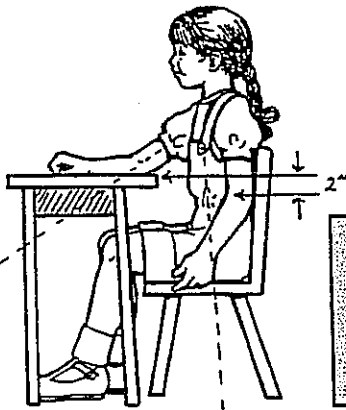


Postural Control


One of the most neglected classroom prerequisites for efficient handwriting is assuming and maintaining a balanced sitting posture. The height of the chair and writing surface can dramatically affect a student's efficiency and attention to a writing task. Below is a diagram that demonstrates the correct sitting posture for handwriting:



- chair back slightly below the shoulder girdle
- writing surface 2" above the bent elbow
- knees and hips bent at 90 degrees
- feet flat on floor

The stability provided from proper positioning allows the shoulder, elbow, hand and eyes to function together for efficient handwriting to occur.

Classroom strategies:

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- One indicator that a chair/desk is too high can be observed when a student wraps his or her legs around the legs of the chair/desk to compensate for not reaching the floor. If the chair/desk cannot be lowered, try a block of wood or telephone book under the feet to provide stability.
 - If the sitting surface is too small or the writing surface is too low, you will observe the student hanging the head into the shoulders or slumping into the seat to get closer to the writing surface. The student may complain of neck or eye strain or complain of cramping while writing.
 - If the writing surface is too high, the student will compensate by displacing his or her weight backward and stretching the arms forward. This position will limit wrist movement and cause the writing movement to be directed from the shoulder or from shifting of the torso. Some students may boost themselves by sitting on their feet, which causes them to lean over onto one side of the desk.
 - If a child still appears unstable following proper positioning, try a slant board or allow the student to work on the vertical plane (i.e., chalkboard).