

## Printing Like a Pro!



### A Cognitive Approach to Teaching Students How to Print the Initials of their Name



- The goal of the Printing Like a Pro! customizable initial writing worksheet sets is for students to learn and remember the correct way to form and neatly print their initials, using correct capitalization.
- With practice, using cognitive strategies, printing of their initials will overtime become automatic, efficient, and neat.
- Printing Like a Pro! customizable initial writing worksheets were developed specifically for students with motor learning challenges who are not yet able to print their entire names. Therefore, printing their initials can be taught and learned as an adaptation to printing their name.
- Individual structured teaching and practice, ideally daily, will help the student learn how to independently write their initials.
- These are available from:

[http://www.childdevelopment.ca/School-Age\\_Therapy\\_Practice\\_Resources.aspx](http://www.childdevelopment.ca/School-Age_Therapy_Practice_Resources.aspx)

### Teaching Strategies

Cognitive teaching strategies include:

- modeling
- imitation
- numbered arrow cues
- dotted, bubble and letter box cues
- self-talk and
- self-evaluation

Begin practice with the initial letter of the student's first name. Manually print the student's name on the blank line on each page. Practice daily. Once they can print their first initial automatically, then practice the initial letter of their last name/surname. Once they can write both the initial letters of their first and last name then teach them how to write both letters together – that is how to write their initials.

## Teaching Strategies:

- **Model:** Show the student a few times how to form the letter using a chalkboard, white board, or by tracing over the letter on the worksheet.
- **Numbered arrows:** Include numbered arrows that show correct letter formation, as these provide a good visual cue.
- **Self-Talk:**
  - Encourage repetitive talking out loud of directions of proper letter formation, i.e., self-talk of direction of movement (e.g., "L = Down and across").
  - Verbally model the self-talk and prompt the student to talk out loud, repeating the same self-talk phrase each time.
  - Using the same self-talk phrase (mnemonic) each time is important for best learning. (For examples, please see sample self-talk directions attached.)
- **Self-Evaluation:**
  - It is important for the student(s) to look at their work to evaluate how closely their letter formation matches the target letters.
  - Self-evaluation can also be in the form of circling their best-formed letter(s). Discuss with the student(s) why they chose these letters. Give specific feedback on the student's letter formation and choice of best-formed letters.
- **Practice:** Use a wide variety of writing tools
  - Pencil
  - Pencil crayons
  - Felt pens
  - Wipe off non-permanent thin tip markers if the worksheets are laminated.
- **Daily practice opportunities** for the student(s) to print their initials functionally in the classroom (i.e., at the top of a worksheet or on the back of artwork) will assist in generalization of learning.

## Tips:

- To make it easiest, print the worksheet set in “landscape” orientation rather than “portrait”.
- If a student requires added supports, **colour code** the start and stop dots (green and red) and highlight arrows with yellow highlighter to show proper direction of movement.
- As repeated practice will be necessary for students with handwriting challenges, it is recommended that the worksheets be reused by either **laminating** or using page protectors with overhead markers (water soluble and non-permanent; a damp paper towel is required for erasing). Overhead markers do not “bleed” and have a true feel of “pencil drag” when used. Thinner tips require more accuracy and are recommended for best accuracy in worksheet practice. Pencil grips, if needed, can be used with the thin tip overhead markers.
- To **track a student's progress**, at the end of each week or month, work can be scanned and saved digitally before it is erased.

## Printing Like a Pro! “Self-Talk” Directions for Letters

*The following are self-talk directions the student can say aloud while printing:*

						
Slide back • • slide down • across the middle	Down • little curve close • little curve close	Around • leave open	Down • big curve • close	Down • across the top • middle • bottom	Down • across the top • across the middle	Around • open • straight back
						
Down • down • across the middle	Down • across the top • across the bottom	Down • curve back • across the top	Down • • slide back • slide forward	Down • across the bottom	Down • • slide down • slide up • down	Down • • slide down • straight up
						
Around • close	Down • little curve • close	Around • close • slide down	Down • • curve close • slide down	Curve back • curve forward	Down • • across the top	Down • curve up
						
Slide down • slide up	Slide down • up • down • up	Slide down • • slide back	Short slide down • • short slide back • straight down	Across the top • slide back • across the bottom		