

Handwriting Series

PENCIL GRASP

Social Welfare Department

Occupational Therapy Team

Central Para - Medical Support Service Unit

Handwriting Series - PENCIL GRASP

Nowadays, "Quick, neat and proper," handwriting is often the standard and expectation from most parents. Occupational therapist aims to maximize children's potential during their developmental stages, and to improve their handwriting techniques so as to promote their interest in writing.

We have specially designed these **Writing Skills Series** in terms of fundamental handwriting skills and related issues for pre-school age group

As these handwriting series focus on grasping position and sitting posture, we are recommending the following activities that will gradually educate the basic steps of proper handwriting techniques. For further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact the occupational therapists.

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(1) Common inefficient pencil grasps

- Flexing the wrist
- Extending the little finger
- Thumb wrapping the pencil
- Holding pencil too near or too far away from the tip of pencil
- "Hanging Pen "
- Pencil not on web
- Holding the pencil tightly
- Holding the pencil loosely

(2) Effects of inefficient pencil grasp

Common complaints from parents when kids are writing:

- Hands get tired easily
- Slow writing speed
- Illegible handwriting
- Writing / Colouring out of grid / boundaries
- No interest in writing

(3) Common reasons that lead to inefficient pencil grasp

- Poor sitting posture
- Poor wrist control
- Poor finger coordination
- Improper paper positioning
- Weak hand grip
- Poor handwriting habit
- Too early to start writing complex words

(4) Stages of pencil grasp development

- Stage 1 - Palmar grasp
- Stage 2 - Finger grasp
- Stage 3 - Tripod grasp

(5) Mature pencil grasp

Dynamic tripod grasp

- Extending the wrist can facilitate the coordination among the thumb, index and middle fingers to manoeuvre the pencil efficiently

(6) Activities to enhance efficient pencil grasp

Upper limb

- Improve the strength and coordination of the upper limb

Hand

- Increase the strength of hand grip

Fingers

- Increase the strength of the fingers
- Improve the coordination of the fingers

Pencil Control

- Simulate the use of pencil
- Strengthen the thumb, index and middle fingers in holding the pencil
- Improve eye hand coordination

(7) Aids in helping the development of efficient pencil grasp

Assisting the tripod grasp:

- Rubber band (fixating the pencil)
- Special pencils/pens
- Writing aids

Fixating the pencil on the first web

- wrist rubber band

Right / Left handed pencils

(8) Sitting posture that helps in promoting efficient pencil grasp

Back straight, feet on ground evenly

(9) Positioning of the paper

Right handed: Paper placed parallel to the right forearm

Left handed: Paper placed parallel to the left forearm

(10) Quick test

Does your child have the following conditions?

- Resists writing? Yes / No
- Gets tired easily? Yes / No
- Slow writing speed? Yes / No
- Illegible handwriting? Yes / No
- Inappropriate heights of table and chair? Yes / No
- Improper paper position? Yes / No
- Pencil too big /too small, too long /short? Yes / No
- Inefficient pencil grasps? Yes / No

- Flexing the wrist Yes / No
- Pencil not on web Yes / No
- Thumb wrapping the pencil Yes / No
- Holding the pencil loosely Yes / No
- Atypical palmar grasp Yes / No
- Extending the little finger Yes / No

Please contact an Occupational Therapist if your child has the above conditions.

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