**Tips for Teaching Early Writing Skills At Home** (Bevan)

1. First get the body ready for writing (1-2 activities)
2. Next warm up the hands (1-2 activities)
3. Finally practice the skill
4. **Get the body ready for writing:** Have your child do some large motor work to get his/her body moving and provide resistance against his joints and muscles. Some ideas include:
   1. Hopscotch
   2. Crawling over/under couches, tables, playground equipment, etc.
   3. Animal walks (walk like a bear, tiger, kangaroo, crab, snake, etc. Make the sounds that these animals make while doing this)
   4. Chew gum, blow bubbles
   5. Crawl on the floor and blow a cotton ball across the floor with a straw
5. **Warm up the hands**
   1. Knead dough and shape it into animals
   2. Squeeze hands into fists, then stretch them out big
   3. Touch each finger to the thumb while saying the name (“pointer, middle, ring, pinky”)
   4. Squeeze each finger with your other hand while naming it. See if you can wiggle it without moving the other fingers
   5. Lacing beads, lacing cards
   6. Playing card games (memory match)
   7. Poking toothpicks into Styrofoam
   8. Feeding pennies into recycled plastic tub with slit cut in the lid
   9. Throwing and catching stuffed animals or balls
6. **Practice the Skill** (copying circle, square, triangle): Practice drawing on a piece of paper taped to the wall (or on an easel) with a crayon that has been broken in half. The combination of using a small writing utensil and drawing on a vertical surface encourages the child to use the first three fingers to hold the crayon.
   1. Draw a house and show how you make a square and triangle for the roof, and a circle for the sun. Ask him to copy. Have your child add color, details, and imagination!
   2. Play Tic-Tac-Toe (teach child how to draw the hash grid lines. Take turns being X or O. Reinforce how X starts at the corners of the boxes and how O starts at the top and goes around like a "c")
   3. Draw person (circle head "start at top, around like a 'c'", slant-lines for arms and legs, include body parts including hands and feet, etc.)
   4. Practice doing simple mazes, staying in between the lines

**Multisensory approach to learning letters and shapes:**

If you choose to work on writing his/her first name, focus on one letter at a time (every week or so). All of these activities build the necessary motor skills for handwriting and reinforce the shape of the letters.

* 1. Roll the letter or shape with play dough
  2. Form the letter or shape out of pipe cleaners
  3. Write the letter or shape with permanent marker and have the child trace it with glue (sprinkle the glue with glitter or jello powder, cover with yarn, or glue on noodles)
  4. Write a letter or shape with permanent marker and have the child stamp on it, place stickers on it, or trace it.
  5. Spray shaving cream into a pie pan and have the child write the letters or shapes with his/her fingers.

**HANDWRITING RULES:**  
1. All letters start from the top

2. All curves go in the counterclockwise direction from the top

3. Letters: F, E, D, P, B, R, A, M, and N start with a line down, then a frog jump back to the top.