



Grande Prairie Public School Division



Effective Printing Instruction: Pencil Grasp

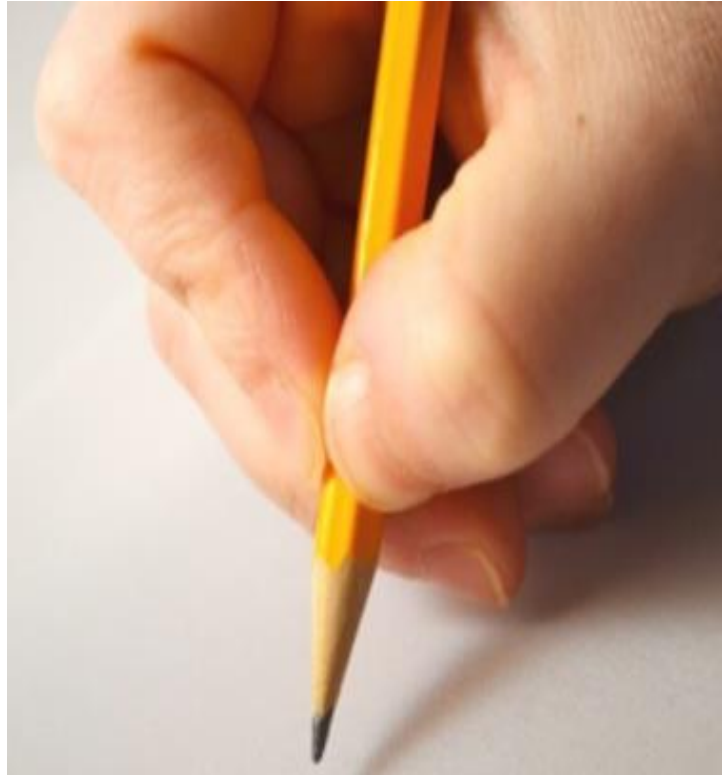
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Pencil Grasp...

is described and classified according to the position of the thumb, number of fingers on the pencil and finger joint positions.



Why do we care about pencil grasp anyway?

Inefficient and awkward pencil grasps may:

- cause biomechanical stresses leading to joint pain and hand fatigue, especially when the amount of printing increases in older grades
- contribute to decreased quantity of written work due to hand fatigue.
- decreased pencil control due to a lack of joint stability or mobility. This may impact legibility printing due to poor letter shape and form.

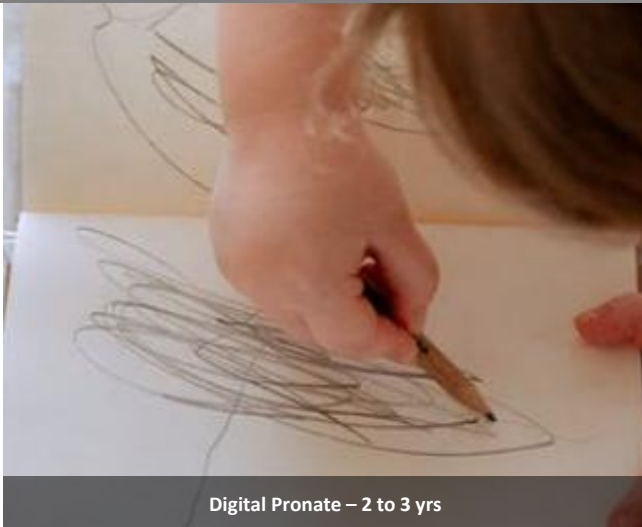
But some children with inefficient, awkward pencil grasps have legible, efficient printing (Schwellnus et al., 2012).

Letter formation and stamina are more important than pencil grasp for legible printing (Schwellnus et al., 2012).





Palmar Supinate – 12 to 18 mo



Digital Pronate – 2 to 3 yrs

The Early Stages of Pencil Grasp Development

Children usually follow the same general progression when learning to hold a pencil.

These are age-appropriate grasps for children similar in age.

Each child may follow this progression at different rates.



There is more than one functional pencil grasp.

A functional pencil grasp provides:

- Stability
- Mobility
- Joint protection
- Speed
- Stamina or Endurance

More information on pencil grasp may be found at: <https://www.lwtears.com/blog/how-to-hold-pencil-grip>

Quadripod Pencil Grasp



This is also acceptable.



This is a functional pencil grasp.

This grasp usually developed between age 4 to 6 years - sometimes up to age 8.

Tripod Pencil Grasp



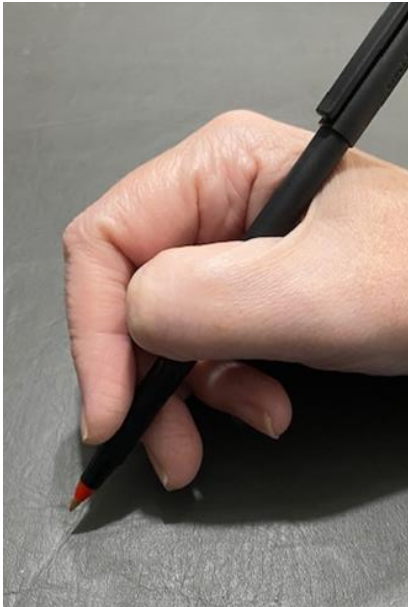
This is also acceptable.



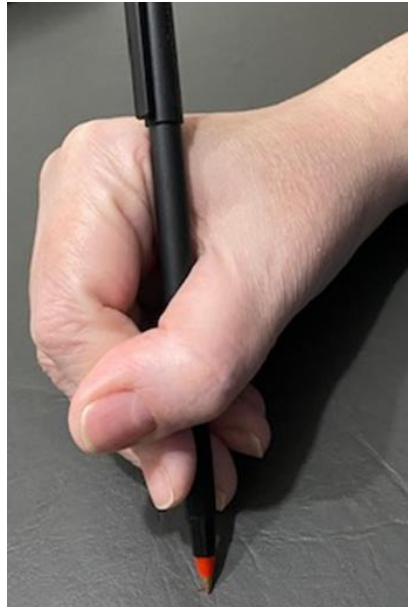
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This grasp usually developed between age 4 to 6 years - sometimes up to age 8.

Other Functional Pencil Grasps



Thumb Tuck



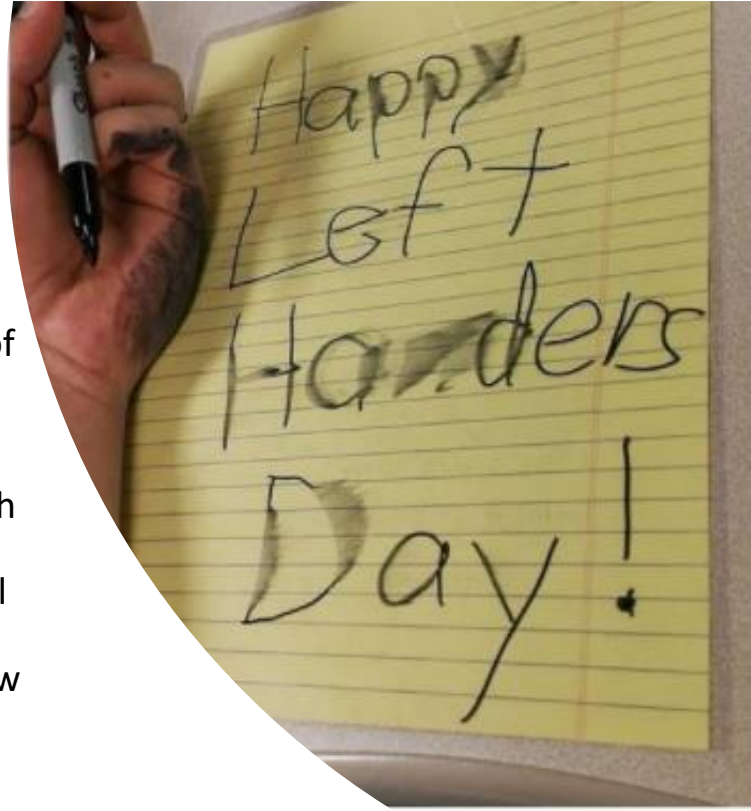
Thumb Wrap

These grasps are fairly common in the adult population.

For some students are considered an effective pencil grasp option.

Left-Handed Printers

- Left handed people are about 10% of the population.
- They have a biomechanical disadvantage when printing in English compared to right handed people:
 - Push pencil instead of pull pencil towards right side of the page.
 - Left hand blocks the writer's view of their printing.



Tips for Teaching Left-Handed Students

- Hand pencils to midline.
- Teach or allow left handers to pinch a little higher on the pencil - 3 cm from tip
- Have them place and keep wrist below writing line – no hooked wrist!
- Position the paper parallel to forearm (in the same direction)
- If copying, place the copy to the right of the paper.

More tips for teaching <https://www.lwtears.com/blog/4-left-handed-writing-tips-for-children>

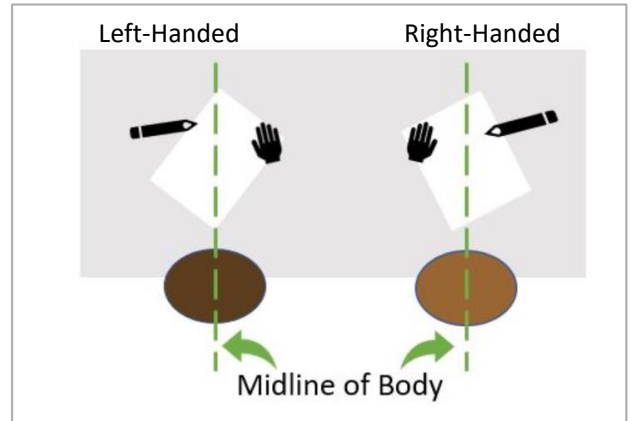
Positioning for Printing

Desk and Sitting Posture

- Arms rest comfortably on table
- Feet flat on floor
- Hips, knees and ankles at 90°
- Back of chair supports trunk



Paper Position



A 'good pencil grasp' ...



- Comfortably holds a pencil tight enough to not drop it.
- Loose enough to move fingers to control the pencil.
- There is more than one functional pencil grasp.
- Takes a lot of practice to become comfortable.

Teaching Pencil Grasp

- A good pencil grasp is actively taught.
- Children are natural imitators – they learn by watching and copying how you hold a pencil.
- Pencil grasp is a motor skill that requires lots of practice to become ‘natural’.
- Coloring is a great way to provide lots of practice to building comfort with pencil grasp.



Methods for Teaching Pencil Grasp

Each video is a different method for teaching pencil grasp:

Pencil Grasp <https://youtu.be/Eg6ggYR-aeY>

The OK Method <https://youtu.be/7ahcJ3VLGgU>

Pinch & Flip https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DP5htYZ5jjQ&ab_channel=CallOTChrissy

Pick, Flip & Grip <https://youtu.be/mt1vD0AxrtU>

Pom-pom Method <https://youtu.be/mt1vD0AxrtU>

Ally Alligator https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RclxBdiuvOM&ab_channel=TheKidsplainer

Facilitating Pencil Grasp Development

- Teach and model pencil grasp method
- Repetitive practice (e.g., pencil pick ups)
- Use vertical surfaces (e.g., chalkboard, windows, easel)
- Use a variety of tools - weights, thickness, length
- Use short pencils
- Pinching activities (i.e., playdough, eye droppers, bubble wrap, clothes pins)
- Practice using scissors
- Pencil Grips
- Monitor to ensure correct use

Reason

- Grip becomes automatic
- Promotes wrist flexion
- Promotes finger positioning
- Shoulder strengthening
- Encourages pencil grasp development
- Build pencil grasp readiness
- Requires separation of sides of hand
- Repetitive demonstration and instruction not effective