



The correct way to hold a pencil

Holding a pencil correctly is a vital skill for any child to learn and needs the Palmar Reflex to have been completely replaced by the Pincer Grip. If some of the Palmar Reflex remains, the child may develop an unusual pen grip, e.g. hand turned in and thumb held over the top of pencil. This can result in difficulty writing. The hand and fingers are not relaxed, and much of the movement comes from the arm and shoulders.

Slow, laborious writing is very tiring and concentration must be used to keep hold of the pen therefore less energy is available to learn in the classroom. It is essential therefore to get this skill correct first time, as bad habits are hard to correct.

The action of holding a pencil is like picking up a pea, using the thumb and first two fingers. The thumb and the index finger (first finger after the thumb) hold the pen with the side of the second finger, pushing from behind, just below the thumb and index finger to give a three-digit hold. The child will then be able to control the pen and see what they are writing or drawing.

This skill is best taught on a one to one basis and once mastered will need plenty of practise with practical experience. Always praise your child's efforts as nothing succeeds like success.

Triangular pens and pencils may be helpful in teaching this skill, as they are easier to grip than the completely round ones.