

# The Left Handed Writer

## Differences between Right and Left-Handers

- The left-handed child requires specific instruction because of a natural tendency to write from right to left
- In writing from left to right, the left-hander must pull the pencil across the page instead of pushing as the right-hander does
- The right-handed writer moves the hand away from the midline (middle of the body) when writing. The left-hander has to write in a much less natural direction.
- The left-hander's hand can cover what has been written, causing the finished product to look smudged.

## Pencil Grip

The majority of left-handers use the 'hook' hand posture, i.e. hand above the writing line with pencil tip pointing towards the bottom of the page.

Some use the mirror image of a typical right-hander, i.e. hand below the writing line with pencil tip pointing up towards the top of the page.

Use equipment suitable for left handers e.g. rulers, pencil grips and scissors.

## Teaching Strategies

1. Establish good writing habits from the beginning.
2. Working on the vertical (drawing on a board or slope) when learning letter movements may make it easier to see what is written.
3. Tilt paper to the right (approximately 45°), with the left side of the paper parallel with the writing arm.
4. Hold pencil with thumb and index finger; middle finger taking weight of pencil. Hold grip slightly higher, approximately 1½" from point for more 'seeing room'.
5. If the back of the hand is kept in a straight line with the forearm, the paper is less likely to smudge.
6. Natural slant of writing to left – encourage by practising drawing circles anti-clockwise.
7. Provide writing books illustrating left-handed slant, or prepare an alphabet card.
8. When copying, place sample of writing at the top of the paper, not on left side.
9. Seat left-handers on the left side of the room, facing the activity in front of and to the right of them. Sitting to the left side of the table will also help avoid banging elbows with right handed writers.
10. Group left-handers together – may provide support and role for one another.
11. Left-handers who struggle with cursive script should be allowed to revert back to manuscript.

## Contact details

Children's Therapy Services

Telephone number: 0300 019 2936

For further general health-related information, please ask the relevant department for an information prescription or contact:

Patient Experience  
University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust  
Longfleet Road  
Poole  
Dorset  
BH15 2JB

Telephone: 0300 019 8499

[www.uhd.nhs.uk](http://www.uhd.nhs.uk)

**We can supply this information in other formats, in larger print or have it translated for you. Please call the Patient Experience Team on 0300 019 8499 or email [patientexperienceteam@uhd.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperienceteam@uhd.nhs.uk) for advice.**

**If you wish to make any comments or to ask about any research evidence used to write this leaflet, please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0300 019 8499, write to the Patient Experience Team (address above) or email [patientexperienceteam@uhd.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperienceteam@uhd.nhs.uk)**

---

Poole Hospital, Longfleet Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 2JB

Author: **Rebecca Shelton** Date: **February 2021** Version: **Three** Review date: **February 2024** Ref: **164/21**

t: 01202 665511 w: [www.uhd.nhs.uk](http://www.uhd.nhs.uk) : @UHD\_NHS : @UHTrust : @uhd\_nhs