

Mouse Club

23rd April 2024

Early Writing and
Letter Formation



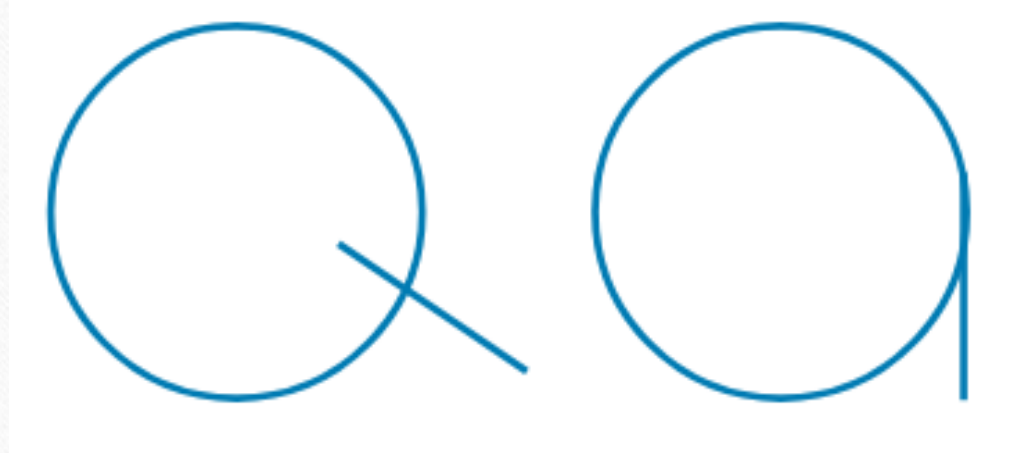
What is letter formation?

Letter formation is the ability to correctly form the letters of the alphabet. There are several steps and skills within letter formation, including making sure the pencil starts in the correct place to form a letter, moving the pencil in the correct direction and using visual discrimination skills to be aware of differences between letters (size, shapes, etc.) and the lines needed to form them.

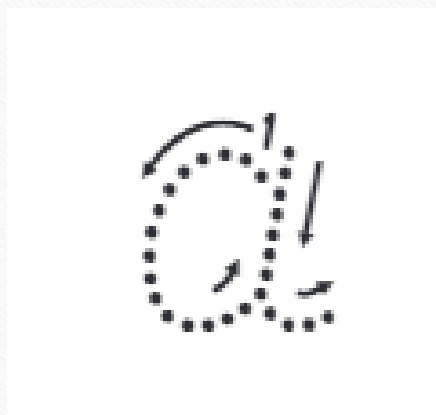
Letter formation isn't exactly the same as handwriting, rather letter formation is part of handwriting. In order to develop legible and fluent handwriting (that will allow them to write comfortably and more 'automatically'), your child needs to be able to form individual letters correctly.



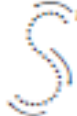




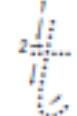
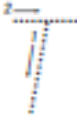

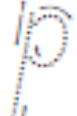

Why is letter formation important?

Let's look at an example. Many children begin to make 'letter shapes' before they have learnt correct letter formation - this is another important step in early writing and should absolutely be celebrated! They may draw an 'a' by drawing a circle and adding a stick on separately, like in these examples ...



While those shapes do resemble an 'a', the formation is not correct - they have started in the wrong place and lifted the pen off to add the line. Whilst practicing their name writing at home, you could start to gently show them how to correctly form their letters, like this...



GPC	Image	Action	Lower Case Letter Formation		Upper Case Letter Formation	
s		Snake – Slithering snake action with arm	Up and over, around the other way		Up and over, around the other way	
a		Arrow – Firing an arrow	Around, up, down and flick		Down, down, lift and across	
t		Tap – Twisting a tap	Down and round, pencil off, across		Down from the top, lift and left to right across the top	
p		Paint – Painting with a paintbrush	Down, up to the top, round to the middle		Down and back up, around to the middle	

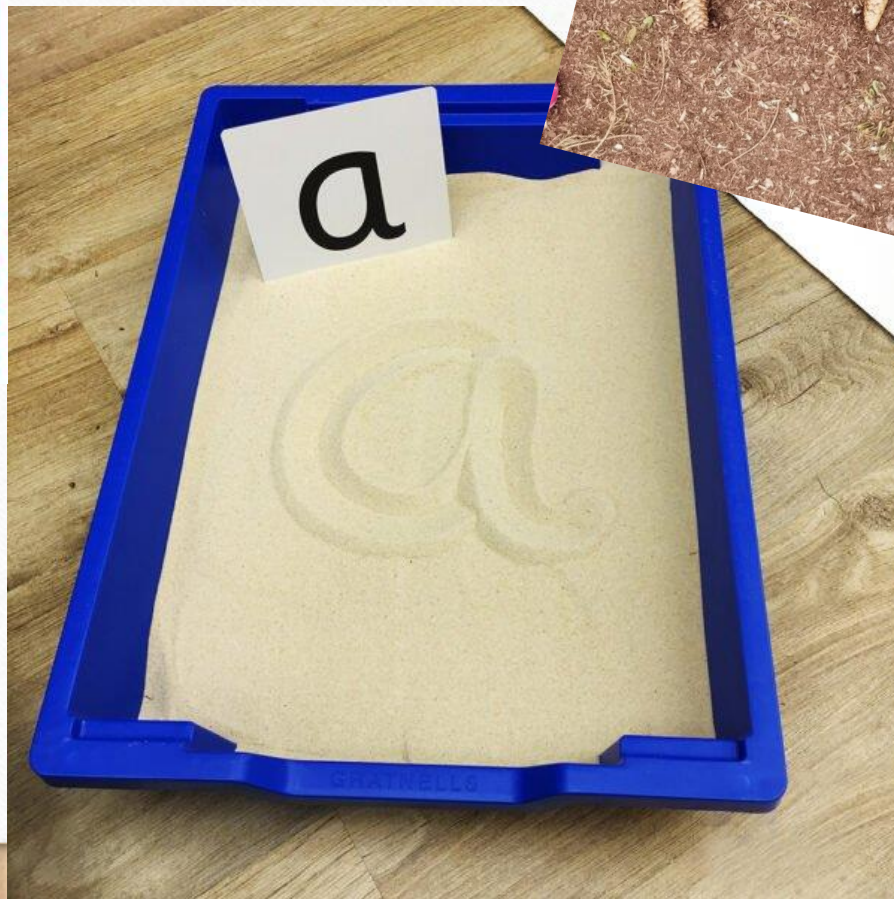
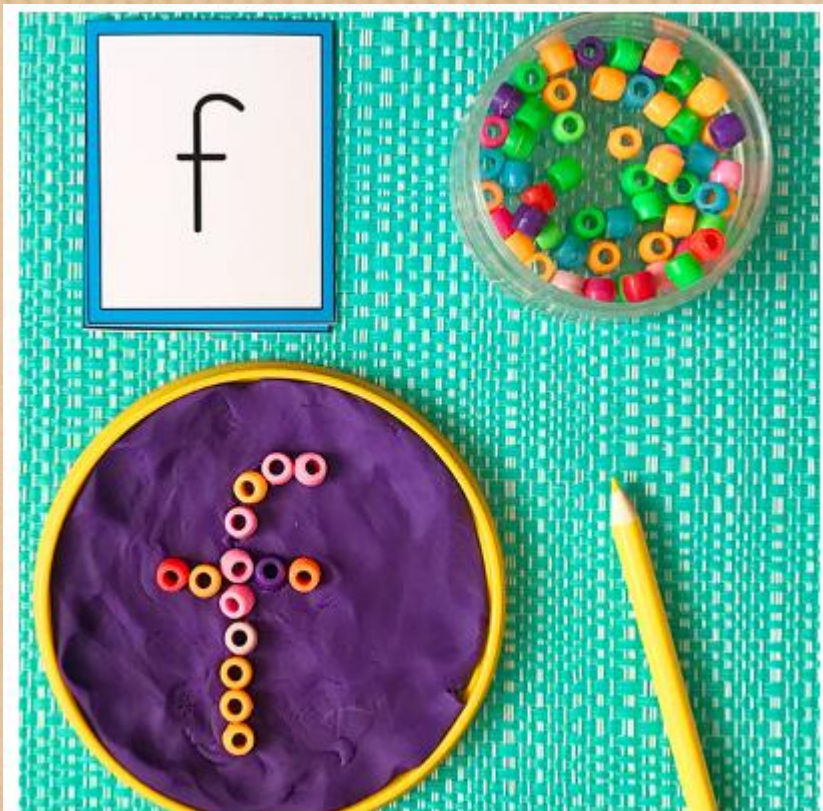
When your child begins to use correct letter formation in their writing, they will find it easier to form letters and begin to develop fluency with their writing. This means they don't necessarily need to think about how they are going to draw each letter as they are writing - their writing, therefore, becomes quicker. It can also help their writing become easier to read. This almost has a cyclical effect - it's such a confidence boost for them when you can read something they've written that they will want to write more, which helps them develop their letter formation even more!

When will my child start learning how to form letters?

During Nursery, we teach the children how to form the letters in their name, however, most children will really start learning how to form letters other letters correctly in reception (aged four or five). This will go alongside beginning to learn their letters and sounds in phonics. You were given a letter formation booklet when the children received their name writing mats. These are the patterns and images we use to teach the children in school. If you require another copy, please let a member of staff know.

Please bear in mind that although your child is being exposed to letter formation, they still need to work on their gross and fine motor skills at this age. Some children may not be physically ready yet for more formal 'writing' so have fun playing physical games and doing sensory activities to try to support them with their physical development too. I have added some ideas you can do at home.







Unlocking Letters and Sounds

Handwriting

Letter Formation for Lower Case Letters

Letters	Patter
Curly letters	
c	Around the curl to sit on the line
a	Around, up, down and flick
d	Around, all the way up, down and flick
s	Up and over, around the other way
g	Around, up, down and a tail
o	Around all the way
qu	Around, all the way down, flick (see also u)
f	Over and down, pencil off, across
e	Across and over, curl to sit on the line