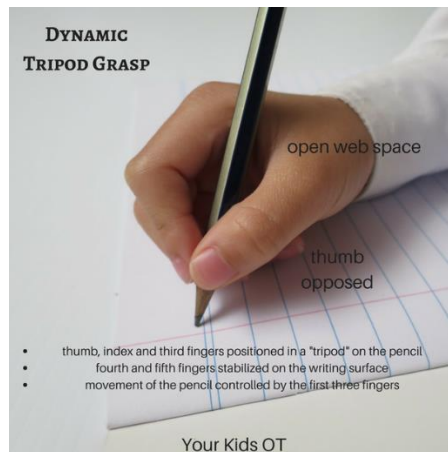


Tripod pencil grip – Information for parents



For efficient pencil control, teachers have for a long-time taught children the **dynamic tripod grasp** (see photo above). The tripod grip involves the thumb opposed to the index and third fingers with all three fingers position in a tripod on the pencil; creating an open web space (the nice circle made by the thumb and index finger) with the fourth and fifth fingers stabilized against the writing surface. It is the preferred grasp for writing speed, control and letter formation with movement of the pencil being controlled by the first three fingers (thumb, index and third fingers). Children who have a functional pencil grip will not be uncomfortable or fatigue easily when writing. Their thumb, index, and middle finger all work together to control the movement of their pencil. It's helpful to know that pencil grip develops over time. A tripod grip develops between ages of 4-6.

Strengthening the fine motor skills that are needed to grasp a pencil must come before using a pencil. Activities that require kids to use their thumb, index, and middle fingers in grasping are key. This prepares them for the tripod grip as it strengthens the very fingers needed for holding a pencil properly. We do this all the time in school with the children, dough disco, squiggle while you wriggle, funky fingers activities, ribbon wands, finger action rhymes etc...

Here's a list of some simple fine motor control activities you can do at home to strengthen your child's finger muscles ready to write.

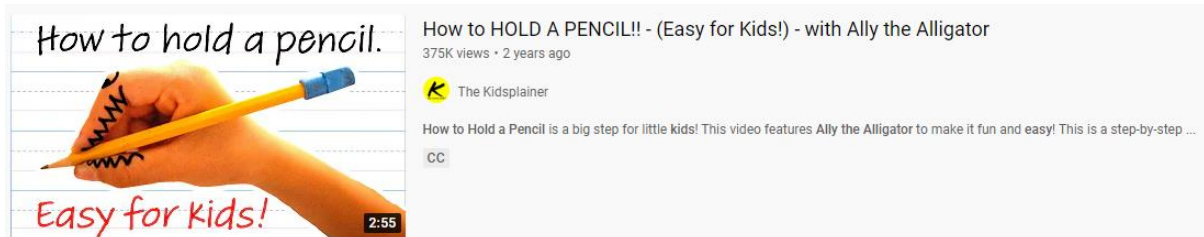
- Cutting with scissors
- Playing with Play dough
- Squeezing pegs
- Tearing paper
- Colouring by putting a crayon flat on its side and rubbing
- Picking up small items with tongs or tweezers
- Squirt water from a bottle or water gun
- Threading beads on to laces

You can find many more ideas on the internet – type in 'fine motor control activities'.

Does pencil grip matter? Yes!

Having the ideal pencil grip does not mean your child will have perfect handwriting. It's one component. You also have to consider their letter formation, use of lines on the paper, and letter spacing. All contribute to legible handwriting. But, having a solid tripod pencil grip will help your child learn to write effortlessly, with more endurance and neatness.

There are lots of videos on how to hold your pencil on YouTube. This is just one video I've found that my son enjoyed watching - How to HOLD A PENCIL!! - (Easy for Kids!) - with Ally the Alligator. We used it in class this week with the children.



Another good tip is using pom-poms or a bit of folded paper to be held by the last two fingers in the palm of their hand. This one is pretty self-explanatory. The fingers that are not on the pencil hold on to a small pom-pom or item. This reminds the child to keep those fingers closed in their hand with the correct fingers on the pencil. If you remind your child to use their 'pinchy fingers', they should hopefully make their fingers like the alligator in the video.



A fantastic website that I've found with lots of information and helpful tips is called:

<http://www.infanteducation.ie/infanted-blog/pencil-grip>

Have a look!

If your child is struggling, please don't worry. We have assessed all the children in class already using a pencil and know exactly which children need support with this. If they slip back into using a pencil or pen the wrong way, stop them and help them to hold it the correct way. It will, like all things with young children, take time and constant reminding. It will be ok but come and have a chat with us if you are unsure and we will be able to give you more tips. We are working on pencil control and tripod grip with the children every day in school. The more practise they get the better they will become!

Many thanks,

Mrs Evans