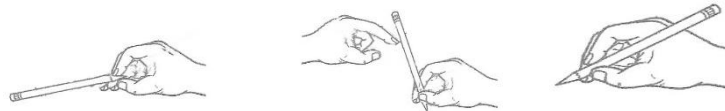


Tips and Tricks for Fine Motor Development

Pencil Grasp:

By 3.5-4 years of age children are learning how to hold a pencil in the tips of their fingers with the thumb closer to the paper. This is called the digital grasp, because it usually uses all of the fingers (digits). Between 4.5-6 years of age children refine their grasp to the mature tripod grasp.

Below is a depiction of how to pick up a pencil for a tripod grasp. It's okay to help your child pick up and hold a pencil!



- Pinch the pencil between the thumb and index finger (aka pinching fingers), rest the pencil on the middle finger.
- Tuck little and ring fingers into the palm of the hand. Try having those fingers hold a small object to keep them tucked.

Tips for Improving Pincer Grip and Hand Strength:

- Inch worm - pinch a pencil/stick/spoon etc between the thumb and index finger, move your fingers up and down the length of the pencil by inching them forwards and backwards.
- Monkey bar and ladder climbing at the playground.
- Animal walks (bear, seal, squirrel etc.) on all fours .
- Opening containers - Ziploc bags, bottles, different fasteners etc.
- Using clothes pins in play
- Threading pony beads onto pipe cleaners
- Playdough

Draw a Person:

- Draw a person/face together. You start by outlining the head, then take turns adding a body part.
- Make food on the plate into a face. Talk about where the parts are in relation to each other (i.e. the eyes are above the nose).
- Draw people/faces in the sand/dirt with sticks.
- Draw people/faces with sidewalk chalk.
- Make people/faces with things you find outside, such as sticks/ leaves/stones etc.

Drawing:

- Companion Drawing:
 - Draw the same thing or different things side by side. Talk about what you are drawing. What does it look like? Did it go how you wanted it to? How are you going to fix it?
 - Colour on the same piece of paper together.
- Draw big shapes with sticks in the mud/sand.
- Draw basic shapes together, especially '+' with one line going through the other line, the bigger the better. Basic shapes (in order of development):

| - O + □ / \ X

Hand dominance:

- Present cups, utensils, clothes etc. to the middle (rather to their left or right) and see which hand they grab it with more often.
- If you notice that they are using one hand more than the other and seem to be better with one hand over the other, it's okay to encourage them to use that hand!
- Do activities where one arm crosses over to the other side of the body (crosses midline). Activities include:
 - Drawing with sidewalk chalk or sticks
 - Climbing on the playground
 - Yoga
 - Jump/dance and freeze games
- Do activities where one hand is the doer and one is the helper. Activities include:
 - Pouring water from one container into another. One hand stabilizes the cup and one hand pours.
 - Use scissors! One hand holds the paper and one hand cuts.
 - Velcro ball game

Printing:

When your child can draw all of the basic shapes (shown under Drawing) you can start to introduce printing the letters of their name. Teaching proper (start at the top) and consistent letter formation from the beginning is important for long term efficient and legible printing.

Printing Like a Pro is a great free resource to teach proper letter formation.

http://www.childdevelopment.ca/School-Age_Therapy_Practice_Resources.aspx

Scissors:

The Correct scissor position is with the thumb in the upper hole and your index finger before the lower hole and index middle and pinky in the lower hole, alternatively; the thumb in the upper hole and first two fingers (index and middle) in the lower hole. Have the child practice picking up and holding the scissors.

Scissor holding tips and tricks:

- Thumbs up for good cutting! Teach your child that "thumbs up" means "good job".
- Elbows in! Many children use their whole arm when they only need their hands .
- If your child consistently forgets to hold the scissors right side up with their thumb in the little hole, make it fun by drawing a face/put a sticker on their thumb or their thumbnail before they begin cutting.

Developmental Sequence:

- Snipping: By age two kids can often make one snip into paper. Try snipping straws, or long strips of thick paper.
- Cutting Line: By age 3, kids can often cut along a thick line. The snips are not always smooth. Keep using thick paper to make it easier. Old file folders work really well.
- Cutting longer lines: By age 4, kids can often cut 6" along a straight line with smoother snips.

Other Resources:

<https://therapyfunzone.net/blog/ot/fine-motor-skills/>

<http://therapystreetforkids.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqz4z9aQRJY> Animal Freeze Dance