

A Guide for Parents...

Developing Pencil Grip

Pencil grip develops as a child's posture and muscles develop. This information provides ideas for developing posture and strength to enable your child to progress to a comfortable, dynamic pencil grip. You do not necessarily need a pencil to help to develop pencil grip!

When your child is using a palmar grip, usually between the ages of one and two, continue to encourage the development of the core muscles which support the whole body. Playing on the floor with cars on a car mat, balancing, dancing and running in the garden, for example, will all work on these muscles. At this stage, children will find it easier to mark-make using chunkier writing tools.



When your child develops a digital pronate grip, usually between the ages of two and four, strengthen arms by playing in the children's park on climbing frames and monkey bars. Also, provide opportunities to strengthen your child's wrists – try painting at an easel, or taping paper on the underside of a table and letting your child lie underneath the table and mark-make above them.



When your child develops a four finger grip, usually between the ages of two and four, try using trigger spray bottles or hole punches to develop hand grip strength. This will give children the strength to maintain the arch of the palm whilst writing. Using a rolling pin with playdough or pastry will encourage children to stabilise their wrists, which is an important skill to have whilst writing.



When your child develops a static tripod and quadropod grip, usually developing between the ages of three and five years of age, develop the dexterity and strength of fingers by using finger puppets and singing finger songs such as 'Incy Wincy Spider' and 'Tommy Thumb'. Dough Disco is another way to develop strength in fingers. This will encourage independent finger movement so that their fingers can move dynamically and independently in a tripod grip.



When your child starts to develop a dynamic tripod grip, usually before the age of seven, encourage use of the 'pincer grip' by threading small beads, which will help children to develop the correct pressure for gripping different things. Using clothes pegs and tweezers will build strength in fingers and the arch of the palm.

