Directionality

The English language is based on top to bottom and left to right orientation. It is the basis for both reading and writing. Directionality is the ability to identify the alignment or orientation of an object in relation to its position to another object. Understanding prepositions and directionality terms such as left, right, top, bottom, above, below, beside, under, around, over, between, through, and behind are essential in order to have good handwriting habits.

Activities to Build Directionality Skills

- Wooden Pieces activities (HWT Teacher's guide p. 23-29)
- Smiley faces in the top left corner of worksheets, door, furniture, etc.
- Have students move play objects from left to right. Draw green “go” and red “stop” signs and have the students draw horizontal lines between the two.
- Ask students to complete drawings in which horizontal left-to-right lines are missing.
- The Hokey-Pokey
- Simon Says
- Twister

Visual Perception

This term describes a child’s ability to use visual information to make meaning of what he sees. When learning letters a child must be able to recognize letters, recall what a letter looks like and discriminate between two familiar letters such as “b” and “p”.

Ideas to Build Perceptual Skills

- Check seating position and location first, inquire on vision status (many kids have glasses but don’t wear them)
- Grade activities from near point skills to far point – start with fill in the blank notes, next provide a set to copy on the students desk, later have student copy from board

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• Provide visual anchors on desk or paper:
  - colored line on desk
  - dark line on paper
  - put work on colored paper so there is a colored edge all around
• Writing on a slanted surface (3-ring binder) may help increase visual field
• Increase skills with the "I Spy" game
• Use different colors to see visual differences in writing strokes
• Any multisensory method to reinforce awareness of closure - tracing, sky writing, rhymes, highlighting
• Have minimal distractions on board and desk
• To practice & increase skills, ask student to retrieve objects for you ex: "get me the scissors on the top shelf by the games" and gradually get less specific with directions
• When writing on the chalkboard, help the child keep their place by writing each line in a different color chalk.
• Provide kinesthetic exercises such as writing on the chalkboard, walking exercises, finger-painting, and body in space.
• Provide tactile experiences such as sandpaper letters, form letters from playdough or pipe cleaners, or outline letters or words with glue, let dry, and then 'feel' the letter.
• Mark paper to show the child where to start and stop.
• Mark the child’s desk with left and right markers.
• Chalkboard practice should precede paper and pencil writing.
• Experiment with different writing tools to find the one that makes writing easier for the child.
• Have the child write on every other line. It’s easier for him/her to read and make corrections.
• Sometimes it’s easier for the child to write on paper with narrower lines rather than the wide-lined paper. Experiment.

• Crossword puzzles will develop language and spelling skills as well as provide an opportunity to practice writing in small places.
• Provide the child with letter and number charts to help him/her remember how to form symbols when writing.

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