



Children's Treatment Network

Building Brighter Futures Together

Developing Pencil Management Skills

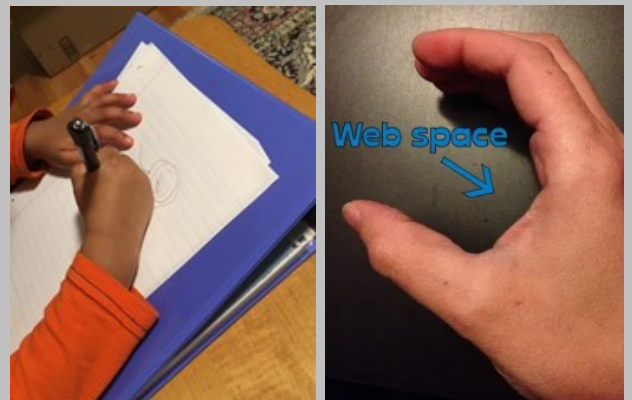
To print or write a child needs to be able to hold a pencil with suitable grip, apply a moderate amount of pressure, and coordinate small movements of the fingers and thumbs.

IF YOU SEE:

Awkward grasp on writing utensil.

TRY THIS:

- Try using a short pencil (about 3" and/or stubs of crayons) and encourage the child to hold pencil by pinching between the tip of the thumb and index finger, while encouraging an open web space. If you make the letter "c" with your hand, this web space is described as "open".
- Encourage dynamic finger and thumb movements, not whole hand/wrist/elbow movements.
- If you see a child with their wrist bent down, try using a slant board or 3" binder. Weigh the eraser end of the pencil so that it rests on the web space.



IF YOU SEE:

Colouring outside the lines.

TRY THIS:

- Make the outlines darker and thicker.
- Provide a barrier by tracing the outline with glue and letting it dry.
- Use Wikki sticks/Bendaroos (hand knitting yarn with wax) to allow the child to feel where to stop colouring.

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IF YOU SEE:

Presses too hard.

TRY THIS:

- Use a mechanical pencil.
- Write on tracing paper or place something soft (styrofoam, felt, padded notebook) or textured (sandpaper) under the paper.
- Tape paper to the wall and have student stand while writing vertically.
- Place a pom pom or small ball to be held by the ring and pinky fingers while writing.

IF YOU SEE:

Does not press hard enough.

TRY THIS:

- Use a pencil with softer lead. Pencils come in different varieties based on the hardness/softness of the lead (typical school pencil is rated HB).
- Try writing with a squiggle pen (battery operated/vibrating pen) for fun drawings.
- Try over correcting by placing paper over a piece of cardboard and emphasize pressing hard enough to see the writing on the cardboard.

Online resources:

[Activity Pad](#)

[The Anonymous OT](#)

[Growing Hands-On Kids](#)

[An OT Mom](#)

[OT Mom Learning Activities](#)

[Twistynoodle](#)



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