



# Family and Tutor Toolkit: Identifying and Supporting Dysgraphia

RIDE Literacy Learning Lab for Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, and Dyscalculia  
To access the full recording with Dr. Margie Gillis,  
titled Dysgraphia 101, [click here](#).

All resources from this session can be found on the Learning Lab website.

## Caregiver Tips for Success

- **Keep it playful and low pressure:** Use games, movement, and sensory activities like sand, clay, or shaving cream to make writing fun.
- **Build body strength:** Hands-on activities and movement help develop the muscles needed for writing.
- **Say it first:** Encourage your child to speak or record ideas before writing to reduce frustration.
- **Break tasks down:** Split writing into smaller steps or sections to make it manageable.
- **Model and practice:** Show correct letter formation and practice together, giving gentle, immediate feedback.
- **Set up a supportive space:** Use wide-ruled or dark-lined paper and allow extra time to write.
- **Coordinate with school:** Ask teachers which letters or skills are being taught and how you can support them at home.

# How can I support students with dysgraphia at home?

Read these family-friendly exercises, synthesized from [Understood.org](#) in the article entitled, [8 Expert Tips on Helping Your Child with Dysgraphia](#).

<b>Feel the Letters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>👉 Close your eyes and let someone trace a letter on your palm or back—can you guess what it is?</li><li>🎲 Switch it up: Try tracing a capital letter and writing the lowercase version, or vice versa!</li></ul>
<b>Write Big!</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>💧 Spray shaving cream letters on the bathroom wall or draw giant letters in the foam.</li><li>☂️ Make letters in a tub of sand or add sand to finger paint for extra squishy fun!</li></ul>
<b>Dig into Clay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>🍝 Roll clay into “noodles” and shape them into letters together.</li><li>✍️ Flatten clay on a tray and etch letters with a pencil—so satisfying!</li></ul>
<b>Pinch &amp; Play</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>🦋 Use tweezers, chopsticks, or tongs to pick up cereal or paper balls—see who can grab the most in a minute!</li><li>🎲 Play board games and use your pinching tool to move the pieces.</li></ul>
<b>Cross-Body Moves</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✂️ Try crafts with scissors—one hand holds, one hand cuts!</li><li>🏃 Do windmills, jumping jacks, toe touches, or mountain climbers before writing time.</li></ul>
<b>Build Strength &amp; Stability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>💪 Get strong with planks, push-ups, wheelbarrow walks, crab walks, shooting hoops, or hanging from monkey bars.</li></ul>
<b>Tell a Story Together</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>🌙 At bedtime, ask, “How was your day?”</li><li>🗣️ Help your child start with an intro, share something from morning, afternoon, and evening, and finish with a happy wrap-up!</li></ul>
<b>Speak It First</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>📱 Let your child record their ideas or stories on a phone or tablet before writing.</li><li>🎧 Listening back makes it easier (and more fun!) to put thoughts on paper.</li></ul>

For more tips on using multisensory techniques for teaching handwriting, access this article entitled [6 Multisensory Techniques for Teaching Handwriting](#).

# How can I support students I am tutoring with dysgraphia?

In addition to the tips above, it is helpful to know how the High Quality Curriculum Materials (HQCM)\* teaches handwriting. Knowing this can support parents, tutors and caregivers to reinforce these concepts outside of the classrooms. For example, ask the teacher questions such as:

- How does the HQCM in school address handwriting?
- Is there a guide that I can use at home to support handwriting (such as this one from CKLA or this one from Peterson handwriting)?
- Which letters have already been taught that I can support at home? How did you teach them?

## Tips and Tricks for Tutoring

**When supporting students in a tutoring environment, follow the guidance of the HQCM to support letter formation. Notice when you might need to model the letter and offer additional practice opportunities.**

Provide wide-ruled or dark-ruled paper to allow students to clearly see the border between lines. Allow time for writing so that students can properly practice letter formation.

Provide immediate, corrective feedback on letter formation.

Provide lots of informal opportunities for writing to keep it fun and informal.

Chunk the task (so that writing is done one segment at a time), and when possible, alter the visual format of the task so it does not feel stressful to the student. For example, if the student is writing a summary of a text, segment the paper into three sections labeled Beginning, Middle and End so that the task feels less overwhelming and so that there is enough space for each segment.

When students are expected to write their answer but there are no lines on the paper, draw them and ensure there is enough space for the student to practice letter formation while responding to the question.

Consider teaching SRSD strategies when possible so that students can execute a writing plan without having to juggle the cognitive load of letter formation and organization at the same time.

**\*In RI, the instructional materials that teachers and students are required to use every day are known as High Quality Curriculum Materials (HQCM).**