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January 09

Writing Center



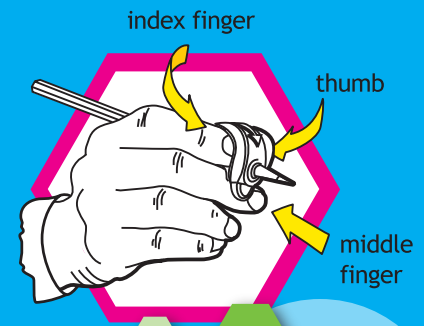
TEACHER EDITION

Discover Writing Success™

Pencil Grasp and Fine Motor Skills

During this month we will focus on the pre-requisite skills for neat, fast, and legible handwriting. These include pencil grasp and fine motor skills. Place a **Grotto Grip**® on every pencil and colored pencil in the classroom to ensure development of the writing muscles. Teach the kids to put “mom” and “dad” in the front seat (index finger and thumb on either side of the arrow) and the “kids” in the back seat (middle finger in the groove with the ring and little fingers held quietly in the palm of their hand”).

Instructions



Grotto Grip®

Week 1 - Pinch Strength

Provide: small pop beads in a variety of colors and shapes. Encourage the kids to connect them using the tip of their thumb, pointer finger, and side/tip of their middle finger (tripod grasp). This is preferable to using the tip of the thumb and the side of the index finger (lateral grasp).

Once the kids understand how to connect the beads and are having success, ask them to copy color patterns and/or reproduce patterns from memory. This continues to work on pinch strength but also adds some visual sequencing necessary for sight word recognition and spelling.



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Week 2 – Pinch strength

Provide: varied types of small tongs (bamboo tongs, children’s chopsticks, strawberry hullers, picklers, real teaspoon that opens and closes, etc.) and small objects to pick up (jacks, small koosh balls, cotton balls, folded pieces of paper, etc.)

And/or

Provide: clothespins (wooden or plastic) and small objects as above

Encourage the kids to hold the tongs or clothespins in three fingers (thumb, index, and middle) to move the objects from one place to another.

Be creative with this activity — kids could:

- Sort colored objects into colored bowls
- Match capital and lowercase letters on folded pieces of paper
- Place the correct number of objects on pieces of paper with the numbers written on them or in bowls with the numbers at the bottom.
- Sort nouns, adjectives, verbs
- Play early math games using manipulatives



Week 3 – In-hand manipulation

(the ability to move, sort and rotate objects within one hand).

These activities encourage strength and stability in the ring and little finger as well as isolated finger movements of the middle finger, index finger, and thumb. This pattern of stability on one side of the hand and movement on the other side of the hand is essential for legible, fast, and fluid handwriting. Make a fine motor kit that contains different small objects for the kids to explore while developing hand skills.

Provide: small, flat “coins” with a “bank.” This could be tiddly-winks and a box with a slit in the top, a tennis ball with a slit cut in it as a mouth and a face drawn on it - “Mr. Money” with coins to “feed” him/her, or simply pennies and a bank. Also provide small beads (1/2-inch or less) and string.

Encourage the kids to hold 5-7 coins or beads in one hand (usually the dominant hand) and feed them into the bank one at a time or string them onto the string one at a time without dropping the other objects in the hand.

Provide: small objects that encourage rotation at the fingertips: spinning tops, nuts and bolts of various widths and lengths, wind-up toys, padlocks and keys

Provide: activities that require shifting of the thumb against the index finger (button dolls, button strips, lacing toys, beads and string)

Week 4 – Pencil grasp strengthening

Provide: dough/clay and pencils (place **Grotto Grip**® on the pencil to strengthen proper muscles for writing)

Encourage the kids to flatten the dough/clay into a pancake and (with medium or light pressure) write their name and sight words into the dough. Kids can either erase the work by pushing the dough/clay back down with their index finger or rolling a new pancake.

Provide: mazes, dot-to-dots, shapes for tracing drawn on sandpaper and a chopstick with a **Grotto Grip**® on it. Have the child have the child trace directly on the sandpaper which will provide kinesthetic feedback to the fingers to reinforce proper pencil grasp.

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