

**Foundations for Handwriting:** The skills students need to be successful with handwriting.

**1. Strength and Stability-Proximal to Distal:**

In order for us to develop control over the smaller muscles of the hand we must have support or control in our trunk, and in all of the other joints leading up to the hand. The hand itself needs adequate strength to hold on to a writing utensil and isolate control in individual muscles.

**2. Fine Motor Coordination:**

- Finger isolation: Separating finger movements from the rest of the arm. Separating finger and thumb movements from each other.
- Accuracy of movement: Limited control: (accuracy of movement) starting and stopping, adjusting size and space, drawing straight and curved lines in different directions.
- Bilateral Coordination: Using both hands together such as; using non dominant hand to assist, holding and turning paper when cutting, tying shoes, buttoning, zipping, stringing beads, stabilizing paper when coloring.
- Lateralization: Developing hand dominance. Age varies but if not established in kindergarten we should have a systematic observation in place to collect data to see what hand may be emerging. What hand does the student use to pick up pencil, scissors, spoon, food? Student may benefit from more bilateral activities.

**3. Visual -Motor Perception:**

Some components of visual motor perception are; visual tracking which is being able to move eyes in a controlled manner. Visual spatial awareness is awareness of directionality (how close objects are, up/down/left/right etc.) Visual memory is the ability to remember for immediate recall characteristics of a form. If difficulties are apparent in this area; screen for visual acuity, screen for visual tracking in horizontal, vertical and diagonal planes, screen for near and far (convergence). possibly refer to an eye doctor, possibly refer for perceptual testing.

**4. Cognition:**

Concepts needed for handwriting are; directionality concepts such as up, down, top, bottom, around, on, left, right, etc. The ability to sustain attention for learning activity. The desire or need for written communication.

*(developed from power point presentation from Steve Maddox, Kelly Sadowski, Suzanne Toner, Nancy Hitchcock- HDESD OTs.)*