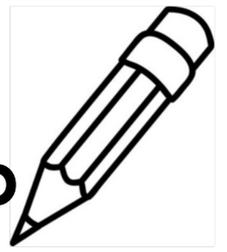




How to Improve Pencil Grasp



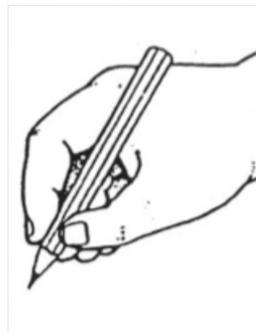
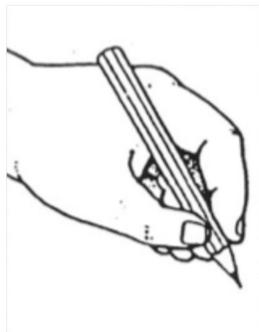
Although some students aren't ready for printing yet, one of the skills we work on in Kindergarten is a correct pencil grasp. A correct pencil grasp is essential for good handwriting throughout the years. As children begin to draw and write, parents/guardians can help establish and reinforce proper pencil grasp early on.

When school aged children draw or learn to print, many just naturally use the recommended tripod grip. Others need gentle help from parents and teachers. It is important to correct your child's grasp as early as possible. If a correct grasp is not developed at a young age, it becomes more and more difficult to change.

There are some easy ways you can help your child.

1. Choose the right tools – When your child is printing or drawing at home, give him/her shortened writing materials. Using broken pieces of chalk or crayons and shortened pencils encourage the thumb and index finger pinch that is used in a proper pencil grasp.

2. Teach and Fix – Teach your child to hold the pencil correctly. With the tripod grasp, the pencil or crayon is positioned between the thumb and index finger with the pencil resting on the middle finger. The recommended tripod grasp is shown below:



When your child is using an awkward grasp, gently remind him/ her of the correct grasp. Give your child consistent feedback to help develop awareness of his/her grasp and always use praise when the proper grasp is demonstrated.

3. Practice - Pencil grasp practice should be fun and enjoyable! Short daily practice sessions are best. There are activities you can do at home other than printing activities to help develop and improve pencil grasp and fine motor ability. Activities such as drawing pictures, playing tic-tac-toe, completing mazes and dot to dot pages are fun and motivate children to want to practice. Other fine motor activities that emphasize the use of the thumb and index finger and encourage fine motor strength include:

- picking up pennies or other small items one at a time and putting them in a jar or sorting them into piles
- using tweezers or clothespins to pick up small items such as pompoms
- popping bubble wrap
- rolling tiny balls of play dough between the thumb and index finger
- lacing small beads on a string or pipe cleaner
- turning a nut all the way on and all the way off of a bolt
- tearing paper into little pieces
- building with small Lego

Choose an activity your child enjoys so he/she looks forward to pencil grasp practice.

Learning and getting comfortable with a proper pencil grasp is important in Kindergarten. Being consistent with pencil grasp at school and at home will help your child develop and maintain a proper grasp which will help him/her write comfortably and efficiently throughout the early years at school.

