

Teach Your Child to Print Their Name Efficiently: The Beginnings of ABC Fluency

Dear Parents,

Learning to print one's first (and later last) name is an important literacy skill in kindergarten. Enclosed is the Zaner-Bloser Handwriting Guide we use to teach your child to form letters. **Please encourage your child to practice writing their name several times a day at home.** At school, children will be asked to carefully practice forming the letters on a 2" x 6" blank card and then name the letters first thing every day in kindergarten. We celebrate each child's progress and talk about the "best letter." If they make a mistake printing, they just get another card and practice again. Then we choose one letter to practice making over and over until the brain and fingers make the connection. Repetition builds control and confidence until efficient letter forms become automatic.

A child's name is the first most important word he or she will ever learn to write. With mastery of his or her name, a child will internalize many handwriting principals, and other letters will be easier to form efficiently.

Please make a name card model similar to the one below to show your child how the letters in his or her name are formed. **Keep one copy in the area where your child likes to write and draw and one on the refrigerator.** With daily practice at home and at school, you'll be amazed at how quickly your child's ability to form letters improves.



- While **good handwriting is not the most important focus** for young writers, learning to automatically control letter forms within a growing number of high-frequency ("by heart") words frees the child to focus more energy to express their ideas in daily "kid writing."
- **We honor and celebrate all children's initial writing explorations and understand that small muscle coordination varies greatly from child to child.** Kindergarten letter formation instruction is always positive, individualized and encouraging. It is integrated into real writing activities so the children are motivated.

Incorrect muscle memories can be hard to unlearn later. Our aim is to encourage efficient letter forms right from the start — beginning with the child's name.