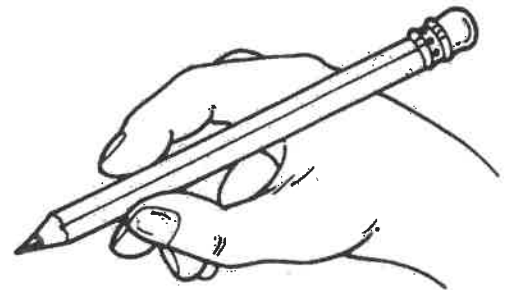


Learning How to Hold a Pencil Properly

Some children just naturally know how to hold a pencil properly. Unfortunately, some children struggle to learn this skill and must be taught proper pencil grasp. Below are some tips that will help you teach pencil skills.

- **Good Posture.** Children should maintain good posture when they are learning how to print. Their feet should be on the floor and the desk surface should be at a height for the arm and elbow to rest comfortably. Ankles, hips, and knees should all be at 90 degree angles. If the chair is too high, place a foot stool under the child's feet.
- **Slanted Surface.** Learning how to print is easier when children are permitted to work on a slanted surface. Place a 4-inch three ring-binder on the desk in front of the child. The spine of the binder should be facing the top of the desk. Rotate the binder to a 45 degree angle. Tape a piece of writing paper on the binder. Writing on this slanted surface is fun and can be extremely beneficial.
- **Align Paper.** Even if you do not use a slanted surface, be sure that the paper is aligned parallel to the arm of the dominant hand and is at a 45 degree angle. The non-dominant hand should be used to hold the paper stable.
- **Proper Pencil Grasp.** The pencil should be held between the pads of the thumb and the index finger while resting on the middle finger. Another appropriate version of this grasp is for the pencil to be held between the pads of the thumb and the index and middle fingers while resting on the ring finger.



Extra Helpful Tips:

- **Pencil Grips.** Use pencil grips for children who have a difficult time remembering how to hold their pencil.
- **Short Pencils.** Break or sharpen pencils down to about a 2-inch length. This will encourage small hands to hold the pencil properly.
- **Chubby Writing Tools.** Use sidewalk chalk, chubby crayons, or a chubby pencil cut down to a short 2-inch length to help children gain more control.

