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Top 10 Reasons to Learn Cursive

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Developing an attractive, legible cursive handwriting style certainly has great aesthetic value, but it also has numerous mental, physical, social, practical and financial benefits.

- 1. Improved neural connections.** Cursive handwriting stimulates the brain in ways that typing cannot. It improves the dynamic interplay of the left and right cerebral hemispheres, helps build neural pathways, and increases mental effectiveness. According to Virginia Berninger, a researcher and professor of educational psychology at the University of Washington, "Pictures of brain activity have illustrated that sequential finger movements used in handwriting activated massive regions of the brain involved in thinking, language, and working memory. Handwriting differs from typing because it requires executing sequential finger strokes to form a letter, whereas keyboarding only involves touching a key."
- 2. Improved ability to read cursive.** When an individual cannot read cursive, they are cursively illiterate in their own language. The ability to read cursive is required in many jobs.
- 3. Increased speed.** The connectivity of a simple cursive style is faster to write than the stop and start strokes of printing. Speed has been shown to increase attention span during writing. This increases continuity and fluidity in writing, which in turn encourages greater amounts of writing.
- 4. Improved fine motor skills.** "Cursive handwriting naturally develops sensory skills. Through repetition the child begins to understand how much force needs to be applied to the pencil and paper, the positioning of the pencil to paper at the correct angle, and motor planning to form each letter in fluid motion from left to right. This physical and spatial awareness allows them to write, but more importantly, builds the neural foundation of sensory skills needed for a myriad of everyday tasks such as buttoning, fastening, tying shoes, picking up objects, copying words from blackboards, and most importantly, reading." Cutting Cursive, The Real Cost. Candace Meyer, CEO, Minds-in-Motion, Inc.
- 5. Increased retention.** The act of taking notes by hand instead of a computer encourages a student to process the content and reframe it, which leads to better understanding and retention. Studies indicate that college students remembered information better one week later when they transcribed a paragraph in cursive, compared to printing it or using a keyboard.
- 6. Ease of learning.** Printing is more difficult due to the frequent stop and start motion when forming letters. In addition, some printed letters look similar and are easily reversed, like the 'b' and 'd', which is often confusing to children. Cursive is of particular value to children with learning challenges like Dyslexia and A.D.D.

7. Improves reading and spelling ability. When printing, some children write so erratically that it is difficult to determine where one word ends and another begins. Cursive, on the other hand, requires children to write from left to right so that the letters will join in proper sequence; therefore, it is easier to read. It also aids with spelling through the connectivity of the letters. This helps the child to see words as a whole instead of seeing separate letters (as in printing). Additionally, the hand acquires knowledge of spelling patterns through movements that are used repeatedly in spelling. This is the same phenomenon that occurs when pianists or typists learn patterns of hand movements through continued repetition.

8. Increases self-discipline. Cursive handwriting is complex, and is inherently associated with the development of fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination. Learning cursive prompts children to also develop self-discipline, which is a useful skill in all areas of life.

9. Higher quality signature. Cursive handwriting can improve the attractiveness, legibility, and fluidity of one's signature.

10. Increased self-respect. The ability to master the skill to write clearly and fluidly improves the student's confidence to communicate freely with the written word.

Handwriting is a vital life-skill. Before the 1930's all American children were taught cursive in the first grade.