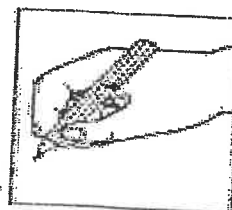
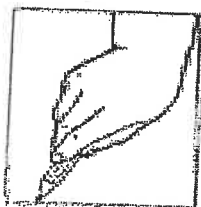
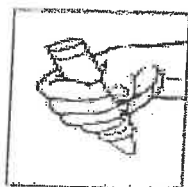


Paediatric Occupational Therapy Advice

Pencil Grasp

Pencil grasp usually develops through certain developmental stages. Children should be encouraged to move their grasp through these stages. A child at stage 1 should not be encouraged to hold a pencil at stage 4 without going through stages 3 and 4 first.



Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Palmar grasp.	digital pronate grasp.	Static tripod grasp.	Dynamic tripod grasp.

Children in early developmental stages (stages 1 and 2) of holding a pencil should use chunky crayons and pencils, they will not have the control to make small precise movements required for writing and are still at a pre-writing stage in their development. Teach and remind the child each time they pick up a pencil how to hold it according to their developmental level.

Stage 4 - Dynamic tripod grasp.

This is the grasp that is the most effective grip for developing writing and will allow children to learn to write at speed when older.

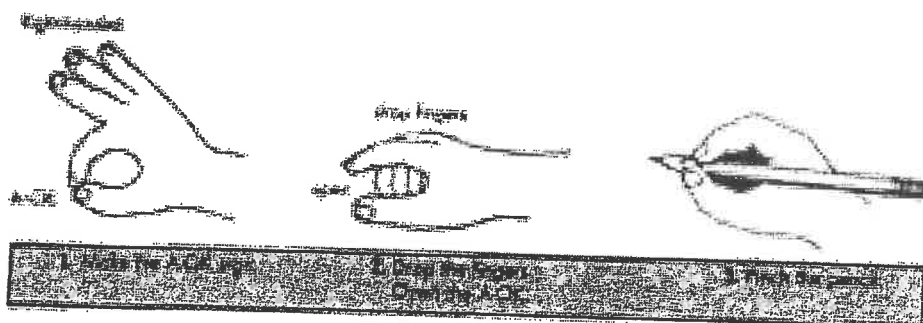
Pencil held with thumb, index finger and middle finger in opposition to each other.

Ring and little fingers are bent round to form an arch.

Wrist is slightly extended (bent backwards) and the side of the hand rests on the surface for support.

Tips to help develop a Tripod grasp (stages 3 & 4)

1. Teach the child how to hold a pencil correctly, try the OK method



2. Flip The Pencil.

Position the pencil on the desk with the point facing the child, pick it up in the finger and thumb of the writing hand, use the other hand to flip the pencil round until it rests in the thumb space. The child is now ready for writing.

3. Wrist extension - Rubber Band Trick

When holding a pencil it should rest on the thumb space and point towards the shoulder as this causes least tension in the hand, the wrist should be extended (bent backwards slightly). To encourage this; put a loose rubber band around the child's wrist, and attach another one to this to loop over the end of the pencil, or use 1 large loop of elastic around the wrist.



4. Wrist extension - try a vertical surface

Try putting paper on the wall and write on a vertical surface, this helps to develop wrist extension required for stage 4 - a dynamic tripod grasp.

5. Hold a small item in your little finger whilst writing.

This helps to isolate your index finger and thumb and can make your hand more stable resting on a work surface. Try using a rubber or a small tissue.

6. Tripod grasp – tiny piece of chalk

Use tiny pieces of chalk that are so small the only way to hold them is in the finger and thumb, try using this on an easel to encourage wrist extension also.

Use of pens, pencils and pencil grips

- Children should try a variety of pencils, in stages 1 and 2 short chunky crayons are preferable.
- Pencil grips can be used to assist the develop pencil grip for stage 3 and 4. Advice can be provided by the occupational therapist. Comfy pen grip, tri-go grip and grippies all available from www.ldlearning.com
- A rubber band wrapped around the base of the pencil can assist grip on the pencil, stopping the pencil from slipping.
- Pens with a soft and chunky grip can assist writing, try a variety of different pens and allow children to use at school if they need it for their writing.
- The 'Stabilo S move' is popular with children and therapists. It is available as a left or right handed pen or pencil and is ergonomically designed. They are available from good stationary shops.

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