

the school years toolkit

hope making a difference choice understanding friendly
together quality understanding dedication hope enthusiastic specialist compassion
personal community people together help care understanding specialist dedication safe local support trust depe
equality care choice independence respect community trust together quality t
tion hope enthusiastic specialist compassion safe health service local dependable help equality care d

Letter and number reversals

You have been directed to this Advice Sheet because a child you are working with has difficulties with reversing some letters or numbers.

If you have used this Advice Sheet and not seen improvement after six months, please contact CYPIT.

What you may see

The most commonly reversed numerals are 2, 3, 5, 7 and 6 for 9. Frequent letter reversals are lower case manuscript b, d, s, c and z. The letters w and m are also sometimes substituted for one another in a top-bottom reversal.

Strategies and Advice

Here are some strategies to help children learn the direction of letters and numerals:

- Sensory activities reinforce letter formation as the student writes and traces their commonly reversed letters and numbers on a blackboard, fine sandpaper or in Playdough or putty. When tracing, make sure the student is using the correct stroke.
- Learning cursive script sometimes eliminates letter reversals since the letters are connected and lead into one another.
- Directional cues can also be paired with verbal ones eg “d” faces the diamond (drawn on the left upper corner of each page) and “p” and “b” face the pink ball (on the upper right corner).
- Other cognitive cues rely on visual images for distinguishing letters:
 - Lower case “b” is like the “B” only without the top circle
 - To remember “d” – “c” comes first then add a line to make “d”
 - With palms facing the chest and thumbs up, the student makes two fists. The left hand forms a “b” and the right hand forms a “d” to make a “bed”
 - When writing capitals B, D, F, K, L, P, R – put the vertical line down first and then add lines or curves to the right side.
 - Develop an individualised cue card for each student to keep at their desk with their common reversals
 - Working on a vertical surface may also decrease problems with directionality for some students, especially when they are first learning to write.

Section 5 **advice** sheets

With a vertical orientation, “up” and “down” literally refer to hand movements the student actually performs.