

## EDUCATION TAKING PART IN CLASS WORK WRITING & DRAWING

### GENERAL INFORMATION ON HOLDING A PENCIL

Pencil grip is only one part of handwriting. In nursery and school a variety of ways of pencil holds will be seen. Most children develop a pencil hold that is comfortable for them. The type of pencil grip your child uses is only a problem if it is making writing difficult to read, is not at a reasonable speed or makes their hand sore or tired.



### HINTS AND TIPS

- Show your child the correct way to hold their pencil.
- Help your child place their finger and thumb in the correct finger position.
- Praise your child when they hold their pencil in a good position.
- Do lots of fun drawing and writing activities together using different types of pencils, crayons and chinks.

### IF WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S PENCIL HOLD

- Try different types of pens/pencils.
- An elastic band wrapped around the pencil 1-2cm from the tip to remind where fingers should be placed.
- Try pencil grips.
- Using a slightly angled surface e.g. a 3 ring binder placed flat on the table to write on.



### GOOD SITTING POSITION:

How best to sit

If possible:

- Bottom back on the chair
- Feet flat on the floor
- Arms rest comfortably on the table
- Table and chair a comfortable size for your child.

### POSITIONING OF PAPER

How best to position the paper

If possible:

Make sure the non-writing hand is always holding the paper. The paper should be sloped at the same angle as the writing hand. This will help your child to see what they are writing.



## HOLDING A PENCIL (Advice for younger children)

As soon as your child stops putting things in their mouth give them little pieces of chalk or crayon and big sheets of paper to scribble on. It is important to encourage a good pencil grip from the start so make sure your child is able to identify and name their thumb, pointer finger and middle finger (see below for Tommy Thumb Song) so they can start to use them together.



## ACTIVITY IDEAS

- Sing the Tommy Thumb song (see below for lyrics).
- Use a variety of different mark makers (e.g. thick felt pens, chunky crayons, chunky chalk etc) and encourage your child to colour in pictures.



- Finger paint with your child and encourage them to use a different colour for each finger (thumb, pointer and middle fingers only).
- Pick up marbles using the thumb, pointer and middle fingers only.
- For any of the above ideas it can be helpful to encourage your child to hold a small cotton wool ball (or another small object) in the palm of their hand using their ruby ring (ring finger) and baby small (pinkie finger) as this will ensure these fingers do not become part of pencil grasp.



**Tommy Thumb, Tommy Thumb**

Where are you?  
Here I am, here I am  
How do you do.



**Peter Pointer, Peter Pointer**

Where are you?  
Here I am, here I am  
How do you do.

**Toby Tall, Toby Tall**

Where are you?  
Here I am, here I am  
How do you do.

**Ruby Ring, Ruby Ring**

Where are you?  
Here I am, here I am  
How do you do.

**Baby Small, Baby Small**

Where are you?  
Here I am, here I am  
How do you do.



**Tommy  
Thumb  
Song**

## HOLDING A PENCIL (Advice for Older Children)

As soon as your child can hold a mark maker using the thumb, pointer and middle finger only start to reinforce a good tripod grasp. Children easily develop bad habits and it is much harder to break these habits once they become established. It is important to use a tripod grasp as it is the most efficient method. As your child gets older and the volume of work increases they may be susceptible to pain or fatigue if they are not using the proper pencil grip.



## ACTIVITY IDEAS

- Use short pencils or crayons to encourage your child to only use their thumb, pointer and middle finger.



- Put an elastic band around the pencil (2cm from the tip) and encourage your child to always place their thumb and first two fingers on the band, or alternately you can buy pencil grips that will encourage your child to develop a good tripod grasp.



- Use chunky triangular pencil/crayons which will encourage the correct pencil grasp.



- Give your child plenty of opportunities to try using a pencil/crayon. Let them score off items on your shopping list as you put them in your trolley. Encourage them to do dot-to-dots and mazes.