

Posture – Check the Workstation

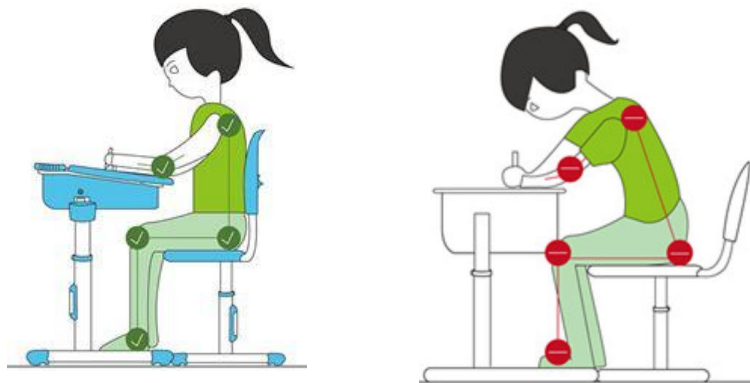
A strong and steady trunk provides a base of support needed for activities requiring fine motor skills, including written communication. It is important for all students to be able to focus on the class activity, rather than on maintaining their posture.

Observations as a result of poor positioning may include:

- Slumped over posture (i.e. leaning on desk)
- Swinging feet
- Sitting on their legs/feet
- Frequently changing positions in their seat
- Sitting with their chair pushed out away from the desk (i.e. not enough clearance to bring the chair in closer)
- Can't sit with their back against the back of the chair and their feet on the floor at the same time

Step 1: Check the Desk

- 90, 90, 90 degree angle rule (ankles, knees and hips)
- The space between the back of the student's knees and the front of the seat should be approximately 2".
- Table/desk height should be 2" higher than the elbows when they are resting at their side with a slight bend when the student is sitting upright.
- There should be enough desk clearance so that the chair can be pulled in close with the legs fitting under the desk.



<http://www.studyright.ie/the-idea>

Step 2: Adjust and Adapt – If proper fitting furniture is not available, ask yourself:

- Is the furniture adjustable?
- Is there another chair or desk available in the building?
- Can I find a way to adjust this furniture to make it work?

If the Feet Do Not Touch The Floor:

- Introduce a footstool (e.g. stack of taped books, empty bin, pool noodle) under the child's feet for support.
 - A foot stool with chair leg cutouts can help to prevent the stool from sliding away.
- Add a cushion behind their back to reduce the depth of the seat so that their feet can reach the floor.



If The Chair Seat Is Too Deep:

- Add a cushion behind their back to reduce the depth of the seat.
- To keep it from slipping off the chair, hold it on with a t-shirt/sweatshirt over the pillow and back of the chair.



If The Fit Is Good but...

The student has weak trunk control:

- Raise the desk height slightly.
- Choose a chair with flat seat base instead of bucket seat.
- Choose a chair with armrests.

- Choose a cut-out desk (provides extra side support for leaning and when fatigued, also allows the child to be closer so that their arms and elbows can be supported to have better access to the task in front of them).
- Allow laying on floor (on tummy) to complete work.
- Place a drawer liner on their seat to add friction to reduce sliding.



The student is slouching/laying head on desk:

- Provide a slanted desk top (e.g. 4" empty ring binder, easel, tilting table top) to help promote a more upward eye gaze and posture. This allows the student to look at the materials without bending the neck forward.



Step 3: When necessary, consider offering flexible seating

- A chair may not be the best option for all students.
- Be mindful that flexible seating allows students to explore different workstations (e.g. standing desk, working on the floor, etc.) for completing work to find an option that works best for them.
- What works for one student one day may not work for the same student the next.