

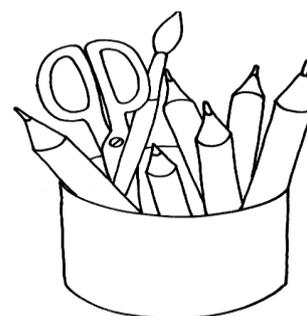
Holding a Pencil – General Advice

Information for Parents, Teachers and Carers

Which children may need support with this?

The majority of children will learn to mark-make and progress with this skill, but for some children this can be more difficult. Here are some examples of children who may need support:

- Children with delayed motor skills
- Children with co-ordination or motor-planning difficulties
- Children with low muscle tone or altered muscle tone
- Children with hypermobility
- Children with reduced attention and concentration



For more information, please contact Occupational Therapy on:

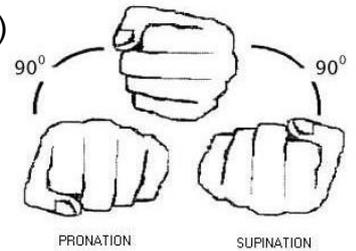
For York and Selby Area: 01904 726599

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What can I do?

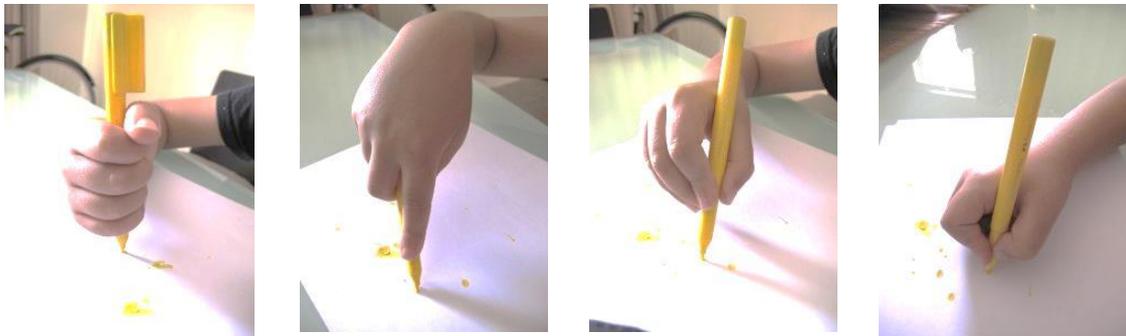
There are several key skills that must develop before being able to grasp a pencil:

- Isolate index finger movement
- Hold objects in a pincer grasp
- Finger and thumb opposition
- Identifying objects by touch in the absence of vision (stereognosis)
- Finger and hand strength
- Shoulder stability
- Wrist and forearm movements (pronation/supination)
- Hand dominance
- Mid-line integration (using both hands together)



If a child finds these skills tricky, we recommend you continue to work on developing these skills before moving onto mark-making.

Typical pencil grasp milestones look like this:



When grasping a pencil you are aiming for:

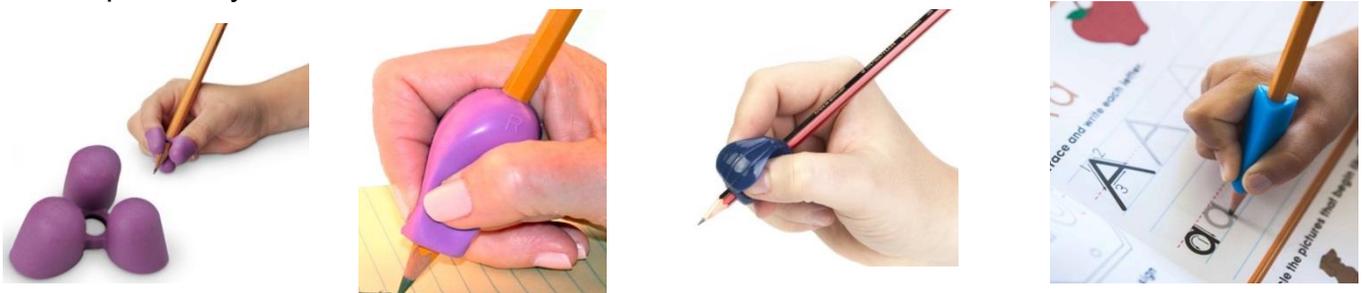
- Good web-space
- Thumb and index on top, with middle supporting underneath
- Little finger and ring finger tucked into palm of hand
- Fingers bent slightly



To achieve the desirable 'tripod' grasp you can practice by asking the child to hold a small object in the palm of their hand with their remaining fingers to keep them out of the way. Triangular or similar shaped crayons can act as a cue for the correct grasp.

To help with finger placement you may want to place stickers on the pencil or an elastic band to draw their attention to where their fingers should be.

You may want to try a pencil grip to support a child with their grasp – here are some examples to try:



Tell us what you think

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

For York and Selby Area: 01904 724366

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Owner	Occupational Therapy
Date first issued	August 2019
Review Date	April 2021
Version	4
Approved by	AB
Document Reference	HM

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