

Activities to support development of using a pencil

Learning how to hold a pencil will take practice. It is important to let children have experience of mark-making. Give them crayons, pens, pencils, paint and chalk, and let them scribble. This will strengthen their hands and to help them learn how to move their fingers.

Using small/stubby items for mark making



- If your child/pupil still uses a whole handed grasp when using a pencil or crayon, try making the item smaller so they are more likely to use their finger tips to hold it.
- This can be done by snapping chalks, colouring pencils or crayons into small pieces (1-1.5" in length). This also works really well with sponges being cut up.



Play-doh / putty



- Hide objects such as beads or pennies in the putty (child has to pull the putty apart to pull out the small items and find as many as they can)
- Try making long 'sausages' by rolling the putty and pinching little spikes along its edge.
- Make a pretend cake/pizza/cookie: the rolling up of tiny balls/small pieces of the putty to create the toppings and carefully place them on is a fun way to encourage a pincer grasp.

Snack time

- Put small snacks such as cheerios or raisins in a small pot or egg cup that your child can't fit their whole hand into.
- Encourage your child to use their thumb and finger to retrieve the snack. This may require some modelling from the adult as the child will often try to tip the snack out onto their hand.

Peg games



- This could involve peg boards. Create fun patterns, practice trying to build a letter shape with the pegs etc.
- This could also be with clothes pegs. Encourage your child to use their index finger and thumb to help hang out washing, pin up paintings, line up pegs on the edge of a tin etc.
- You can also use pegs or tweezers as a fun way of picking up objects such as mini pom poms or cotton balls and moving them from one tub to another.
- Make this more fun by matching the coloured pom pom to the correct coloured pot, or learn to match sizes e.g. large, medium and small pom poms into large, medium and small pots.



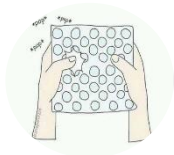
Arts, crafts and baking

- Sponge painting, bead activities, modelling clay, jewellery making, rolling, kneading, mixing, decorating as part of baking activities.



Bubbly fun

- Try using different sized bubble wrap. Pop the small bubbles pinching with thumb and index finger or by pushing down on larger bubbles when sheet is placed on a hard surface



Positions for writing and drawing

Practising drawing/writing on an upright or angled surface helps to promote extension at the wrist which also supports a dynamic pencil grasp. This can be encouraged by using:

- An easel (painting, writing, drawing)
- A writing slope
- Paper taped to the wall
- Chalk drawings on external walls
- Painting



- Bath time is a great time to encourage this type of activity using bath crayons or smearing shaving foam onto the tiles/shower screen and using the sponge to make patterns, shapes or letters in the foam.

