

TOP TIPS FOR HELPING LITTLE LEFT-HANDERS IN A RIGHT-HANDED WORLD



LEFT HANDERS DAY

AUGUST 13

Your child may well show signs of being left-handed long before he/she is old enough to pick up a pen, often at 3 months+ when they first start putting finger food to their mouth with their dominant hand, or **sucking their favourite thumb.**



Under the age of 5, many children are not aware of the concept of "left and right" and it's quite likely that some of them have not yet settled on their eventual hand preference for writing.

If you feel your child may be left-handed, but are not sure, ask her new teacher simply to be patient, encouraging and supportive. **Pass on the following tips as appropriate to the new nursery or pre-school.**

1. EATING

Left-handers tend to feed themselves with their left hand all the time (finger food, **dinner fork** and pudding spoon) - they don't often reverse the cutlery, unless they are trying to cut with a knife, when they will be better using this in their left hand.



2. DRESSING

For left-handed boys, buttons and zips are 'back to front' so need a bit more practice. When helping left-handers with trousers/shoes, remember they usually balance on their left foot first, so have the right leg-shoe ready for them to step in to. **Shoelaces/ties** - A good tip is to stand opposite the child when demonstrating tying a tie or laces. This provides them with a mirror image to copy.

3. WIND-UP TOYS

Left-handers naturally **turn** in an anti-clockwise direction. If a left-hander is frustrated with a toy, it may be because it works back-to-front for him/her. Try alternative toys with cogs and wheels that work equally well with the handle turned anti-clockwise, or press button activation.



4. CUTTING

Do ensure your child has access to fully left-handed scissors for all craft work. Find out how left-handed scissors are distinguished (for instance with different coloured handles or ribbons) and ensure your child understands the difference and knows to ask for **their type of scissors** at home and nursery.

5. DRAWING

Encourage a **good pencil grip** as soon as your child starts playing with paint and colouring, to make the progression into writing style simple and painless. Oversized triangular crayons and pencils help develop the ideal tripod grip that left-handers need to avoid smudging and cramped grip as they learn to write. Always ensure pencils/crayons/toys and so on are placed directly in front within easy reach of either hand.



6. READING & WRITING

Left-handers naturally work from right to left across a page. Be aware of this when your child starts drawing, and reading simple words and letters. Remind them to start at the top left of a page when reading and **starting to form letters**, and don't be surprised if they form some letters backwards, or read a word back to front until they have mastered the direction they need to go in. Lefties have a talent for transposing images in their heads so can often read and write backwards with ease! A star in the top left of reading flash cards, computer screens and blank writing pages can be a helpful reminder of the correct side to start.



Find more advice and resources for left-handed children at:

Anything *Left* Handed.co.uk