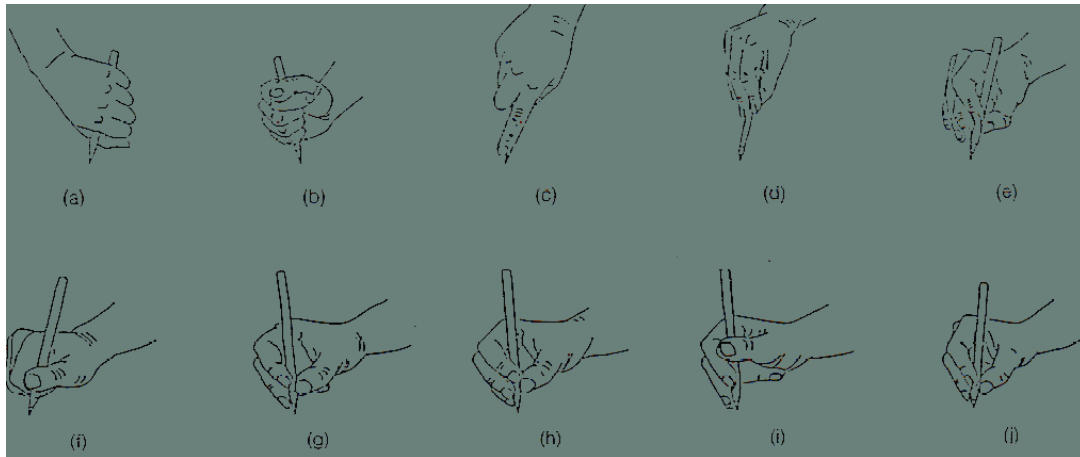


SCHOOL WORK

**Developing a Pencil Grasp
Introduction**

Children start making marks on a paper at around 12 months of age. Then, they progressively develop further control and better grasp of the pencil, resulting in increased quality of drawing and written work (see below for variations of pencil grasps). A pencil is a tool that works best when held properly. An inefficient grasp may negatively affect control of movements, flow, legibility and speed of written work.

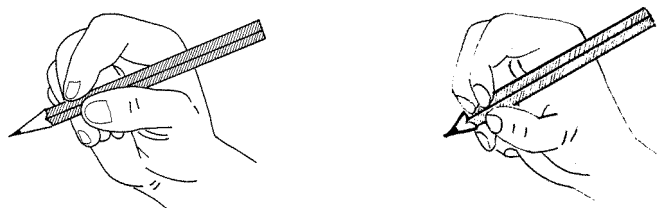


It is advised that each school has a range of different equipment to use as an assessment kit to try with children who have handwriting difficulties. External Pen/Pencil Grips may help with appropriate positioning of fingers, but this usually is a matter of personal preference and some children do not find the use of an external grip helpful, especially older children that have established a habit. A trial kit for schools could include items such as:

- A range of comfortable pen/pencil grips.
- A range of different pencils and pens, especially some with wider barrels or triangular shapes.
- An angled writing board
- Papers with different line formats (i.e. high visibility lines, double lines, 4-lines, different coloured lines/background, etc)
- A handwriting checklist



A **tripod pencil grasp** is considered to be the most efficient grasp for handwriting activities. Three fingers (index, thumb and middle fingers) are placed about 1.5-2cm from point for a right-hander, and 2.5-3cm for a left-hander (to increase visibility of the writing). The wrist and the little finger side of the hand need to be resting on the table at all times, in order to facilitate control of finger movements.

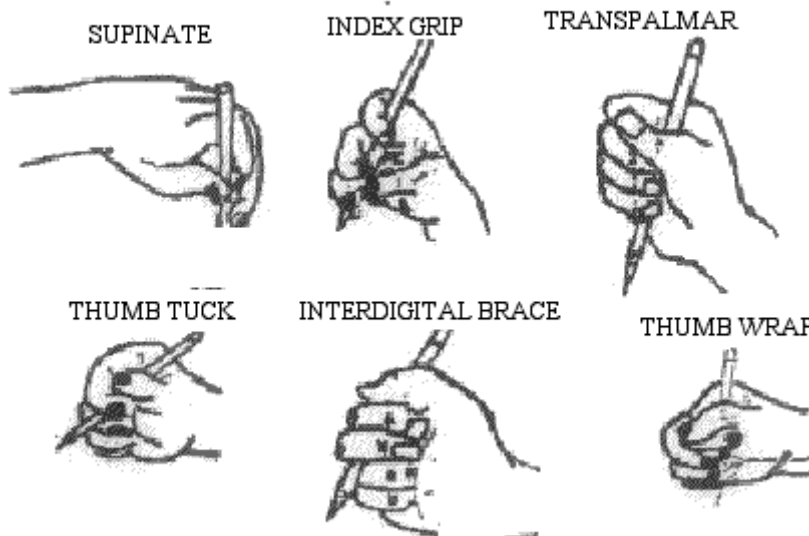


Please consider that not every child will have developed a correct tripod pencil grasp, and that some adapted grasps can also be effective, depending on the type of motor coordination problem or medical condition presented by the child. It is not recommended to try to change to an alternative grasp for an older child (usually 9 years of age or older), specially if this is effective in terms of speed and legibility. Here are some examples of adapted pencil grasps that may still be appropriate and functional for a child:



Early promotion of a correct holding position on pencils and crayons is likely to decrease difficulties in the long term for the child, and an appropriate pencil grasp should be encouraged even before more structured writing activities are introduced in the classroom (i.e. during drawing or colouring sessions). Here are some examples of poorly developed grasps that tend to cause an increase in fatigue, pain, slow speed and poorly formed or illegible writing:

INEFFICIENT GRIPS



Disclaimer

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