

# Six strategies to help students master cursive writing

Teaching cursive handwriting is unlike most other skills you'll introduce to young students. It requires a combination of cognitive and motor skills, as well as diligence and stamina. Use these six strategies to help guide students toward cursive mastery.

## 1. BUILD FINE MOTOR SKILLS IN EARLY GRADES

Developing the skills needed to master cursive can begin well before formal instruction. In pre-K and early elementary grades, lean into play-based skill-building activities such as manipulating Play-Doh and building with Legos. Introduce prewriting skills early, like learning how to hold pencils correctly.

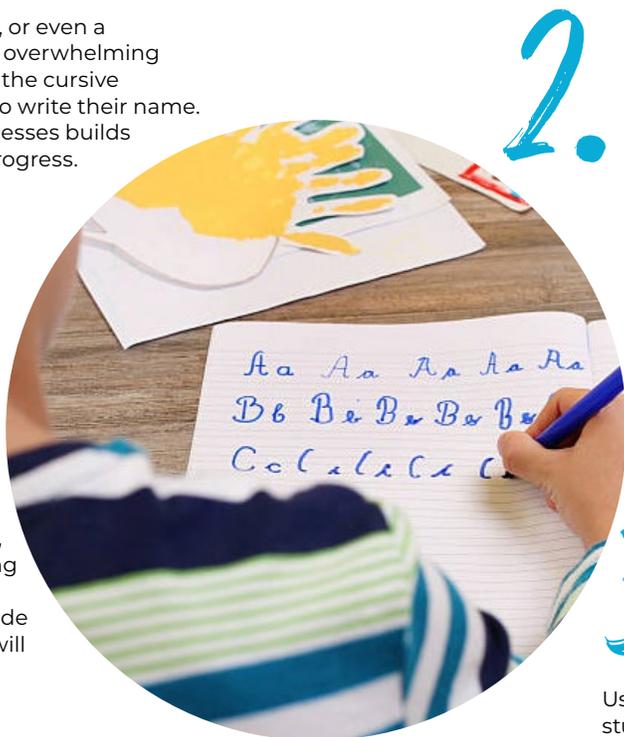
## 2. CELEBRATE SMALL MILESTONES

Writing an entire paragraph, or even a sentence, in cursive can feel overwhelming at first. Once students learn the cursive alphabet, encourage them to write their name. Celebrating these early successes builds motivation and reinforces progress.

## 3. WAIT UNTIL STUDENTS MASTER FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

Students typically develop the hand-eye coordination and muscle control needed to learn cursive handwriting by around 3rd grade, experts say. Introducing formal cursive instruction too early may frustrate students who are still building foundational skills.

Cursive handwriting's loopy, continuous movements will be new to students. Mastering the skill requires concentration, diligence, and strong preexisting fine motor skills. Your patience and encouragement as you guide students through the process will maximize success.



## 4. RECOGNIZE THAT MASTERY TAKES TIME

Regular practice builds muscle memory. Once students are ready, experts recommend practicing cursive daily. Keeping sessions short—about 10 to 15 minutes—minimizes fatigue and potential frustration.

## 5. MAKE IT MULTI-SENSORY

Using a multi-sensory approach can help students learn cursive's loopy, continuous strokes. Try these ideas:

- Encourage students to practice forming cursive letters by using broad arm strokes in the air.
- Have them say the letter aloud while writing it.
- Let them trace or write letters in shaving cream or other textured materials.

These approaches engage multiple senses and help reinforce muscle memory.