Vertical surface	Perform drawing, coloring and printing on a vertical surface (like a white board leaning against a wall or on an easel).	Builds shoulder and wrist strength. Helps child learn “up” and “down” in relation to printing and drawing.
Big practice	Perform drawing, coloring and printing on a large scale, so that width of figure is approximately the same width as the child’s trunk.	Allows learning the motor plan using large movements; performs the “thinking” part of the movement without taxing fine motor skills
Multi-sensory practice	Perform drawing, coloring and printing without a pencil, on alternate mediums. Possible mediums include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● With the finger in the air (oriented vertically). ● In shaving cream, pudding or other “goopy” substance ● On a piece of carpet, or other “fuzzy” texture ● On the screen of a tablet or smartphone, first without then with stylus 	Enforces movement patterns through different qualities of sensory feedback.
Consistent movement patterns and feedback	Ensure all practice with drawing and printing enforces mature handwriting formation styles. Provide consistent verbal cueing to child for shapes and letters. In general, vertical lines go from top to bottom, horizontal lines go from left to right and circular strokes start at the top and move counterclockwise.	Consistent practice of movement patterns helps motor learning. Consistent verbal cues helps child remember appropriate stroke direction and sequence.