



## Fine Motor: 3- Sensory

### **Sensory processing needs**

Generally, we find students with difficulties in sensory processing, sensory awareness, and/or perceptual skills usually have handwriting problems. For example, a student with proprioceptive problems may hold the pencil too tight and push too hard while writing

### **Handwriting strategies physical strategies**

It is important for students to learn correct posture when writing. Chair height should be adjusted to fit the desk or table height. The table or desk should be at the student's chest level, and elbows should be able to rest comfortably on top. The student needs to have his or her back against the back of the chair and feet on the floor. Knees, hips, and ankles should be at a 90-degree angle. We have used exercise bands to provide some students with a sensory 'kick back' tool.



Bumpy /sloped cushions can be placed on some chairs.



Occasionally students were allowed to take turns sitting on a large therapy ball instead of a chair. These strategies address the theory that rocking and swaying are calming activities.

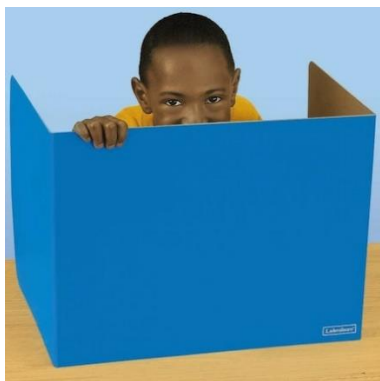
### Visual & Auditory distractions

In the schools we visit, we generally see very good classroom noise control, and students have the opportunity to learn to a calm/ quiet environment. However Primary/SEN hubs sometimes have a tendency to have a brightly coloured and visually stimulating rooms. For some of our students (with or without special needs), this can be overwhelming and distracting for a student who already struggles with writing.

A workstation, or an area where a student can move to while writing is often successful. In Secondary, talk to the student, they will often be able to suggest parts of the classroom where it is easier to concentrate or who not to sit next to who maybe distracting them (you may have to negotiate with Class Teachers who have a very rigid seating plan!)

#### Quick Fixes

A tri-fold piece of cardboard (or cardboard box) or laminated manila folder "study coral" or "privacy boards" can be put up to help a student focus



### Write while standing

Historically, when working with some students who have had a significant challenge handwriting, we have set up a high table at the side of the room and they allowed them to write standing up. This has been very successful, when all other traditional approaches have failed.

## Pencil grips



<https://www.tts-group.co.uk/essential-pencil-grip-kit>

## Writing slopes

These can be very helpful, especially with younger children who are less self-conscious. I would recommend that all schools have a slope board for students to trial. Older students can be self-conscious and prefer to use an A4 folder turned on its side or a clear slope. It is worth SEND departments, having a couple to trial with students before purchasing.

<https://www.zieler.co.uk/8-things-you-must-know-before-you-buy-a-writing-slope/>

## External stimulants

Relaxation music can be played in the background to help integrate the auditory system, and self-talk during writing practice was also used as an auditory system strategy. Research found that students trained with perceptual prompts and verbalisation of stroke sequence perform better than students who simply copy models.

Using scented markers while practicing may help students to remember the letter formation because the olfactory system has neuronal connections to the memory system. The students especially enjoyed the gustatory system activities. Research supports chewing and sucking activities as calming or organizational sensory activities.

Equipment that helps with proprioception are wrist weights, Wiggle Pens, and a weighted pencil holder. Some students needed help with their tripod grasp. Pencils were marked with dots to indicate where the fingers should be placed, or sometimes commercial pencil grippers were used. Balancing exercises were used to integrate the vestibular system. Some students find that using textured paper, which has raised lines, was helpful. It is ideal for helping students stay within the lines because it provides both visual and tactile cues.

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The screenshot shows the YouTube channel page for 'Redbridge Seats' with 59 subscribers. The page is set to the 'PLAYLISTS' tab. On the left, there is a navigation menu with options like Home, Explore, Subscriptions, Library, History, Your videos, Watch later, SEND strategies and..., Show more, SUBSCRIPTIONS (Music, Sport, Gaming, Movies & shows), and MORE FROM YOUTUBE (YouTube Premium, Movies & shows). The main content area displays 'Created playlists' with a grid of 15 playlist thumbnails. Each thumbnail includes a video preview, a title, a 'VIEW FULL PLAYLIST' link, and an update date. The playlists cover topics such as iPads, Speech and Language, Visual impairment, ASC/ ASD/ Autism/Social Communication, Medical needs, Hearing Impairment, Emotional support and Behaviour, Communication and Signing, Physical Disability, Sensory videos, and The Girl Player.



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We have a wide range of handwriting and motor skill advice videos on our website [www.redbridgeserc.org](http://www.redbridgeserc.org)