

Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children
Therapy Department



Printing Like a Pro!

A Cognitive Approach to
Teaching Printing to
Primary School-Age Children

(For Parents and Caregivers)



Developed by Ivonne Montgomery, Occupational Therapist,
Edited by Jill Zwicker, PhD, OT(C)

Printing Program Suggestions for School-Age Children

PRINTING LIKE A PRO! (For Parents and Caregivers)

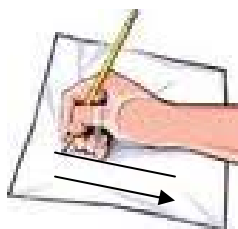
The following ideas are meant to be a list of possible suggestions. Select activities that are at the child's present developmental level. Please contact your child's occupational therapist if you have any questions.

Parents:

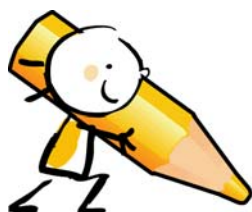
- Is your child struggling with learning to print?
- Are they frustrated while printing?
- Is your child having problems remembering the letters and how to form them?
- Does your child print letters starting from the bottom rather than from the top?
- Does your child frequently reverse letters?
- Is it hard to read your child's writing?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, then this might be a good program for you to do with your child at home to help them to learn how to print or to improve their printing skills.

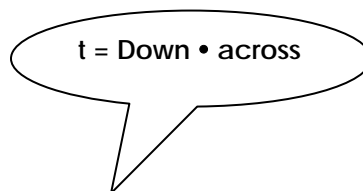
- **Why use this program?** This program's aim is to help your child learn and remember the correct way to form each letter. This helps to make printing easier. This can also help to make printing neater and quicker.
- **Who can use this program?** This printing program is for all types of learners in primary grades. It was, however, developed for students with motor learning problems.
- **How this program works?** This program uses specific strategies that include **modeling**, **imitation**, **self-talk**, and **self-evaluation** (these are cognitive-based strategies).
- **How often should practice be done?** 20 minutes, three to five times a week may help your child learn correct letter formation. This regular teaching will hopefully help to prevent or correct "bad habits".



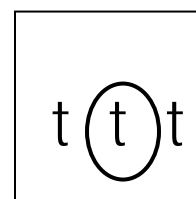
Parent models



Child imitates



Child says out loud

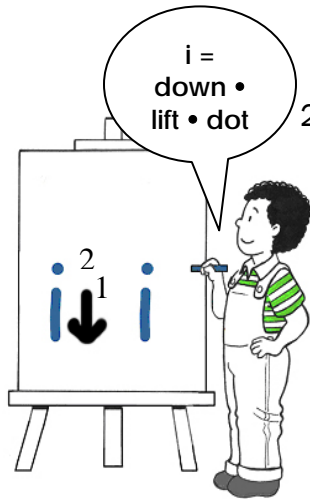


Child circles best letters

Teaching Strategies:

1. Modelling:

- **Show** your child a few times how to form each letter. Use a chalkboard, a scrap sheet of paper, or a white board. It is best to **sit beside** and not across from your child so that they can more easily imitate you.
- **Include numbered arrows** that show correct letter formation as this provides a **good visual cue**. Point out the numbered arrows to your child so they are aware of the correct letter formation of each letter (please see worksheets – see #4 below).



2. Self-Talk:

- Encourage your child to **say out loud** how to form each letter. This is called **“self-talk”** for the direction of movement. For example, “i = down • lift • dot”.
- You can help by saying the directions out loud to your child and encouraging your child to repeat after you.
- Later, remind them if they forget to talk out loud.
- Try to use the same set of directions each time. Using the **same self-talk words** each time is important for best learning (for an example, please see sample self-talk directions attached.)

3. Self Evaluation:

- It is important for your child to look at their work to see how closely their letter formation matches the target letter.
- **Self-evaluation** can also be in the form of **circling their best-formed letters**. Assist your child as needed. Discuss with your child why they chose those letters. This helps them to focus on the important aspects of proper letter formation.

4. Practice:

Use the **Printing Like a Pro! worksheets** available for download from:

- http://www.childdevelopment.ca/School-Age_Therapy_Practice_Resources.aspx
- Your child will most likely need to use the worksheets more than once, especially if there are certain letters your child is having trouble learning or remembering. Therefore, the following ideas are suggested so that the worksheets can be used repeatedly:
 - a. You can make extra copies
 - b. Sheets can be laminated or you can use a page protector on each worksheet with use of an overhead fine tip marker. This wipes clean with a wet paper towel.

Activities to Try:

How often?

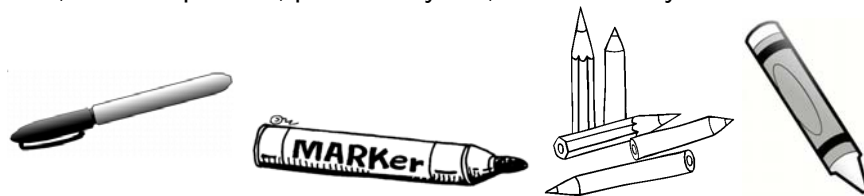
- The **Printing Like a Pro!** worksheets should be done for about **20 minutes, three to five times a week.**

What to use and what to do?

With the **Printing Like a Pro!** worksheets:

- Show your child a few times how to form each letter. Remember to sit beside and not across from your child so that they can more easily imitate you. You can trace over the letter and numbered arrows with a highlighter. **Remember to:**
 - **Model printing of each letter a few times.**
 - **Point to the “visual cues” (numbered arrows)**
 - **Encourage “self-talk”**
 - **Encourage “self-evaluation”**
- Sit with your child as they work on each letter worksheet. It is important for your child to use “self talk” and correct any errors they have made (i.e., self evaluation).
- Also make note of any letters your child is struggling with so that more attention can be paid to learning these letters.
- Initially, do not worry about staying on the lines. This will come after your child is able to easily and quickly form each letter.

You can make it more fun by using a variety of writing utensils on the worksheets, such as felt pens/markers, colored pencils, pencil crayons, and wax crayons.



IMPORTANT:

- At the end of each session, practice each letter learned on a regular sheet of paper using a pencil. This is done to help “carry over” what was learned (i.e., generalization of the skills learned). Again, work on the letters in the group that the child is learning.

Letter Groupings and Teaching Lower Case Letters

*Please work **first on teaching lower case** as lower case letters are **used more in printing** (and in reading) than upper case.*

- It is important to **teach the proper way to form each letter** as shown on the Printing Like a Pro! worksheets, i.e., left to right, top to bottom, etc.
- Work on each group listed below **until** you feel the student has learned the group i.e., can easily remember how to correctly print each letter in the group.
- After practicing each individual letter, it is good review to practice all letters from the group in random order.
- Once printing of each letter in the group appears **easy and automatic**, move on to the next group.

The groups have been **broken down** from **easiest to most difficult letters** to form:

Following are the groups you can work on:

<u>Downers</u> (Group 1)	l i t f	easiest
<u>Rounders</u> (Group 2)	c o e a d	↓
<u>Curvers (special)</u> (Group 3)	s u	
<u>Curvers</u> (Group 4)	r n m h b	
<u>Diggers</u> (Group 5)	j g q p	
<u>Sliders</u> (Group 6)	w y x z k	
	most difficult	

IMPORTANT

- A good teaching tip is to **begin each session with a warm up. To do this, review all of the letters already learned on a scrap sheet of paper. This helps your child remember all the basic motor patterns needed to print more challenging letters.**
- It is important to **observe if your child correctly forms the letters in each group. If they have forgotten, you will need to go back and re-teach using the above strategies.**
- **Once your child has learned correct letter formation and can easily remember how to form letters, other parts of printing can then be addressed such as staying on the line, spacing, sizing, etc.**

Simple Words

Once your child can easily and automatically print letters, the next step is to work on simple words. Use of self-talk and numbered arrows should no longer be required. Focus on words that use the lower case letters in each group learned. For example: Group One/Downers - "it, lit, tilt", etc. These can be done on a chalkboard or on paper. As your child progresses, you can build on each group.


Initially, do not worry about staying on the lines. As you notice improvements, you can focus on proper positioning on the line as well as consistent sizing. Later, you can teach proper spacing between letters and words, i.e., use finger spacing or a Popsicle stick between words.

Capital Letters

- Once simple words are introduced, the next step is to work on capital letters using the progression below, working from the easiest to the most difficult letters to form. **Remember to model each letter a few times, use "visual cues" (letters with numbered arrows), encourage "self-talk" and "self-evaluation".**

Following are the groups you can work on:

<u>Downers</u>	L T I H F E	easiest
(Group 1)		
<u>Rounders</u>	C O Q G S	
(Group 2)		
<u>Curvers (special)</u>	S U J	
(Group 4)		
<u>Curvers</u>	P B R D	
(Group 4)		
<u>Sliders (long)</u>	V W X A N M Z	
(Group 5)		
<u>Sliders (short)</u>	Y K	
(Group 6)		most difficult



What to use and what to do?

- Follow the same steps as listed above regarding use of the **Printing Like a Pro!** worksheets. At the end of each session, practice each letter learned on a regular sheet of paper using a pencil. This is done to help "carry over" what was learned (i.e. generalization of the skills learned).
- The last step is to work on words that begin with capital letters. This can first be done on a chalkboard or white board. You can then progress to having your child print entire sentences, concentrating on:
 - Proper letter formation and sizing
 - Proper positioning on the line
 - Proper spacing within and between the words
 - Proper use of punctuation

Please contact your child's Occupational Therapist if you have any questions.

Author: Ivonne Montgomery, OT, SHHCC Edited by Jill Zwicker, PhD, OT(C)

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Printing Like a Pro!

Sample of "Self-Talk" Directions for Lower Case Letters

The following are examples of the self talk directions the child can say aloud while printing.

Downers - Group 1

- l Down
- i Down • lift • dot
- t Down • lift • across the middle
- f Up • around • down • lift • across the middle

Rounders - Group 2

- c Around • leave open
- o Around • close
- e Forward • up • around
- a Around • close • down
- d Around • close • up • down

Curvers (Special) - Group 3

- s Curve back • curve forward
- u Down • curve • up • down

Curvers - Group 4

- r Down • up • curve forward • stop
- n Down • up • curve forward • down
- m Down • up • curve forward • down • up • curve forward • down
- h Down • up • curve forward • down
- b Down • up • curve forward • close

Diggers - Group 5

- j Down • dig • curve back • lift • dot
- g Around • close • dig • curve back
- q Around • close • dig
- p Down • dig • up • curve forward • around • close

Sliders - Group 6

- v Slide down • slide up
- w Slide down • slide up • slide down • slide up
- y Slide down • lift • slide back • dig
- x Slide down • lift • slide back
- z Forward • slide back • forward
- k Down • lift • slide back • slide forward

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