

St Margaret's CE Primary School

Pencil Control Development Development of a tripod grasp

Even when a child has good fine motor skills and well-developed grasp patterns, holding a pencil is a new and complex task. You may need to check the child's grip on the pencil while they are colouring or drawing. The pictures below show the developmental stages that a child may go through when learning to hold a pen.

			
1-1½ years Palmar Supinate Grasp	2-3 years Digital Pronate Grasp	3½-4 years Static Tripod Grasp	4½-6 years Dynamic Tripod Grasp

(Erhardt, 1994)

A child should be able to use a static or dynamic tripod grasp for writing.

This means that:

- the pencil is held between the tips of the thumb, index and middle fingers
- the pencil is held in a relaxed way without too much pressure on the shaft of the pencil
- the pencil rests on the hand between the thumb and index finger (webspace)
- the webspace gap should be open i.e. the thumb and index fingers form a circle
- the ring and little fingers are held away from the pencil bent slightly into the palm.