Ohio’s FLAP K-4 Mandarin Curriculum
Reading and Writing Guidance

Assumptions:
• All language classrooms should support integrated literacy development through language-rich environments with meaningful print displays.
• Language acquisition in first and second language progresses naturally from oracy skills (listening and speaking) to literacy skills (reading and writing).
• Students bring oracy and literacy skills from home language learning to bear in learning a second language.
• Writing skills should be introduced at developmentally-appropriate points, and in a developmentally-appropriate manner, taking into account small motor skills and muscle development of small children.
• Students will be able to recognize more than they can produce.

Therefore:
• Before writing is encouraged, recognition skills (sight words) should be practiced through the use of flashcards and environmental print. (K)
• For very young students, writing practice should begin with large-motor activities, such as brush work on large font characters, air tracing, total physical response (TPR) or writing largely in sand. (K)
• Writing production should proceed from tracing and copying to experience writing characters. (K-1)
• High-frequency/commonly used words and radicals, and those characters containing fewer strokes (under six or seven), will be targeted for writing in K-1. It is best to introduce characters in thematic groups, such as, 头(head), 目(eye), 口(mouth), 舌(tongue), 耳(ear).
• Move to labeling, matching, sorting, and classifying at the word then sentence level.
• Surround students with text in the form of key words, word banks, charts, bulletin boards, signs, class rules, menus, etc.
• Use visual discrimination and directionality experiences with early readers.
• Model reading and engage learners through Big Books.

The choice of having students learn to write traditional or simplified characters is left up to the individual teacher or Chinese language department at each elementary school. To become proficient, students must ultimately learn to read both. Use traditional or simplified characters consistently, or introduce students to both simultaneously.

Roman alphabet phonetic systems, such as Pinyin, may be used as a bridge to literacy, but students ultimately need to read and write characters to be considered literate.