

# Tips for Pencil Grasp

*Key factors to consider when developing a proper pencil grasp are wrist position, pencil position & posture while seated.*

## To Promote Proper Pencil Position:

*Key points to remember:*

1. Pencil should be held in a stable position (e.g. usually between the thumb, index finger and middle finger)
2. Ring finger and little finger should be tucked in to palm and hand should rest comfortably on the table
3. Pencil should rest in the “C” shape arch of the hand (i.e. the eraser tip **should not** be facing away from the child)
4. Pencil should be held approximately 1-2 cm from the tip



*Strategies:*

- Demonstrate to child how to place the pencil in his/her hand or physically place the pencil in his/her hand
- Place visual cue on pencil (e.g. sticker, dot, rubber band, etc.) to indicate where pencil should be held
- Smaller size tools (e.g. golf pencils, crayon & chalk bits, etc.) are better for little hands
- Writing on an inclined or a vertical surface, or propped up on their elbows while lying on their tummy on the floor encourages proper wrist position.

## To Promote Proper Seated Position:

- Table and chair should be appropriate for the child's size
- Forearms should rest comfortably on the table
- Feet should rest flat on the floor with thighs parallel to the table
- Hips, knees and ankles should be at 90°



## Alternative Body Position and Writing Surface:

- Have child perform activities on a vertical surface (e.g. easel, paper taped on the wall, chalkboard, windows, etc.) or while lying on tummy on the floor
- Have child perform activities on an inclined surface (e.g. use a 3" three-ring binder with the spine of the binder furthest from the child)



## Alternative Writing Tools:

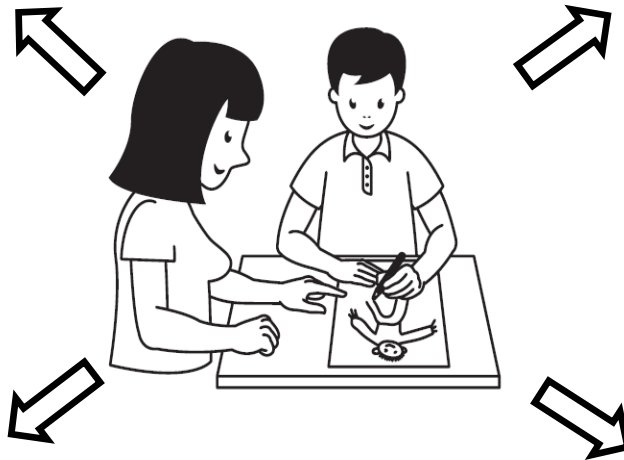
- Paint
- Q-tips
- Window markers
- Bathtub paint
- Shaving cream

## Developing Drawing Skills:

- [Click Here](#) for a handout on how drawing skills develop
- Ways to develop drawing skills:
  - Provide your child with partially completed images and have them complete the missing parts. Have a model of what the finished product would look like. There are also pre-made complete the picture worksheets where your child is to draw the other half of the image.
  - Step-by-step drawing that highlights the added features with each step
  - Tracing images, either with a stencil, or with tracing or parchment paper placed over the image or taped on a window
  - Connect the dots in dot-to-dot images

Give feedback to help him/her become aware of pencil position

Encourage child to practice for a few minutes every day until he/she consistently uses a suitable grip



Use simple activities that are appropriate for your child's age

Praise your child for his/her efforts

*There is a wide range of acceptable pencil grips. Although a student's pencil grip may look "different" it does not mean that it is not efficient.*

**IF IT LOOKS DIFFERENT, BUT IS EFFICIENT, DON'T CHANGE IT!**

## References:

- The Fine Motor Olympics
- Occupational Therapy (OT): Kids Health Information
- COATA Health