

Pencils and How to Grip Them



Many children have beautiful handwriting and are able to keep pace with the demands of written work. However, a second group of children is unable to do this seemingly simple task. But Why?

When looking at the way a child holds a pencil, you should imagine someone holding up their hand saying “OK.” This would be with the index finger and thumb touching, forming a circle in the middle, and the three other fingers out of the way. Then place the pencil in between the tips of the index finger and thumb, maintaining the circle shape, and having the eraser end of the pencil, pointing back toward the shoulder of that same hand. When the rest of the hand is closed, the middle finger should naturally slide to a supporting role on the underside of the pencil.

If this position is not being used, then it may be one of the contributing factors to the student’s illegible handwriting.

One possible solution is using a pencil grip. Placing this triangular shaped pencil grip, approximately one inch above the writing tip of the pencil will help facilitate the grip mentioned above, with the tip of the index finger on one side, the tip of the thumb on another, and the side of the middle finger on the third.

These pencil grips are an example of how simple assistive technology can be. Consistent use of them can improve the quality and speed of a student’s written work.

There are many different types of pencil grips available, which offer different features. If you would like more information on pencil grips, please contact your local occupational therapist.