

## To Help With Letter Identification:

### Kinesthetic Learner:

Kinesthetic learners need to move around and work manually with ideas. You touch things a lot. Smells and textures are important. You sometimes have difficulty sitting still in class just listening. The more activity you experience while doing a skill, the better you learn it. The more skin and muscles you use, the better you remember. Even small motions that seem unrelated to the activity such as swing a leg, drawing, or knitting help you understand ideas. You also enjoy playing 'Gestures' rather than 'Pictionary' or 'Taboo.' You learn best by doing or experiencing something. The more senses you can involve in learning, the better you will remember it.

#### Helpful Hints for Improving Kinesthetic Input:

- Sit where you can actively participate in classroom events.
- Sit where you can move as needed without disturbing others.
- Draw pictures in class of the material being taught.
- Take notes creatively.
- Ask and answer questions.
- Make models of the concepts whenever possible.
- As you study, move around.
- Walk and talk to yourself about material. Each lap you make, try moving at a different speed or style like skipping, sliding sideways, walking backwards, etc. Also include different voices. Sing, etc.
- Work on a chalk or whiteboard when you can.
- Incorporate pictures of models, if possible.
- Pat yourself on the back - physically - when you do well.
- Make sure your pen and writing materials please you.
- Make physical comfort a priority as you study.
- Make note cards, sample tests.
- Write the letters on the back of the hand to get a tactile/kinesthetic memory of the letter.
- Write the letter on sand paper, in sand, in Playdough to increase the tactile memory of the letter.
- Use Handwriting Without Tears to introduce the letters in a multi-sensory way in a developmentally correct sequence. [www.hwtears.com](http://www.hwtears.com)

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**KINESTHETIC AWARENESS**  
**Classroom and Individual Practice**

**CONTROLLING DIRECTION OF PENCIL MOVEMENT**  
**—DOT-TO-DOT DESIGNS**

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**Purpose**

To improve ability to direct movement of the hands using kinesthetic sensory information

**Materials**

Unlined paper; markers, grease pencil, or crayon; homemade or commercially available dot-to-dot designs

**Preparation**

Prepare several dot-to-dot sheets of various degrees of difficulty. Include a page of simple vertical and horizontal lines and lines of various angles (formed when two dots are connected); simple shapes (circle, square, triangle, rectangle) and more complex designs and pictures.

**Position**

Child sits at desk or table; adult sits at child's preferred side. Child uses correct grip pattern (with cues if needed).

**Procedure**

1. Child grips marker and completes the most simple dot-to-dot designs. Adult encourages child to look at target dot and guide the pencil to it without shifting eyes away from the target.
2. When this can be accomplished easily, child progresses to more complex dot-to-dot shapes, always focusing eyes on the target dot for each connection. The eyes move from one target dot to the next.
3. If lines are not straight or do not connect the two dots, child closes eyes while adult moves child's hand from one dot to another several times until child has "the feel" of the movement. Child then repeats the attempt to connect the two dots while focusing on the target dot.
4. Child repeats, using more complex dot-to-dot designs. Child focuses on smooth movement from one dot to the next.



**Desired Response**

Child uses kinesthetic sensory information to guide the writing implement while keeping eyes on the target dot, and connects the two dots with a straight line.

**Undesired Response**

Child watches the movement of the writing implement or shifts eyes from target dot to writing implement.

**Variations and Adaptations**

Dot-to-dots can be made on the chalkboard, on a powdered table top, or in damp sand, shaving cream, or finger paint.

As skill increases, child works on increasing speed while still connecting dots accurately.

Children can make their own dot-to-dot pictures freehand or by placing tracing paper over a picture and making dots over the design.

*Use of these activities should be directed by a qualified therapist.*

**Ways to Encourage Letter/Number Handwriting**  
**Compiled by Janet Mapes, OTR/L**

1. Provide much modeling on the formation of letters and numbers and encourage/demonstrate a top to bottom approach.
2. Practice letters in groups of similar strokes such as:
  - **c a g d q o s** ( all start with c shapes first and are done with one continuous stroke )
  - **i l t**
  - **r n m b h p** ( all start with downward stroke first, then re-trace back up )
  - **v w k z x y** ( diagonal letters )
  - **j e f u** ( miscellaneous letters )
3. To practice formation of letters:
  - (a) Model formation of letters/numbers slowly several times using verbal cues
  - (b) Trace over large letters/numbers (color changer markers are good for this). Tracing can also be done with finger on dry erase board to "erase" your letter or on chalkboard using different colored chalk.
  - (c) Finger draw letter/number in different materials (cornmeal on tray, salt on black construction paper, fingerpaint, sand, etc.) Watch for correct formation.
  - (d) Make a dot or use a small sticker for a starting point and have child practice letter formation him/herself. Letters/numbers do not always have to be done at the table using pencil/paper.
    - Can use chalk on driveway or sidewalk
    - Small sponges and water on chalkboard or driveway
    - Different colored markers on paper on wall/floor
    - Dry erase boards
    - Magna-doodles

The idea is to model a lot, do only 3-4 letters a week, practice frequently (10 minutes/day), and make it fun !

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**KINESTHETIC AWARENESS**  
**Compensatory Strategies**  
**CLASSROOM MODIFICATIONS**

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**Purpose**

To improve performance of classroom tasks that rely upon kinesthetic sensory information

**Strategies**

Without clear awareness of the feelings that accompany fine changes in finger position, the child must use visual and tactile (touch) information to guide movement. Handwriting requires constant fine movements of fingers and finger joints. It also requires a great deal of visual guidance and conscious attention for children with weak kinesthetic skills. To help the child to compensate, consider ways to:

- Provide increased sensory guidelines to help with judgments about movement and positioning.
- Increase resistance to movement so that it is felt more easily.
- Modify writing expectations and decrease writing requirements.

The following are examples of these types of adaptation.

*Provide additional sensory guidelines.*

1. Have child use lined writing paper with left and right margin lines added.
2. If child has difficulty lining up numbers for math problems, turn lined paper sideways; or provide graph paper.
3. Paint a line around the pencil where it should be gripped.
4. Use a pencil gripper that provides tactile and visual cues for grip positioning.
5. Tape or glue a string or wrap a rubber band around the pencil where it should be gripped.

*Increase resistance to movement.*

1. Avoid ballpoint pens that glide easily and provide little sensory feedback. Mechanical pencils with strong, sharp lead (about .9 millimeter) are often ideal. Encourage use of a variety of writing implements, and allow child to use those that "feel the best."
2. For large writing or drawing, crayons or grease pencils provide more friction with writing surface and often can be felt more easily.