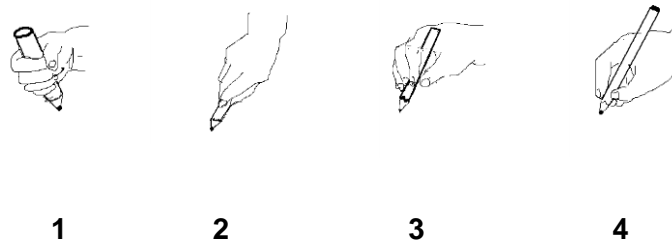


Occupational Therapy Advice – Development of Pencil Skills

Grasp

- Children initially start to hold the pencil within their fist (age 1-1½ years), progress to holding the pencil shaft with all their fingers (2-3 years) and then move on to a static, then dynamic tripod grasp. Children generally follow this sequence of grasps and it is important to encourage their ability at each stage.



- It can sometimes be helpful to provide some tactile prompts to ensure a good grasp. To encourage a tripod grasp, try placing stickers where you want the fingers to be placed (opposition of thumb, index and middle finger). There are pencil grips commercially available which promote a good tripod position. An elastic band placed at the tip of the pencil will prevent the fingers from slipping forwards onto the point. The ideal location of the fingers is about one inch from the pencil tip.
- Large, chubby pencils are easier to grasp before progression to slimmer types. Triangular pencils are also commercially available.
- To encourage good opposition of thumb and fingers, practice lots of fine motor activities that develop these skills (please refer to Fine Motor hand-out).

Dominance

- Once dominance has been decided, encourage your child to consistently use the same hand to draw with and the other hand to support the paper. Notice which hand your child generally prefers to use and encourage this to be the one to hold the pencil.

Foundation Letter/Shape Formation

- The sequence of pencil skills begins with marking the paper randomly with the pencil. It then progresses to general then circular scribbles. A child then needs to trace, copy or draw these shapes; | — ○ + / □ \ X △ ◇. These directions are important to gain prior to letter formation.
- Encourage these directions by using a multi-sensory approach. Try making the patterns using paint/chalk/Etcha-Sketch/white board. Use shaving foam/sand to trace the direction in. Can your child make the shape out of Playdough?
- Use sandpaper letters/shapes for your child to feel and draw over.

- Incorporate these lines and shapes needed in pictures/faces. For example – can your child add round eyes to a round face with a horizontal line for the mouth?
- Use stickers/dots for your child to join together to make the lines needed for the shape. If you draw the line yourself can your child follow you with the movement himself? Will he/she trace over the lines you have made?
- Use simple paths and mazes for your child to draw in-between.

The following provides information on where you purchase pencil/pen grips and triangular pens/pencils similar to those used during occupational therapy sessions. The companies suggested below are a few of the many suppliers who sell the items but you may be able to purchase them from local retailers.

Pencil/Pen Grips

Search for foam pencil grips, soft pencil grips, triangular pencil grips and ultra-grips on the following sites:

www.amazon.co.uk

www.berol.co.uk

www.coolrewards.co.uk

www.specialdirect.com



Triangular Stationary

Search on the following sites for triangular pens/pencils, felt tips, coloured pencils and “hand hugger” pens/pencils:

www.amazon.co.uk

www.ryman.co.uk

www.berol.co.uk

www.stabilo.com

www.staedtler.co.uk

The above information should not be taken as a recommendation or endorsement of the named companies. It is merely provided as suggested suppliers for parents or carers.

POSTURITE

2 different sizes, in clear or coloured Perspex

Available from:
Posturite
0845 345 0010
www.posturite.co.uk

POSTURE PACK

Includes writing slope and wedge cushion (can be bought separately)

Available from:
Back in Action
www.backinaction.co.uk

WRITE ANGLE

Coloured plastic slope

Available from:
Philip & Tacey Ltd
North Way
Andover
Hampshire
SP10 5BA
01264 332171
www.philipandtacey.co.uk

WRITESTART DESKTOP

Large wooden writing slope

Available from:
LDA
Abbeygate House
East Road
Cambridge
CB1 1DB
0845 120 4776
www.ldlearning.com

Contact details

Children's Therapy Services

Telephone number: 0300 019 2936

For further general health-related information, please ask the relevant department for an information prescription or contact:

The Health Information Centre
Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Longfleet Road
Poole
Dorset
BH15 2JB
Telephone: 0300 019 8003

www.uhd.nhs.uk

We can supply this information in other formats, in larger print or have it translated for you. Please call the Patient Experience Team on 0300 019 8499 or email patientexperienceteam@uhd.nhs.uk for advice.

If you wish to make any comments or to ask about any research evidence used to write this leaflet, please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0300 019 8499, write to the Patient Experience Team (address above) or email patientexperienceteam@uhd.nhs.uk

Poole Hospital, Longfleet Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 2JB

Author: Rebecca Shelton Date: February 2021 Version: Two Review date: February 2024 Ref: 162/21

t: 01202 665511 w: www.uhd.nhs.uk : @UHD_NHS : @UHDTrust : @uhd_nhs