



# Handwriting Difficulty

## What is handwriting difficulty?

Handwriting is a complex process involving smaller skill sets associated with the sensory motor, visual perceptual and cognitive domains. If a child has a problem in learning any of these smaller skill sets, learning to write will be a slower and more difficult process than for his or her peers of the same age.



## What causes handwriting difficulty?

Several factors can contribute to handwriting difficulties in a child.

Some common ones include:

- Poor postural control and muscle tone
- Poor fine motor skills
- Poor bilateral integration (coordination of the left and right side of the brain and body)
- Poor visual perception and visual motor integration (eye-hand coordination)
- Poor visual functions or visual tracking (coordinated eye movements)
- Poor cognitive ability



## What are the common symptoms of handwriting difficulty?

- Poor posture when writing
- Inconsistent hand dominance
- Poor or awkward pencil grip
- Hard or light pencil pressure
- Difficulty with letter formation
- Difficulty with letter size and alignment
- Difficulty with letter and word spacing
- Letter reversals / Mirror writing
- Complaints of hand fatigue during writing
- Slow and effortful writing
- Untidy and illegible writing

Please note that some of the above signs are common in pre-schoolers when they first start to write. You may wish to seek clarification from an occupational therapist if you are unsure.

## Helping children with handwriting difficulty

Here are some fun activities you can engage your child in to develop his/her postural control, fine motor skills and interest in writing:

- Provide your child with different drawing materials (e.g. markers, chalk, colour pencils, crayons, paint) and surfaces (e.g. paper, vertical whiteboard or chalkboard, painting easel) to scribble and draw on. This can start from as young as 18 months.
- Have your child form and trace shapes or letters using his/her fingers in different textured materials (e.g. sand, play dough, shaving cream, paint, carpet, felt or flannel cloth).
- Engage in activities such as mazes, connect the dots, colouring, cutting or pasting craft activities.
- Play with blocks, beads, building bricks, pegs or any toys that involve manipulation of small parts.
- Use play dough to roll, knead, pinch, press with hands and fingers. You can also hide objects in the play dough for your child to find.
- Engage your child in play activities at the playground (e.g. climbing, swinging).
- Consider pushing and pulling games (e.g. tug of war).
- Pretend to walk like animals with both arms and legs with weight bearing on the ground.
- Consider games involving spatial concepts (e.g. have your child copy patterns with toy building blocks or bricks and play 'Simon Says').

## Additional resources on handwriting difficulty

- Help for parents <https://nha-handwriting.org.uk/handwriting/help-for-parents>
- Handwriting Without Tears <https://www.lwtears.com/resources/activity-booklets>

## NUH Child Development Unit

NUH Child Development Unit is part of the Khoo Teck Puat – National University Children's Medical Institute at National University Hospital. The clinic provides multidisciplinary assessments, therapy and holistic management of children with developmental & behavioural disorders from birth to 7 years old.



For health information and resources relating to child development, visit:

<https://www.nuh.com.sg/cdu-resources>

<https://www.nuh.com.sg/cdu>



# Notes

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## About the National University Centre for Women and Children

National University Centre for Women and Children (NUWoC) is a national university specialist centre that aims to empower women, children and their families to lead healthier lives. We provide comprehensive medical and surgical services ranging from pre-conception to child and maternal health.

NUWoC comprises the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology (O&G) and Khoo Teck Puat – National University Children’s Medical Institute (KTP-NUCMI) of National University Hospital. It focuses on the right-siting of appropriate services in the community and builds complementary services in National University Health System’s (NUHS) centres of excellence – Ng Teng Fong General Hospital and Alexandra Hospital.

Through a generous gift from the Estate of Khoo Teck Puat, KTP-NUCMI established an integrated outpatient facility with medical, diagnostic and rehabilitation services for children. We are also the only public specialist centre in Singapore that offers paediatric kidney and liver transplant programmes.

For more information about us, visit [www.nuh.com.sg/NUWoC](http://www.nuh.com.sg/NUWoC)

### Children’s Emergency (24-hr)

Location NUH Main Building, Zone F, Level 1  
Contact +65 6772 5000

### KTP-NUCMI

Location NUH Main Building, Zone E, Level 2  
(Accessible via Kent Ridge Wing, Zone C, Level 2, Lift Lobby C)  
Operating Hours 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri), 8.30am – 12.30pm (Sat)  
General Enquiry +65 6772 5736  
Appointment Line +65 6908 2222  
Email ktpnucci\_appt@nuhs.edu.sg

### 9a Viva-University Children’s Cancer Centre

Location NUH Medical Centre, Zone B, Level 9  
Operating Hours 8am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)  
Appointment Line +65 6772 5030  
Email cbccappt@nuhs.edu.sg

### NUH Children’s Urgent Care Clinic @ Bukit Panjang

Location Junction 10, #01-22  
Operating Hours 9am – 11pm daily (including public holidays)  
General Enquiry +65 6219 1538  
Email childreucc@nuhs.edu.sg

### NUH Child Development Unit @ JMC

Location Jurong Medical Centre, Level 2  
Operating Hours 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)  
Appointment Line +65 6665 2530 / 2531  
Email cdu@nuhs.edu.sg

### NUH Child Development Unit @ Keat Hong

Location Keat Hong Community Club, #03-01  
Operating Hours 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)  
Appointment Line +65 6769 4537/4637  
Email cdu@nuhs.edu.sg

### Clinic A22 NUWoC Children’s Clinic @ NTFGH

Location Ng Teng Fong General Hospital  
Tower A – NTFGH Clinics, Level 2  
Operating Hours 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)  
Appointment Line +65 6908 2222  
Email appointment@nuhs.edu.sg

## Our Patient Care Institutions

National University Hospital  
Ng Teng Fong General Hospital &  
Jurong Community Hospital  
Alexandra Hospital  
National University Polyclinics  
Jurong Medical Centre  
National University Cancer Institute, Singapore  
National University Heart Centre, Singapore  
National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore  
NUHS Diagnostics  
NUHS Pharmacy



Scan the QR code for more information on our patient care institutions.



Scan QR code for more information on NUWoC facilities.

OneNUHS Hotline: (65) 6908 2222  
OneNUHS General Enquiries: [contactus@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:contactus@nuhs.edu.sg)  
OneNUHS Appointments: [appointment@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:appointment@nuhs.edu.sg)  
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