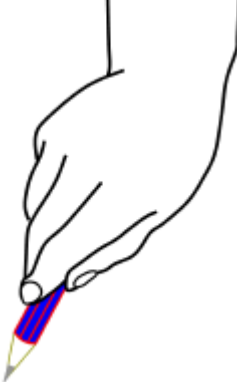
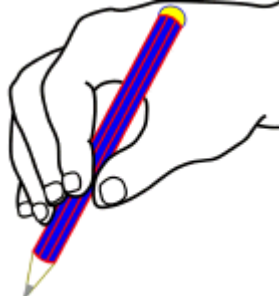
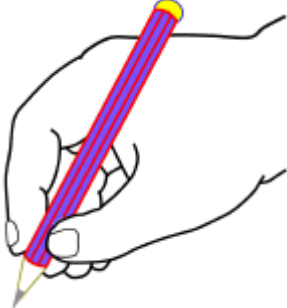


Getting a Grip on Writing

The pencil grasp! It seems by the time children start kindergarten they have developed a "good" or "bad" pencil grasp.

Pencil grip difficulties become more apparent in primary years as writing demands increase, however, they can develop in children as early as preschoolers. Children usually begin their grip development around the age of 1 to 1½. Outlined below are the stages of grip development.

	<p>1 to 1 1/2 Years</p> <p>Palmar-Supinate Grasp*</p>
	<p>2 to 3 Years</p> <p>Digital-Pronate Grasp*</p>
	<p>3 1/2 to 4 Years</p> <p>Static Tripod Posture*</p>
	<p>4 to 6 Years</p> <p>Dynamic Tripod Posture*</p>

Grip is important because it allows the fine movement necessary for writing. The pencil should be held $1/2 - 1 \frac{1}{5}$ inches (1-3 cm) from the tip of the pencil and the fingers need to be able to move individually.

Left-handed writers:

it is recommended that left-handed writers grip the pencil $1 \frac{1}{2}$ inches (3 cm) from the tip of the pencil to help the child see what has been written. If the thumb, index finger and middle finger share holding the writing implement, the child will find the writing position easy to maintain.

Problems Teachers & Occupational Therapists see regularly:

- Middle finger on top
- Thumb over index finger
- Pencil low in web-space
- Straight thumb
- Thumb & index finger parallel

What can you do to help?

Children should be encouraged to RELAX.

Remember, pencil grip is one small element of the complex nature of handwriting. Handwriting difficulties can cause low self-esteem, poor motivation for class work and homework, and frustration. In addition to grip, handwriting problems to keep an eye out for include:

- Slow at completing writing tasks
- Heavy pressure
- Poor spacing and written organization
- Poor letter formations and reversals
- Pain in fingers, wrist and forearm
- Poor writing posture

At Angel Academy we believe in early intervention. It is important to establish a good pencil grip as early as possible. Our program focuses on correct pencil grip and further builds on children's fine motor skills with exercises for correct letter formation and fluency. We follow the Bismarck Public School writing program.