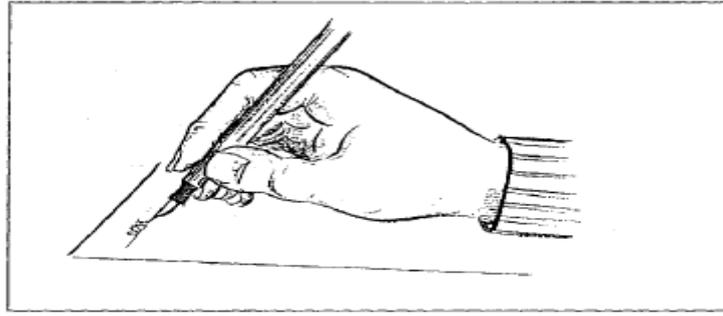


Pencil Grip



Pencil grip is a developing skill, which usually matures over time. Some children may hold a pencil in a fist, or maybe a tripod grasp, as shown above.

The most effective pencil grip is the tripod grasp, although some children may find a way that works for them which is less conventional. This grip allows the fingers to move without using the wrist or whole arm. This means that less effort is used and the child's writing can be more fluent. The forearm should be resting on a desk or table for stability.

The pincer grip is the ability to grasp small objects with a thumb and forefinger. It is an important part of a child's fine motor development and is necessary for holding and manipulating a pencil. In order to support your child's fine motor skill development, the following exercises can be undertaken:

- Encourage the child to pick up small objects (toys, sweets etc.) with their thumb and first finger rather than her whole hand, or thumb and middle finger.
- Encourage the child to form these fingers into a 'beak' and pretend they are a bird picking up seed to encourage and promote the idea of tucking the other fingers away.
- Clothes pegs opened with the thumb and index finger help to strengthen pincer grip e.g. placing pegs on the edge of a plastic tub to make "a cage for an animal".
- Use tweezers to pick up small items such as sorting Hamma beads or the game Operation
- Making play dough into small shapes, pinching a play dough sausage with thumb and first finger and flattening play dough balls into pancakes.
- Pick small items e.g. buttons, beads out of play dough with the thumb and index finger.
- Pop bubble wrap with index finger and thumb.
- While doing pincer grip activities place a small object (e.g. pencil grip / piece of play dough / a rubber) in the child's palm to be held in place by the middle, index and little finger. This will help with only using thumb and first finger.

Tripod Pencil Grasp

To encourage the development of a tripod pencil grasp try the following:

- Use short (1"), wide pencils/crayons/chalk to encourage the child to hold the pencil correctly.
- Encourage the child to hold the pencil between the thumb pad and index finger pad (like a bird beak). The pencil then rests on the middle finger.
- Put a sticker or band around pencil to show to hold it near the tip.
- Place a grip on the pencil to encourage a dynamic tripod grip (introduce use slowly), or try using a triangular pencil.

