

The Whistle Stop



About Language Express

Language Express provides speech and language assessment and therapy services for young children in Lanark, Leeds, and Grenville counties. Services are free and are available from birth until the end of Junior Kindergarten. Don't wait and see! We can help your child and provide helpful ideas for you and your child's caregivers or teachers.

When To Get Help:

- If your child is not meeting all of the communication milestones for his or her age. Check the milestones at www.language-express.ca.
- If your child is stuttering.
- If your child's play or social interaction seems different from other children his or her age.
- If your child's voice doesn't sound right.
- If your child has a diagnosis such as hearing loss, Autism Spectrum Disorder, or developmental delay.

Language Express accepts referrals for children from birth until November 30 of the year they turn 4. **For example, children born in 2015 must be referred by Nov. 30, 2019.**

Call us for more information or to make a referral

1-888-503-8885

Learning to Write

We all know we should read with our children, but did you know that writing is just as important? Preschoolers, toddlers, and even babies are developing the skills they need to be ready to learn to write, and parents and early learning professionals can help. Writing is a complex process that requires a number of skills that have to be taught and practiced.

These include:

- knowing letter names and letter sounds
- understanding the rules of print such as going from left to right
- developing motor skills, including pencil grip and letter formation
- vocabulary knowledge

Children learn to print following the stages below. It's good to show children models of "adult" printing ("This is how I write your name") and also models of printing that's one stage up from where your child is now ("Some children who are still learning print your name like this").

1. Pre-conventional

- Scribble
- Mock Letters
- Random Letter Strings

2. Semi-phonetic

3. Phonetic

4. Transitional

5. Conventional

Adapted from a Nov. 2015 presentation by Lucy Hart Paulson: "Learning My ABCs and Writing Them, Too! Research-Based Alphabet and Writing Instruction for Young Children" at the Niagara Literacy Conference.

Why bother with teaching handwriting in a digital age?

Handwriting is directly related to:

- letter recognition
- reading comprehension
- sound-letter association
- spelling
- printing ability
- oral language
- phonological processing [breaking words up into sounds]
- grammatical ability
- attention
- visual-motor skills



(Feder & Majnemer, 2007; Kim et al., 2013; Puranik & Al Otaiba, 2012)

	Try this	For example
<p>Infants</p> 	<p>Create opportunities for your child to use his fingers to make interesting marks and scribbles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yogurt or applesauce on a highchair tray • “draw” by making marks in playdough, sand, carpet pile • try finger paints while your child sits in an empty bathtub – easy to clean up!
<p>Toddlers</p> 	<p>Help your toddler learn that making marks on a page has meaning that others understand. Give her plenty of engaging materials to use for drawing and scribbling. Talk with her about what she is doing. Make your own marks and explain that some of the marks are letters that say something.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • water or chalk on a sidewalk or fence • a stick to make marks in sand or snow • pencils, crayons, markers • painting with sticks, feathers, cotton swabs, toy cars, etc.
<p>Preschoolers</p> 	<p>Help your preschooler to understand the difference between writing and drawing, and to write his name and some letters. Encourage him to use invented spelling using whatever letters or symbols he can. It works best when an adult helps the child “sound out” words and shows interest in the child’s attempts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a variety of writing materials • give your child lots of chances to observe and help you with writing: making a grocery list, signing a card, leaving a note for someone, dictating a story for you to write for him • remind him to spell words the way they sound, rather than spelling them for him. This teaches him to listen for the sounds in words.

Adapted from CELLpractices, Center for Early Literacy Learning (CELL), Copyright © 2010 by the Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute, Asheville, North Carolina.