

Spacing and awareness of margins

Spacing

- Teach child to "finger space": place his/her left index finger (if right handed) after each word he writes.
- For lefties, it's better to space with an object, such as a popsicle stick.
- Have child make his/her own finger spacer: decorate a popsicle stick or tongue depressor – call it a "spaceman".
- Have child place a dot with a stamp marker or highlighter after each word, or to make a small dot with the pencil. Later he/she can erase the dots.
- It's better to have large exaggerated spaces, especially for young writers. Using 2 fingers to space may be a good way to start.
- Try graph paper and write one letter in each box with one box in between words. Graph paper can also be used in math to assist in keeping the numbers in the correct place. Different sized graph paper can be downloaded from <http://www.do2learn.com/activities/mathhelpers/index.htm>.
- To increase awareness, challenge your child to read sentences that don't have spaces in between words. Play "Sentence Doctor" and have him/her complete "surgery" to rewrite the sentences correctly to fix the sick sentence and make it better.
- Use "edibles" such as Cheerios, Skittles, or M&Ms as spacers between words and eat as a reward.
- Have the child say "space" after each word to remind them to move the pencil.
- Tell students that spaces between words must be wide enough to fit a small sticker. Place a visual reminder on their desk (<http://blog.maketaketeach.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/word---spacing.pdf>). After the student finishes his/her writing, the paper is given to the teacher and a small sticker is placed between words where stickers will fit. A reward system can be used – child gets a reward when they reach an agreed upon/predetermined number of stickers.

Awareness of Margins

- Highlight the left margin to increase the child's awareness of where to begin and continue sentences.
- Highlight the right margin if the child tends to cram in words at the ends of the lines.
- Teach child to place a ruler at the left margin; remind him/her to return to the ruler to continue sentences.
- Highlight the left margin green (for go) and right margin red (for stop).
- Use "stop and go" paper found at <http://www.do2learn.com/activities/writingtools>