

# Penmanship Camps at Handrighting, Ink

If Johnny can't read, most educators would agree, this is a problem. And if Johnny can't write, or at least if no one can understand what he wrote, this is equally disturbing. Even in this age of e-mails and instant messages, where language and writing skills have been reduced to esoteric and sometimes cryptic communiqués, handwriting is still a "critical life skill," according to Sandy Purvis, an occupational therapist and owner of Handrighting Ink. Not only is handwriting an important tool to communication and learning in our schools, she says, it is vital to effective interaction in the business world and everyday life.

"Students still have to be able to write their assignments down and take notes," says Purvis, who together with her business partner, Amy Carroll, has over 37 years of experience working to improve the penmanship skills of children and adults. Whether it's note taking in the classroom or conference room, filling out Valentine's cards and thank you notes, or simply taking down a phone message at work, Purvis says handwriting is an essential skill that needs to be legible if you're going to effectively communicate in day-to-day life.

Thanks to computers, today's stu-

dents have easy access to information from all over the globe. But emphasis on keyboarding skills has perhaps, de-emphasized the need for good old-fashioned penmanship.

Addressing this need, Purvis and Carroll decided to start their own business.

Handrighting Ink. began as a penmanship summer camp a couple of years ago and grew into a full-time operation which has successfully helped many children become effective with both print and cursive handwriting styles.

While most children who possess good natural motor and perceptual abilities will go on to develop average or above average penmanship skills as they go through school, a significant number have difficulty mastering basic handwriting adeptness.

The children's programs at Handrighting Ink. integrate motor activities and handwriting exercises in a playful environment. The instructors throw in ball play or some jumping games, for example, or have the students work with silly putty to improve finger dexterity. These methods can be the foundation for teaching students the proper gripping and navigating of a pencil for accurate letter formation and

maintaining appropriate spacing between letters. It helps them improve on their hand-eye coordination, broadens their attention span and, Purvis adds, "they have fun with it. It's our secret weapon to keep the kids alert and focused."

Handrighting Ink. offers a variety of classes and seminars throughout the school year in addition to private individual instruction. Due to the demand for school-age children, they are unable to offer adult classes but do provide individual private instruction for adults. Classes are grouped by age, from 4 1/2 to 13. Offerings include an introduction to printing at the preschool and kindergarten levels in addition to cursive and advanced cursive instruction at higher levels. Instructors use their knowledge and experience in Occupational Therapy to build foundation components for good handwriting:

- Postural stability and Control
- Eye-Hand Coordination
- Pencil and Grip Skills
- Movement and Posture

Awareness

- Visual and Motor Perception
- Self-esteem and Concept
- Sensory Regulation for Focusing and Attention

They use the nationally recognized *Handwriting Without Tears* workbooks by Jan Olsen. In addition to teaching handwriting to children and adults of all ages, they provide seminars and inservices for teachers and parents. School-based intervention is provided to students at cooperating private schools.

Group classes meet weekly throughout the school year for six-week sessions at their studio located at 81 Lancaster Avenue, #213, Malvern, PA 19355. The last spring session starts April 23 and ends June 4.

Camp Handrighting Ink. will be offering a 6-week summer handwriting program. Group classes are held Mon.-Thurs. from June 18 to August 3 at the Baptist Church in Great Valley, Devon, PA.

If you have any questions, please call 610-408-0868 or check out the company's web site at [www.handrightingink.com](http://www.handrightingink.com) for more information, tuition fees and class schedules. □

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