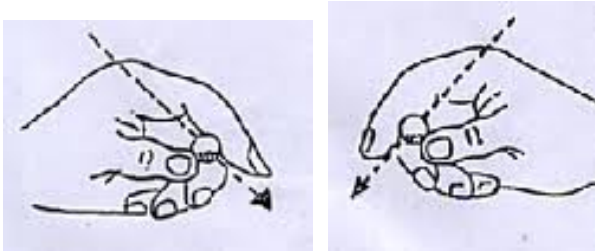


## Beechwood Primary- Information on Pencil Grasps.

### Optimum grasp

While the most efficient way to hold a pencil is the dynamic tripod grasp (figure 1) many other patterns are commonly seen in children and it does not always require intervention or modification. In the dynamic tripod grasp, the pencil is held between the thumb and index finger, with the pencil resting on the middle finger.



(figure 1 - dynamic tripod grasp for right and left handed)

### Functional Grasp Patterns

**Tripod grasp with open web space:** The pencil is held with the tip of the thumb and index finger and rests against the side of the third finger. The thumb and index finger form a circle.

**Quadripod grasp with open web space:** The pencil is held with the tip of the thumb, index finger, and third finger and rests against the side of the fourth finger. The thumb and index finger form a circle.

**Adaptive tripod or D'Nealian grasp:** The pencil is held between the index and third fingers with the tips of the thumb and index finger on the pencil. The pencil rests against the side of the third finger near its end.

### Immature Grasp Patterns

**Fisted grasp:** The pencil is held in a fisted hand with the point of the pencil on the fifth finger side on the hand. This is typical of very young children.

**Pronated grasp:** The pencil is held diagonally within the hand with the tips of the thumb and index finger on the pencil. This is typical of children ages 2 to 3.

### Inefficient Grasp Patterns

**Five finger grasp:** The pencil is held with the tips of all five fingers. The movement when writing is primarily on the fifth finger side of the hand.

**Thumb tuck grasp:** The pencil is held in a tripod or Quadripod grasp but with the thumb tucked under the index finger.

**Thumb wrap grasp:** The pencil is held in a tripod or Quadripod grasp but with the thumb wrapped over the index finger.

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**Tripod grasp with closed web space:** The pencil is held with the tip of the thumb and index finger and rests against the side of the third finger. The thumb is rotated toward the pencil, closing the web space.

**Finger wrap or inter digital brace grasp:** The index and third fingers wrap around the pencil. The thumb web space is completely closed.

**Flexed wrist or hooked wrist:** The pencil can be held in a variety of grasps with the wrist flexed or bent. This is more typically seen with left-hand writers but is also present in some right-hand writers.

### What to do to improve pencil grasp

It is important to try to modify the pencil grasp as early as possible. Adaptive pencil grips may be helpful in teaching students to modify their grasp and are used to facilitate an optimal pencil grasp (figure 2). There are many different types of grips available. For a pencil grip to be effective, the student needs to be involved in choosing the grip and to understand the importance of using it.



The most optimal position for writing includes the ankle, knee and hip at right (90 degrees) angles with the forearms resting on the desk. The top of the desk should be approximately 2 inches above the elbows when the arms are at the student's side.

### Activities to Improve Pre-Writing Skills and strength

- Skipping with a rope
- Volleyball-type activities where hands, paddles, or rackets are in palm-up position
- Squirt bottles
- Slinky-shift back and forth with palm up
- Bead stringing/lacing with tip of finger against thumb
- Pouring from small jug to a specific level in clear glass. Increase size of jug as strength increases.
- Inch a pencil or chopstick positioned in tripod grasp toward and away from palm. The shaft should rest in open web space.
- Practice screwing and unscrewing lids
- Pop bubble wrap
- Play dough/silly putty activities
- Use a turkey baster or nasal aspirator to blow cork or ping pong balls back and forth. These can also be used to squirt water to move floating object/toys.
- Tear pieces of sugar paper into small pieces and glue the different colours of paper on simple picture from a colouring book, or make your own design.
- Floor activities - large mural painting, floor puzzles, colouring when lying on stomach on floor.

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- Dot-dots, colour by number, mazes.
- Wheelbarrow walking
- Finger plays/string games such as Cat's Cradle.
- Use tongs/tweezers to pick up blocks/small objects.
- Pennies into piggy bank or slot cut in plastic lid. Coins can also be put into slots cut in foam.
- Working on vertical surface, especially above eye level. Activities can be mounted on a clip board or tapes to surface or chalkboard/easel. Examples: pegboards, Etch-a-sketch ( upside down), Magna doodle, outlining, colouring, painting, writing.
- Clothespins/pinching. Put letters on clothes pegs and spell words by clipping on edge of shoe box. Use a clothes peg to do finger "push-ups" by using the pads of the thumb and index finger to open a clothes peg and count repetitions.
- Squirrel objects into palm (pick up with index finger and thumb, move into palm without using the other hand)
- Squeeze sponges to wash off table, clean windows, shower, etc.