

# Chalkboard Fun

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## Presentation Overview

Objectives:

- 1) Review the developmental prerequisites of handwriting
- 2) Understand why the chalkboard can be an effective tool to build handwriting readiness
- 3) Learn 10 fun chalkboard activities

If you remember just one thing by the end of this presentation, remember this:  
*Handwriting readiness can be achieved without paper, pencils or workbooks.*

Introduction: Think of a Child You Know Who Struggles with Handwriting

What are the Developmental Prerequisites for Functional Handwriting?

Why is the Chalkboard an Effective Handwriting Readiness Tool?

What Materials Do You Need for Chalkboard Activities?

What are 10 Chalkboard Activities to Use at Home or School?

Conclusion

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## Introduction: Think of Child You Know Who Struggles with Handwriting

### Demonstration of a “Worse Case Scenario”

- € What is missing?
- € Multiple brain processes and skills must integrate on an automatic level
- € Learn to be a handwriting “Crime Scene Investigator”

## What are the Developmental Prerequisites for Functional Handwriting?

Postural Control and Proximal Stability

Bilateral Integration

Midline Orientation

Functional Wrist Position

Functional Prehension and In-Hand Manipulation Patterns

Visual-Perceptual-Motor Integration

Spatial Awareness and Analysis

Motor Planning and Motor Memory

Endurance

*And don't forget about the link between writing and...*

...reading and spelling:

- € Phonemic Awareness
- € Sound-to-Symbol Relations (Orthographic Coding)
- € Reading Fluency
- € Spelling
- € Grammar and Composition
- € Attention and Focus
- € Motivation
- € Intensity, frequency and duration of systematic instruction
- € Writing Fluency

Problems result from introducing handwriting too early because:

- € weak trunk control
- € body awareness and spatial concepts emerging
- € hands not ready for writing tools
- € phonemic awareness and sound-to-symbol relationships emerging
- € instruction may be inconsistent, leading to poor habits

We must build handwriting readiness before habits are ingrained.

- € weight bearing, crawling, pushing, pulling, climbing, rolling, jumping, squeezing, twisting, pinching, poking
- € body scheme and spatial concepts
- € hand skill development – little tools for little hands
- € phonemic awareness and sound-to-symbol relationships
- € practice pre-writing strokes through fun, multisensory *drawing* activities

*In other words, we can build handwriting readiness without paper, pencils or workbooks.*

## Why is the Chalkboard an Effective Handwriting Readiness Tool?

The chalkboard is a *vertical* work surface.

- € The child stands in a weight bearing position of full body extension
- € Pushing against resistance gives feedback about body position
- € The body is parallel to the writing surface so, “up is up”
- € The vertical work surface promotes a functional wrist position

Chalkboard activities build *sensorimotor* skills.

- € Can target postural control, stability, midline orientation, and visual motor coordination, spatial awareness and analysis, motor planning and motor memory
- € Promotes overall strength and endurance

Chalkboard activities facilitate functional *grasping* patterns.

- € Wrist extension helps the child transition to a mature grasp
- € A variety of chalkboard tools can be used to teach correct grasp
- € Using small pieces of chalk can strengthen fingers
- € The child can “feel” a functional grasping pattern during a chalkboard warm-up to facilitate a correct pencil grasp during a seated writing activity

The chalkboard offers *novel, multisensory* learning experiences.

- € Can easily incorporate fun tools to provide sensory input
- € Offers a novel and engaging way to work with children who are frustrated by paper and pencil activities

The chalkboard provides opportunities for *demonstration and observation*.

- € Can demonstrate pre-writing stroke formation before introducing letters
- € Can observe children to assess writing readiness

The chalkboard is easy to use in many settings.

- € Unobtrusive in educational settings
- € Readily available (what about white boards?)
- € Set-up an activity center
- € Use as a rotation for inclusion
- € Provide a position change to help modulate attending
- € Use as a warm-up before a demanding visual motor task
- € Give opportunities for extra practice
- € Utilize skills of instructional assistants
- € Great for home activities (permission to write on the wall!)

### What Materials do I Need for Chalkboard Activities?

Chalkboard

Chalk

Sponge Sticks

Sponge Brush

Spray Bottle

Erasers and Sponges

Wrist Weights

Other Fun Tools

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## What are 10 Chalkboard Activities to Use at Home or School?

1. Warm-up Patterns

2. Tangle Maker

3. Paint On a Cloud

4. Fire Fighters

5. Spray and Wash

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6. Guessing Game

7. The Rainbow

8. Snowflakes in Windows

9. Diamond Mine

10. Follow the Leader Cursive