

PENCIL GRASP

There are lots of easy little tricks OTs like to use to promote stronger, more effective grasp patterns on writing utensils. Here are some favorites:

1 || Before they can focus on fine motor skill development and handwriting, kids need to build strong, stable core muscles to give them a good foundation and base of support. Make sure they are sitting with good, strong, supported posture.

2 || If the child struggles with holding the pencil either too far away or too close to the tip, try placing a small sticker or wrap a stripe of colored electrical tape around the pencil at the appropriate height.

3 || Give the child verbal prompts to use his "Super Fingers" (thumb, index, and middle fingers)! This simple reminder can make all the difference with younger children who just need a little nudge to remember the correct pencil grasp.

4 || Try having the child write with shorter pencils (like the ones used on the golf course) or broken crayons. This is a favorite trick of OTs and preschool teachers because kids naturally gravitate toward a tripod grasp at the correct height when using smaller writing utensils.

5 || Another great grasping trick is to have kids tuck a small object (e.g. craft pompom, marble) into their ring and pinky fingers, holding it there while they grasp the pencil and writing with their thumb, index finger, and middle finger.

6 || Try having the child write on a vertical surface (paper taped to wall or marker board, easel, slant board, or even a large 3 ring binder).