 Handwriting

Kentucky isn’t alone in looking to add cursive to state education standards. At least 15 states require students to learn cursive currently in addition to the Common Core handwriting standards, which only require printing for grades K-5. A study by Dr. William Klemm is often cited as showing the importance of cursive to brain development. According to the study, there seems to be a similar effect in brain development and activity when a student learns cursive as when they learn a musical instrument. With “cursive writing, compared to printing . . . the movement tasks are more demanding, the letters are less stereotypical and the visual-recognition requirements create a broader repertoire of letter representation.”

*2018 Children and Technology in Action-The Kloiber Foundation*

**Instruction of Individual Letters:**

* “Effective teaching involves
1. verbal descriptions and verbal coaching and
2. showing model letters with number arrows indicating the sequence of strokes.”
* Naming the guidelines is also helpful. LETRS recommend using the following:

Top line–“hat line”

Middle line–“belt line”

Bottom line–“foot line”

LETRS Volume 1, page 191

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Auditory**
* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Proprioceptive**

**Multi-Sensory Raised Ruled Paper**

* Raised Rule or “bumpy” paper
* Pencil will “bump” the lines as kids write.
* Purchase multi-sensory handwriting paper.[Amazon.com : Pacon Multi-Sensory Raised Ruled Paper, Sheets, Film-Wrapped, 5/8" x 5/16" x 5/16" Ruled 11" x 8-1/2", Ruled Long, 100 Sheets : Paper Racks And Stands : Office Products](https://www.amazon.com/Pacon-Multi-Sensory-Raised-Ruled-Sheets/dp/B007AH77PM)
* Make your own with glue (regular or glitter) or puffy paint. Apply glue/paint and allow to dry on top and bottom.

[Bold\_Line\_Paper\_Understood.pdf (ctfassets.net)](https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048i0q/2HMXgXyKbZlW2L9OklueE4/ec82111c34c5cebb300fa3f7820e0d13/Bold_Line_Paper_Understood.pdf)

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Proprioceptive**

**Trace/Mazes**

Trace and do mazes-develops fine motor skills

 [Shapes\_and\_Mazes\_for\_Tracing\_Understood.pdf (ctfassets.net)](https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048i0q/39rFEmvTJltIixsMiVSgYn/6b91a1ca270deb70f04ad59f0584b1dc/Shapes_and_Mazes_for_Tracing_Understood.pdf)

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Proprioceptive**

**Tracing of Letters/Words**

**Templates:**

* Make your own using Word’s Text Effects & Typography feature (found under Home) and certain fonts
* **Aharoni**
* **Century Gothic**
* Online: Create Printables has several free options to print without downloading. Total number of downloads are limited. The website will ask the user to upgrade to Premium. The following were free at the time this resource was created:

 [CreatePrintables - Alphabet Look Trace Copy](https://www.createprintables.com/alphabet-look-trace-copy/) (Alphabet Look Trace Copy)

 [CreatePrintables - Name Tracing Practice - Original](https://www.createprintables.com/name-tracing-worksheet-practice/) (Name generator)

 [CreatePrintables - Word Tracing Practice - Original](https://www.createprintables.com/word-tracing-practice-worksheet/) (Word Tracing Practice)

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Auditory**
* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Proprioceptive**

**Wet-Dry-Try**

Will need a chalkboard, sponge cut into small cubes, and a piece of chalk.

* Wet a sponge cube and squeeze it as to not drip.
* Write a letter on the slate as a model.
* Student writes the letter using the wet sponge.
* Student traces it with a dry sponge.
* Student writes the letter using chalk.
* Student says the letter
* There is an app [**Wet-Dry-Try**](https://www.lwtears.com/hwt/wet-dry-try) but it does cost with ratings of 2.5/5.0.

 [6 Multisensory Techniques for Teaching Handwriting | Understood](https://www.understood.org/en/articles/6-multisensory-techniques-for-teaching-handwriting)

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Auditory**
* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Proprioceptive**

**Sensory Freezer Bag Writing**

* Place enough hair gel in a freezer bag to make a bag about ¼” deep when flattened out and zipped tight.
* Use a finger or eraser end of pencil to practice writing letter/word.
* Say letter/word

Hair gel will provide resistance. Can place in fridge to provide tactile feel of cold.

 [6 Multisensory Techniques for Teaching Handwriting | Understood](https://www.understood.org/en/articles/6-multisensory-techniques-for-teaching-handwriting)

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Auditory**
* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Proprioceptive**

**SpaceKid**

* Prompt students to appropriately space words.
* Space Kid is a picture of an astronaut that can be glued to the pencil and used as a reminder to make space between words.
* Make “SpaceKid” from download
* Make “SpaceKid” without download with plastic spoon or tongue depressor (can purchase flavored tongue depressor for scent).
* **Most simple method is to use the eraser of a pencil.**

[Printable Handwriting Tools | Understood](https://www.understood.org/en/articles/download-tools-to-help-with-handwriting)

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Auditory**
* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Olfactory**
* **Proprioceptive**

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**Kagan’s Kinesthetic Symbols for Punctuation**

* Pair these symbols with punctuation during writing instruction
* Period—Fist
* Colon—Two fist, one above the other
* Comma—Hand curved in shape of letter C
* Semicolon—Fist above + hand curved below
* Exclamation Point—Fist below elbow of raised forearm

Brain-Friendly Teaching Tools. Tips, & Structures by Dr. Spence Kagan

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Auditory**
* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Olfactory**
* **Proprioceptive**

**Smell/Texture to Paint/Glue**

Combines visual and tactile methods, while adding a little smell into the mix.

* Student will use paint and paintbrushes to form letters/words/numbers on construction paper.
* While the paint is still wet, student can sprinkle something smelly to make for a fun and memorable learning experience.

**Possible sprinkles:** cinnamon, garlic, or onion powder.

* After using paint, student will use liquid school glue and form letters by squeezing the bottle using the correct strokes for each letter. Before the glue dries, sprinkle materials of varying textures.

**Possible textures:** coffee grounds, glitter, or sea salt.

* Say letter/word/number.

[10 Effective Multisensory Writing Activities for Kids | Article (kidsacademy.mobi)](https://www.kidsacademy.mobi/storytime/multisensory-writing-activities/#:~:text=Simple%20Yet%20Effective%20Multisensory%20Writing%20Activities%20and%20Techniques,Draw%20it%20on%20Your%20Back%21%20...%20More%20items)

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Auditory**
* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Olfactory**
* **Proprioceptive**

**Plastic Canvas/Red Crayon**

* Provide a plastic canvas. These can be found in needle/yarn section of department store.
* Provide letter/word representation printed on paper.
* Using a crayon, trace the letter/word with the paper placed on top of the plastic canvas. Remove canvas.
* Instruct students to trace the “bumpy” “waxy” crayon path while saying the letter/word.

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Auditory**
* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Proprioceptive**
* **Olfactory**

**Sky, Grass, Ground**

Hand positions for students that have trouble making letters the correct size. The hand positions are to help students remember where the letters are in relation to the lines on the paper.

* Sky-Thumb up for tall letters such as /b/. The line extends upwards beyond the center line.
* Grass- Fist for small letters such as /o/. The small /o/ stays within the boundary of the bottom line and the center line.
* Ground-Thumb down for descending letters such as /y/. The /y/ has a line that drops below the bottom line.

[Printable Handwriting Tools | Understood](https://www.understood.org/en/articles/download-tools-to-help-with-handwriting)

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Proprioceptive**

**Writing Trays**

* Utilize a shallow baking tray (can be disposable) and fill it with textured materials. **Possible texture materials:** cornstarch, sugar, cornmeal, flour, shaving cream, baby powder dry rice, salt, etc. Can add spices to dry materials for scent.
* Provide a visual prompt underneath the texture. A letter/word printed out.
* The student follows the lines of the letter/word removing textures to reveal the letter/word
* Have the student state letter/word when finished.

[10 Effective Multisensory Writing Activities for Kids | Article (kidsacademy.mobi)](https://www.kidsacademy.mobi/storytime/multisensory-writing-activities/#:~:text=Simple%20Yet%20Effective%20Multisensory%20Writing%20Activities%20and%20Techniques,Draw%20it%20on%20Your%20Back%21%20...%20More%20items)

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Auditory**
* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Olfactory**
* **Proprioceptive**

**Writing on Back**

* Divide students into groups
* Have one student write a letter/word on the back of another student.
* Have the student guess the letter or word.

[10 Effective Multisensory Writing Activities for Kids | Article (kidsacademy.mobi)](https://www.kidsacademy.mobi/storytime/multisensory-writing-activities/#:~:text=Simple%20Yet%20Effective%20Multisensory%20Writing%20Activities%20and%20Techniques,Draw%20it%20on%20Your%20Back%21%20...%20More%20items)

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Auditory**
* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Proprioceptive**

**Bubble Wrap Letter Pop**

* Draw letters on bubble wrap with a permanent marker.
* Instruct student to follow proper handwriting strokes when popping the bubbles.
* Have student state letter/word when finished.

[10 Effective Multisensory Writing Activities for Kids | Article (kidsacademy.mobi)](https://www.kidsacademy.mobi/storytime/multisensory-writing-activities/#:~:text=Simple%20Yet%20Effective%20Multisensory%20Writing%20Activities%20and%20Techniques,Draw%20it%20on%20Your%20Back%21%20...%20More%20items)

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Auditory**
* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Proprioceptive**

 **Playdough Fun**

* Provide scented playdough (can add scent to unscented playdough).
* Provide visual letter or word prompts.
* Instruct students to form letters or word.
* Use hands to roll or use playdough letter tools/cookie cutters. Can provide visual representation of letter/word on which the student forms the playdough.
* Instruct students to follow proper handwriting to make the letter/word.
* Have student state letter/word when finished.

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Auditory**
* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Olfactory**
* **Proprioceptive**

**Non-Hardening Modeling Clay**

* Place non-hardening modeling clay into a tray.
* Provide visual representation of letter or word prompts.
* Allow students to use their fingers or short objects such as a pencil to write target prompt in the clay.

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Auditory**
* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Proprioceptive**
* **Olfactory**

**Chalk Letter/Word**

* Draw an oversized letter/word on the sidewalk with chalk using large strokes. Have a student walk the letter using the correct direction. Student will state the letter/word when completed.

Options:

* Have classmates line the letter on each side and have student go through the students.
* Have several letters/words written on sidewalk. Call out target letter/word and have student choose the correct letter/word to walk.

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Auditory**
* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Proprioceptive**
* **Vestibular**

**Sandpaper Letters**

* Provide sandpaper letters
* Instruct student to trace the letter with their finger in the proper handwriting motion.
* Have student state letter when finished.

**Sandpaper letters on Amazon:** [Amazon.com: sky new Montessori Sandpaper Letters Toys for Toddlers Small & Capital 2pc Wooden Box Set Early Childhood Education Material : Toys & Games](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01LDBJF1E/ref%3Dsspa_dk_detail_1?psc=1&pd_rd_i=B01LDBJF1E&pd_rd_w=VaHTC&content-id=amzn1.sym.88097cb9-5064-44ef-891b-abfacbc1c44b&pf_rd_p=88097cb9-5064-44ef-891b-abfacbc1c44b&pf_rd_r=PWJ5EM0C8PJMVGE0GDFG&pd_rd_wg=8ychj&pd_rd_r=5b8bfd78-0e88-4de3-84a6-a165caae05c3&s=toys-and-games&sp_csd=d2lkZ2V0TmFtZT1zcF9kZXRhaWw&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUExNVRWMktBSzFVTDBXJmVuY3J5cHRlZElkPUEwNTQ4ODIzMThOUUM3UkRQQUVITSZlbmNyeXB0ZWRBZElkPUEwMDUxMTczM0tWVDJQUkkzVVBXJndpZGdldE5hbWU9c3BfZGV0YWlsJmFjdGlvbj1jbGlja1JlZGlyZWN0JmRvTm90TG9nQ2xpY2s9dHJ1ZQ==)

**Sandpaper letters DIY** [DIY Montessori Sandpaper Cards for the Alphabet - Royal Baloo](https://royalbaloo.com/montessori-sandpaper-cards-diy/)

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Auditory**
* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Proprioceptive**

**Sky Writing/Air Letters**

* Students will make letters with extended arm while standing.

[Alphabet Songs - Learning to Write Letters to Music - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEnAOqVNZuY)

[Learn ABC Letters for Children | ABC Tracing and ABC Song with A for Apple - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJc-owH4goU)

[Advance your Cursive Writing with Letterschool! - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CC5LNdLI00U)

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Auditory**
* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Proprioceptive**
* **Vestibular**

**Puffy Letters**

* Provide puffy letters
* Instruct student to trace the letter with the proper handwriting motion.
* Have student state letter when finished.

**DYI puffy paint letters:**

* Cut cardstock into 4x4 pieces
* Write each letter on a piece
* Trace each letter with puffy paint (can purchase or DYI-recipe below). Some schools of thought such as Montessori keep vowels red and the consonants blue.

 **Base recipe for puffy paint**

* 1 cup flour
* 1 cup salt
* 1/2-3/4 cup water

[Homemade Puffy Paint with 3 Simple Ingredients ~ Learn Play Imagine](http://www.learnplayimagine.com/2012/10/homemade-puffy-paint-with-3-simple.html)

Mix the ingredients until you have the desired consistency. We don't like it too watery, or it gets the paper wet and dries flat. If it is too thick it won't fit through the opening of a squeeze bottle. Mix it well then separate it according to the number of colors you plan to make. Color can be added with food coloring, liquid water colorings, tempura, or powdered paint.  Food coloring is the safest so students can safely play with the puffy paint. Spoon the colored paint into squeeze bottles.

[DIY Montessori Inspired Sensory Letters ~ Learn Play Imagine](http://www.learnplayimagine.com/2012/10/diy-montessori-inspired-sensory-letters.html)

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Auditory**
* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Proprioceptive**

**Wet Spaghetti**

To make wet spaghetti do the following:

* Cook a packet of spaghetti like you would if you were to planning to eat it.
* Rinse the spaghetti under cold water to remove the additional starch.
* Let the spaghetti cool down enough for you to touch it.
* Separate the spaghetti into different zip lock bags.
* Add a few drops of food coloring and oil to each zip lock bag.
* Mix the food coloring so the spaghetti is fully colored. You may need to add a few more drops of food coloring.
* Add scented extract to it.
* Leave the colored spaghetti in the bag for about 10-15 minutes so the dye can dry.
* If you have too much food coloring, you can rinse the spaghetti under some cold water to remove the excess.
* Provide visual letter or word prompts or use a template.
* Instruct students to form letters or words using spaghetti.
* Instruct students to follow motion for proper handwriting to make the letter/word.
* Have students state letter/word when finished.

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Auditory**
* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Olfactory**
* **Proprioceptive**
* **Vestibular**

**Pipe Cleaners/Wikki Stix**

* Provide pipe cleaners or Wikki Stix
* Provide visual letter or word prompts or use a template.
* Instruct student to form letter or word using pipe cleaner/Wikki Stix.
* Instruct student to follow proper handwriting to make the letter/word.
* Have student state letter/word when finished.

**Options cheaper than Wikki Stix:** Bendaroos and Monkey String (found on Amazon).

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Auditory**
* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Proprioceptive**

**Writing in Sand or Dirt**

* Head outside and get down in the dirt to form letters/words in the dirt or sandbox!
* Encourage student to use fingers or a large stick to practice writing strokes.
* Be creative-use different sizes or shapes of sticks, or even use stones or tools to form different letters/words.
* Say the letters/word when writing. If student is tactilely sensitive, consider using an object to write.

 [10 Effective Multisensory Writing Activities for Kids | Article (kidsacademy.mobi)](https://www.kidsacademy.mobi/storytime/multisensory-writing-activities/#:~:text=Simple%20Yet%20Effective%20Multisensory%20Writing%20Activities%20and%20Techniques,Draw%20it%20on%20Your%20Back%21%20...%20More%20items)

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Auditory**
* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Proprioceptive**

**Make Letter with Body**

* Divide the student into groups of 2-3.
* Write the letter on the board.
* State the letter the students are to make with their bodies.
* Think ahead of each letter to think how many children you need to make the letter. For example, the letter ‘c’ can be made by one child’s body. Whereas the letter ‘g’ may require 2-3 children.
* Let students be creative. Some will make the letter lying down and some will make the letter standing up.

[9 Multisensory Activities For Sensory Handwriting: Easy To Setup (2022) (readykids.com.au)](https://readykids.com.au/sensory-handwriting/)

**Addresses the following senses:**

* **Auditory**
* **Tactile**
* **Visual**
* **Proprioceptive**
* **Vestibular**

**Free Handwriting Apps:**

* Writing Wizard Rating <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/writing-wizard-handwriting/id1305242235>
* 123s ABCs Preschool Learn HWOTP Kids Handwriting <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/123s-abcs-preschool-learn-hwotp-kids-handwriting/id1022503802>