

## Handwriting Made Easy

Teaching a child to print starts earlier than Kindergarten. Remember the days of sitting at the kitchen table with your crayons and favorite coloring book? It seems with all the latest technology, our children lose some of the necessities needed to accomplish basic classroom skills. One of the simplest things we can do for our children is to limit video game time and computer time. These activities use both hands. Children today need more activities that encourage using one hand versus both, like coloring and printing.

Coloring is a foundation for learning to print. Holding the crayon, staying in the lines, even understanding simple concepts like starting and stopping. All of this requires your child to practice using his or her dominant hand. The more practice your child gets using their dominant hand the more successful they can be at printing in the classroom. Printing is the foundation for learning to read. Video and computer games do not let your child develop a preference for the hand that will guide them in learning to print their names.

To help engage in activities that promote school readiness, I have made up a pre-printing/printing kit. This can be a special project for you and your child to do together. With adjustments along the way, this kit will take your child from Pre-K through 4<sup>th</sup> grade! Also included with the basic crayons and pencils are other items, ideas and activities for your child to enjoy. All of which will encourage fine motor development, not just for printing in the classroom, but also for buttoning buttons, using scissors, gluing and even being able to zip their own jackets!

- 1 Shoebox or similar container with lid
- 1 Package of Crayons, start with the 8 count
- 1 coloring book, let your child pick his or her own favorite theme
- 1 package of pipe cleaners, let your child form shapes, letter and numbers
- Silly putty, it can be rolled and twisted and still can be pressed into the Sunday funnies and make a picture☺ Great for making little fingers strong!
- Sidewalk chalk let your child make their mark on the world early!
  
- Scissors, pick ones that are designed for either left or right handed use, child size provides extra control. Safety tips are important to, still no running with those scissors!
- Glue sticks, I like the ones that have color. Your child has a good visual of where they need to put the glue and how much to use. Plus it dries clear.
- Crayola has a dry erase book of letters and numbers.
- Pencils of course!
- A big eraser, as your child practices their printing they will start to self correct. As they get older this is a must have technique so they can monitor their own work.

One of the best things about this kit is that all the items were purchased at the local Dollar Stores, even the Crayloa dry erase board! As your child grows change the items in their kits. You can add colored markers, colored pencils, both come in erasable. Grade

appropriate "travel books" fit nicely and are filled with mazes word searches puzzles and "how to draw" pictures. When your child starts to bring projects home, map's to color, time lines to fill in, posters to draw they will be all set!

So, the next time the kids are bored, or you feel they've had enough video games and T.V. get out the kit you made together, it's full of ideas to enhance your child's development for school, and with these essentials Handwriting is Made Easy!

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