

**What are letter and number formations?**

- They are learned motor patterns of how to make each letter or number.
- When formations are mastered, writing can become automatic.

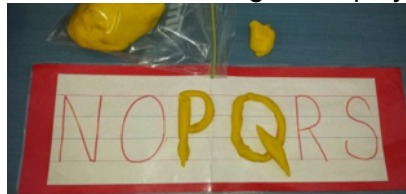
**Why is practicing letter and number formations important?**

- Once children practice and master formations, they can focus on the ideas of what they are printing rather than how to form the individual letters and numbers.
- Once patterns are learned, the child can print faster and start to develop smaller, neater writing.

**Strategies to help a child learn and master letter and number formations:**

- The goal is for the child to practice in different ways and develop a “mental map” of what the letters and numbers look like as well as the “motor pattern” of how to form them.
- Make practicing fun by incorporating various materials and activities, including: full body movements, playdough, yarn, finger tracing, chalk, crayons and pencils, etc.

→ Form the letters using rolled playdough, wiki stix or yarn.



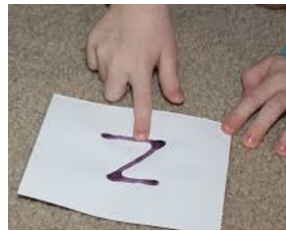
→ Form letters using a letter kit or make your own cardboard cut-outs: to make upper case letters with cardboard cut-outs, you will need 8 long lines (6 inches long), 6 short lines (3 inches long), 6 big curves (6 inches tall) and 6 small curves (3 inches tall).



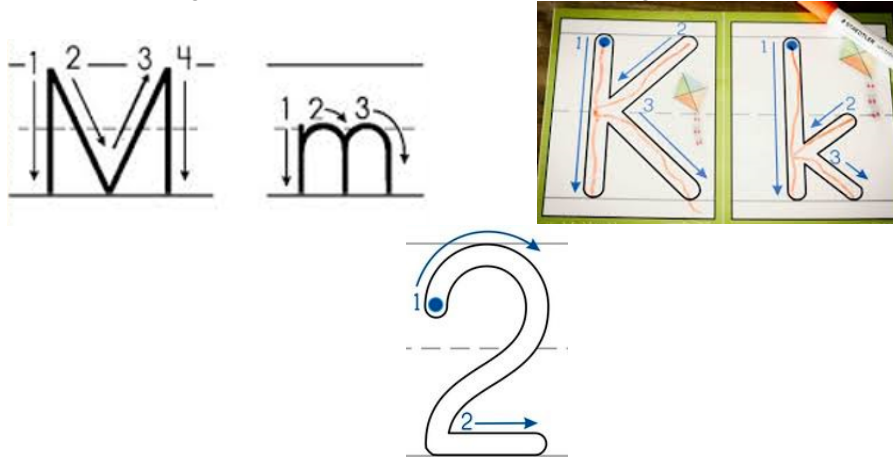
→ Carve letters in flattened playdough. Use big arm movements to trace large numbers on the carpet or draw large letters using sidewalk chalk.



→ Finger trace along letter cards, sandpaper cut-outs or glitter glue cards.



→ Use verbal cues or a rhyme to help children remember the movement pattern.  
→ Encourage a top-down movement and using the same pattern each time.



→ Try available printing programs that can be found online:

*Print Like a Pro*

<http://www.childdevelopment.ca/SchoolAgeTherapy>

*Handwriting Without Tears*

[www.lwtears.com](http://www.lwtears.com)