**Dysgraphia (**[**https://dyslexiaida.org/understanding-dysgraphia/**](https://dyslexiaida.org/understanding-dysgraphia/)**)**

**Summary:**

**Dysgraphia**is a Greek word. The base word *graph* refers both to the hand’s function in writing and to the letters formed by the hand. The prefix *dys* indicates that there is impairment. *Graph* refers to producing letter forms by hand. The suffix *ia* refers to having a condition. Thus, *dysgraphia* is the condition of impaired letter writing by hand, that is, disabled handwriting. Impaired handwriting can interfere with learning to spell words and speed of writing text. Children with dysgraphia may have only impaired handwriting, only impaired spelling (without reading problems), or both impaired handwriting and impaired spelling.

**Symptoms:**

Research to date has shown orthographic coding in working memory is related to handwriting and is often impaired in dysgraphia. *Orthographic* *coding* refers to the ability to store written words in working memory while the letters in the word are analysed; or the ability to create permanent memory of written words linked to their pronunciation and meaning. Children with dysgraphia do not have primary developmental motor disorder, another cause of poor handwriting, but may have difficulty *planning sequential finger movements* such as the touching of the thumb to successive fingers on the same hand without visual feedback. Children with dysgraphia may have difficulty with both orthographic coding and planning sequential finger movements.

**Strategies:**

* Continuing to strengthen hand muscles;
* Continuing to develop motor control;
* Connecting dots or dashes to create complete letter forms;
* tracing letters with index finger or eraser end of pencil;
* imitating the teacher modelling sequential strokes in letter formation; and
* Copying letters from models.

Subsequently, once children learn to form legible letters, they benefit from instruction that helps them develop *automatic letter writing*, using the following steps to practice each of the 26 letters of the alphabet in a different order daily:

* studying numbered arrow cues that provide a consistent plan for letter formation
* covering the letter with a 3 x 5 card and imaging the letter in the mind’s eye
* writing the letter from memory after interval that increases in duration over the handwriting lessons
* Writing letters from dictation (spoken name to letter form).