HANDWRITING DEVELOPMENT

1. Neurological Development is Crucial
   a. Developmentally we need to make sure children have been given the opportunities to reach most developmental milestones necessary for writing words and sentences
      i. Before gripping a pencil correctly, can they:
         1. String beads
         2. manipulate playdough/clay correctly
         3. Lace cards
         4. Use appropriate grasp patterns to open/close containers and “pinch” open small items such as tweezers, clips, clothes pins
         5. Use scissors correctly to snip paper, cut lines and eventually cut Pictures
      ii. Before writing words and sentences can they:
         1. Draw straight lines (horizontal, vertical) = age 2.5 -3 years
         2. Draw single circles (not scribbling over and over in circular motion) = age 3
         3. Draw simple shapes:
            a. circle (3 years)
            b. cross (3.5 years)
            c. square (4 years)
            d. triangle (5 years)
            e. diamond (6 years)

            i. Note: forming diagonal lines are an important developmental milestone (crossing the midline). Without crossing the midline appropriately letters like: A, M, N, R, V, W, X, Y, Z will never be formed correctly
      4. Discriminate between left, right, up and down (always starting at the left and top of letters, drawings, and other art projects)
      5. Cross the midline:
         a. Draw + age appropriately
         b. Skipping
         c. Shoe tying
      6. Isolate wrist movement from arm/shoulder movement
         a. Have them lie on tummies and use elbows for support while coloring/drawing
         b. Practice drawing shapes and letters on dry erase boards – writing in a vertical plane rather than horizontal plane increases wrist movement
      7. Sit appropriately at desk/table
a. Make sure they are able to sit on bottoms and have feet flat on floor when sitting at desk and tables.

8. Are they using age appropriate grasp?
   a. Use shorter crayons & pencils – this way they have less room for extra fingers

Items Used in Fine Motor kits:
Small Pop Beads
Green theraputty
Tongs/Strawberry huller
Clothes Pins
Lacing Cord
Wooden ornaments to place clothespins on/any cardboard
Alphabet wooden beads for stringing
Nuts/bolts
http://www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com/pencil-grasp-development.html
http://www.therapystreetforkids.com/PreWritingSkills.html
http://www2.ccsd.ws/k4/ot/handwriting_activities.htm