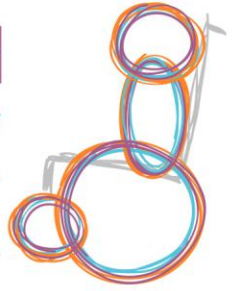


Are children who were born premature at risk for poor handwriting performance when compared to peers?

childhood
disability
LINK



Summary

Children born premature are at risk for developmental delays and academic difficulties at school age. This study found that children born premature had significantly lower legibility and slower speed scores on most handwriting tasks when compared to peers. Poor legibility was associated with difficulties in visual-perception and eye-hand coordination, and was more likely to occur in boys. Behavioral problems contributed to poor legibility and speed in writing. Handwriting, an important life skill particularly in the classroom, is an area of potential difficulty for children born premature. Relationships with particular sensorimotor abilities and behavioral challenges may guide intervention efforts to improve handwriting performance.

What families & practitioners should know

Handwriting (legibility and speed) is a particular life skill that children born premature may have difficulty with at early school age. This study identifies a number of sensorimotor limitations that were associated with poor legibility and speed in this population. This information may guide remediation or adaptive strategies to improve handwriting. Behavioral difficulties contributed to poor handwriting performance, underscoring the importance of medical and therapeutic management of this area of concern. Clinicians following children born premature long-term may want to screen for potential handwriting problems, so as to identify difficulties early and minimize secondary effects on academic success and self esteem.

Reference

[Feder, K., Majnemer, A., Blayney, M., Synnes, A., Bourbonnais, D., & Platt, R. \(2005\). Handwriting performance in preterm survivors compared to peers. *Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology*, 47, 163-170.](#)