

Common Pencil Grips



There are a wide range of ways people hold pencils, some appear natural, and yet others appear awkward and uncomfortable. Usually by the time a child commences kindy however, they should be able to hold the pencil in a functional tripod or quadrupod grip.

There are a number of factors to look for when observing how a child holds a pencil to determine if the grip needs intervention. Here are the factors that lead to a “functional” or mature pencil grip:

- Elbow on the table surface
- Wrist and forearm on the table surface
- “Less” fingers on the pencil (ie tripod or quadrupod grip)
- Pencil rests in webspace
- Wrist is in extension (this allows dynamic movement of the fingers on the pencil)
- Adequate pressure (on both the pencil and the paper)
- Helping hand stabilizing the paper

FUNCTIONAL GRIPS

Here are some examples of appropriate pencil grips:



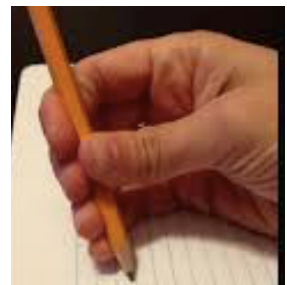
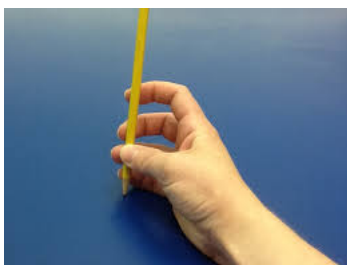
Tripod



Quadrupod

NON FUNCTIONAL GRIPS

Here are some examples of grips you may need to support to










Other factors to consider

There are other factors that impact on how a child holds their pencil and this may be easy to spot, or may be hard to detect. Some of these factors include limitations in core strength, limited sense of body awareness, limited hand strength, joint hypermobility, poor fine motor skills and visual skills. Pencil skills are often the “icing on the cake” in relation to physical development, so once all the building blocks are well established, the ability to hold a pencil often emerges with ease.

Handwriting Aides and Devices

Aides to Trial

Aide	When to use it	Cost
<p>Handwriter</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When wrist is “hooked” • Too many fingers on the pencil • Pencil not resting in webspace 	<p>\$8.00 (Skillbuilders) Or online</p>
<p>Weighted cuff</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the grip is shaky or tremor is noted 	<p>Starting at \$30 (Skillbuilders) Or online</p>
<p>Claw Grip</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When child continually lets go of the pencil • When the thumb wraps around the pencil and this is ineffective • When the thumb is tucked under the index finger • When the pencil is vertical, rather than resting in the webspace 	<p>\$3.00 (Skillbuilders) Or online</p>
<p>Stabilo pencil</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows minimal resistance on the page – so good for children with minimal strength, or those who fatigue (potentially for those above year one) 	<p>\$18 (Officeworks)</p>
<p>Slant board</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the wrist is hooked • Paper moves around the table • Helps with visual tracking 	<p>Starting at \$70 (Skillbuilders) Cheaper alternatives include arch lever folder on its side or a laptop tray (available at Ikea or Officeworks)</p>
<p>Cross over grip</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the child “thumb wraps” or thumb tucks 	<p>\$3.00 (Skillbuilders) Or online</p>
<p>Pom Pom in palm</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When there are too many fingers on the pencil – encourages a tripod or quadrupod grip 	<p>^ Craft shop – or roll up tissue into a ball!</p>

<p>Other Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of texta • Vibrating pens • Highlighter • Physical barriers to write within • Compensation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less resistance on the paper then a pencil – leads to • Provides good proprioceptive feedback to the hands for writing • Good visual contrast so child can visually see where to write • Ideal if child lacks control or needs physical support initially to draw shapes • Technology can prove very effective for children with ongoing challenges with writing and pencil skills 	<p>Kmart often sell vibrating pens in the stationary section for \$5.</p>
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##. Skillbuilders is a local supplier of therapy products. Items can be purchased online or at their showroom:

Website: <https://www.skillbuilders.com.au>

Address: Unit 1/24 Hammond Rd
Cockburn Central 6164
Western Australia