

# Key Area: Movement and Motor

## Letter Reversals



Many young children reverse letters because they lack familiarity with the symbols. While this is a common occurrence in the Early Years, Foundation and early Year 1 when learning to write letters, ideally, reversals should not be present **beyond seven years of age**.

### Verbal Cues and Starting Points

It is valuable to learn letters as movements rather than as visual shapes. This gives children a mechanism for remembering visually confusing letters. If the letters are taught effectively, with **starting points** and **verbal cues**, the motor memory of each letter will be paired with the phoneme and reversals will be minimised.

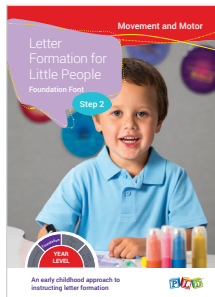
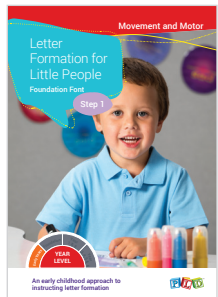
### Tips for Dealing with Reversals

Remember, ongoing practice copying the letter is always preferable to continuing to practice it incorrectly.

1. Ample practice is important to enable over-learning of new movements to occur.
2. Choose one reversal per session to focus on, demonstrate first, then the child imitates.
3. Verbal cues are crucial to reinforce correct letter formation.
4. Use starting points and direction arrows.
5. Use the non-dominant index finger (as well as the dominant index finger) to trace the direction of the letter.
6. Teach ways to discriminate confused letters.
7. Use a multi-sensory approach to teach the letters e.g. students write letters in the air with their pointer finger and large arm movements (try it with eyes open, then eyes closed).
8. For students with persistent reversals, the use of a desk template is helpful as it provides a model of the particular letter(s) to copy as required.

### Students Who Continue to Reverse Letters

Students who continue to reverse letters may experience difficulty with positions-in-space. The confusion relates to the position the parts of the letter(s) occupy in relation to one another (i.e. is the circle to the left or the right of the line?) and the position the symbol occupies in the overall space of the paper (i.e. is the symbol formed above or below the writing line on the paper?).



### Related Programs

**Letter Formation for Little People - Step 1**  
(for the Early Years)

Website code: Mlff

**Letter Formation for Little People - Step 2**  
(for Foundation)

Website code: Mlff2

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**around back...  
around forward**

snake

**around...  
up...  
and down**

apple

**down...  
and across**

tiger

**down...  
up...  
and around**

pop

**down...  
and a dot**

itchy

**down...  
up and over**

nose

For the other alphabet verbal cue pages, refer to the programs on the left.