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**National Handwriting Day**

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## **National Handwriting Day: Teachers lament over pupils not able to write properly**

**January 23<sup>rd</sup> is the National Handwriting Day – a good reason to focus on the growing problems with handwriting**

Handwriting is being pushed back in every day life. Even in schools problems seem to become more frequent. "At school, everybody says there are problems with writing and have been for a long time. Teachers lament that children don't have the motor skills and that there's a lack of attention for this matter. Parents are helpless and pupils are frustrated", says motor skill researcher Dr. Christian Marquardt, scientific advisory committee member at Schreibmotorik Institut in Heroldsberg. The Schreibmotorik Institut in cooperation with the German Teacher's Association initiated a survey amongst teachers which should answer the following questions: How grave are problems with handwriting in reality? And what are the reasons for that?

The German Teacher's Association (DL) also observes that complaints among teachers about problems with pupils' handwriting are becoming more frequent. "The amount of children and adolescents who have problems with handwriting would be somewhere between 20 and 50 percent", estimates Josef Kraus, president of the Teacher's Association. Kraus further: "We want to call public attention to problems with handwriting. For that we need to evaluate the situation to begin with. After that we want to suggest appropriate steps to politicians. I don't want to anticipate the results, but that much is plain: We need more resources to promote

gross and fine motor skills as early as in daycare centres and later on in primary schools as well. That's what we want to achieve."

Reports from Finland show how current the whole topic is. As of 2016, teaching cursive handwriting will be withdrawn from the curriculum at primary schools. From then on schools are free to teach children primarily how to type on a keyboard. In the USA handwriting has been abolished from curricula in primary education because of the advancing digitisation. A model for Germany? By no means for Kraus. He emphasises that there tends to be a coherence between the learning efficiency of pupils and the quality of their handwriting. "Someone who writes well and adept, memorises written facts better and more focused, he/she minds more intensively, writes more deliberately and deals more intensively with the content of the written facts." The survey among teachers takes place until march:

<http://media.4teachers.de/poll/>

### **Background:**

On January 23<sup>rd</sup>, the USA celebrate the National Handwriting Day. January 23<sup>rd</sup> is the birthday of John Hancock (1737 –1793) the initial signer of the American Declaration of Independence. His signature on the document is especially striking because of its size.

The Schreibmotorik Institut in Heroldsberg is a unique institution in Germany. It carries out independent research in the field of writing motor skills and writing ergonomics, links relevant institutions in the field of writing and brings together experts who have spent years examining the theory and practice of efficient handwriting. It developed teaching materials for writing lessons and offers seminars for educators.