

It is, therefore, not surprising that many children experience difficulty in mastering this task (Beery 1989)

A child will be ready for formal instruction in handwriting, when they manage to master the first 8 figures of The Test of Development of Visual Motor Integration (VMI)

The 8 figures are:

| _ O +
/ □ X Δ



Writing speed

1. Speed in handwriting is related to age – the rate of greatest increase being between 7 – 9 years.
2. Children reach adult levels of speed at about 15 years.
3. At the age of 13, students should write at 13 words per minutes.
4. At the age of 15 – 16 'O' level students should write at about 20 words per minute.
5. There are two reasons for slow writing speed:
 - i. Children with poor mechanics for writing are deterred even further when needing to integrate spelling and composing into the process.
 - ii. Children with poor handwriting usually have an unstable motor set and are unable to write automatically and with flexibility.

Endurance

Endurance is necessary in exam situations or for recording information in a classroom environment. Poor hand writers frequently cannot sustain the legibility of their writing as the length of their assignment/task increases, often causing pain or discomfort in their hands/forearms.

As the student tires, letter sizes may become smaller, writing more laboured and letters and words omitted.

If mastery of correct letter formation does not occur during primary years the speed of writing will be affected. The outcome of decreased speed could therefore affect an individual's ability to record enough information required during an exam situation.

The following activities will assist your child to develop the underlying skill areas that influence handwriting:

Pre-handwriting activities

- The child completes activities lying on their tummy and weight bearing through elbows e.g.