This typing resource is designed to help families support their child to start developing some touch-typing skills at home.

When to consider teaching touch-typing?

- Typically, we recommend that children learn to touch type when they are in Grade 2 or above. Prior to that, children are still learning letter identification and printing skills. Children below Grade 2 tend to have smaller hands and their fingers may not be able to reach all the keys on a standard keyboard.
- If students can identify all the letters of the alphabet and they have spent time developing their printing skills, but their printing is still not legible, fluid, or efficient, then learning to type may be a better option.

What is Touch-Typing?

- Touch-typing is the ability to type using all your fingers without looking at the keyboard or thinking about what your fingers are doing.
- When someone learns how to touch-type through lots of short practice sessions, they learn muscle memory.
- Once the finger movements are learned through repetition, the finger movements become automatic.

Hunt-and-Peck vs. Touch-Typing:

- Hunt-and-peck is typically when someone looks at the keyboard and uses their pointer fingers to type. Although this can be a functional way to type, it is not nearly as efficient as touch-typing.
- We always advocate, for children who can, to learn to touch type!
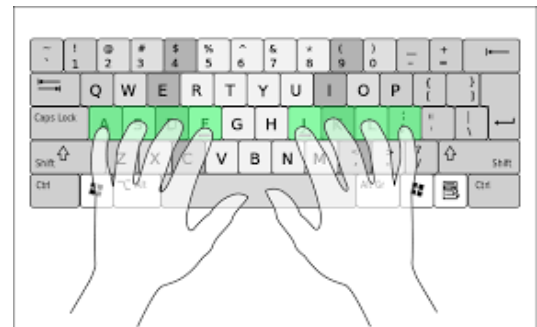
What type of keyboard?

- Children should learn on a standard size QWERTY laptop keyboard or external keyboard. Using a standard keyboard helps with correct finger placement and provides auditory and tactile feedback when they type.
- Do not use an onscreen keyboard, such as on an iPad. These do not give children the necessary feedback and promotes hunt-and-peck typing rather than touch typing.

Positioning and Set-Up:

- Children should sit at a table or desk where their feet are supported on the floor and in a chair that supports their back
- The table height should be just below their elbows. Elbow angle should be between 90-110 degrees.
- Wrists should be resting on the desk and not floating in the air above the keyboard.
- Fingers should be placed on the **home row keys** with thumbs on the space bar. You may need to assist the child to correctly to curve their fingers on to the home row keys.
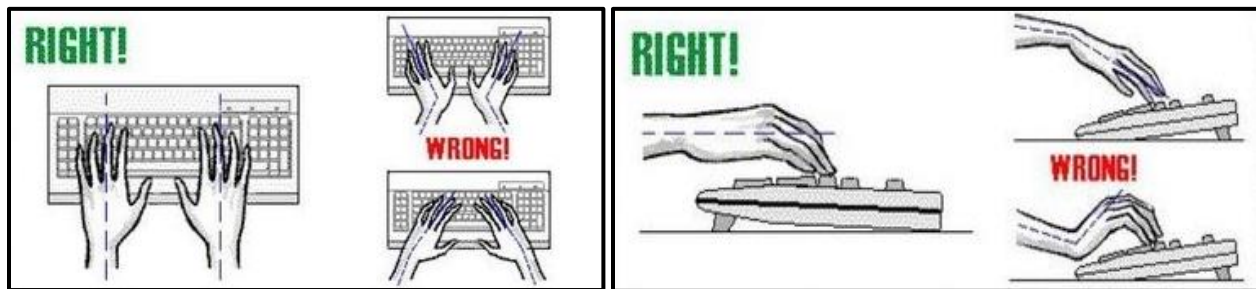
Touch Typing Programs:

- It is important to use a touch-typing program that teaches children correct finger movements through repetition.
- A touch-typing program is a structured program that generally starts with the home row keys and gradually introduces other keys and motor movements.
- There are many free or paid typing programs available on-line. A few free typing programs we recommend for introducing touch-typing are:
    - www.typing.com
    - https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zf2f9j6/articles/z3c6tfr
    - www.typingclub.com
    - https://www.kidztype.com/dance-mat-typing-level-1-stage-1_f1117a537.html
    - https://www.kidztype.com/browse-typing-games.html (for more advanced typing, video game style)

Adult Supervision and Support:

- Adults will initially need to supervise the child to help remind them to keep their fingers correctly on the home row.
- Encourage the child not to look at their fingers when typing. A good strategy is to tap the child's typing finger to encourage them to not lift their fingers off the keyboard or look to find the keys. If necessary, cover the keyboard.
- Short (10-15 minutes), frequent (daily) sessions are recommended as an effective way to build the motor patterns for typing.