Dear Parent/Guardian: This month in the Writing Center we are focusing on proper pencil grasp and the fine motor skills needed for neat handwriting. Each week will focus on a different aspect of these skills. Consistently use a Grotto Grip® on all pencils and colored pencils to train the proper muscles for writing. In addition, below you will find some activities you can encourage at home to reinforce what your child is learning at school:

**Weeks 1 & 2 – pinch strength**
- Connecting pop beads
- Building with Legos
- Using clothespins or chip clips to pick up and move small objects
- Using tongs to pick up and move small objects or stack small blocks
- Making pictures on a light bright
### Week 3 – In-hand manipulation

- Hold 3-5 small coins in one hand (their writing hand) and place them in a bank one at a time using only the writing hand and without dropping the others from that hand. The child will have to use their thumb to push the coin up to their fingertips while still stabilizing the other coins in the palm of their hand.
- Hold 3-5 small beads in one hand (their writing hand) and place them on the string one at a time using only the writing hand and without dropping the others from that hand.
- Hold 3-5 Lite Brite® pegs in one hand (their writing hand) and place them in the holes one at a time using only the writing hand and without dropping the others from that hand.
- Hold 3-5 small snacks (M&Ms, Cheerios, etc.) in one hand (their writing hand) and eat them one at a time using only the writing hand and without dropping the others from that hand.
- Manipulate objects that require rotation at the fingertips: spinning tops, nuts and bolts of various widths and lengths, wind-up toys, padlocks and keys.

### Week 4 – Pencil grasp strength

- Use small pieces of chalk, end of a paintbrush, broken pieces of crayon to ensure a pinch on the writing implement (it is nearly impossible to have a fisted grasp or thumb wrap on a small piece).
- Write words/letters in a flattened pancake of resistive material (dough, clay, goop) – use a chopstick with a **Grotto Grip®** on it.
- Write with a triangular shaped vibrating “squiggle writer” pen – encourage the tripod grasp by putting stickers on two sides to cue where the thumb and index finger are placed (the vibration helps the child hold their fingers in place).

These activities are meant to be fun and motivating. Daily practice will help to improve your child’s writing success. Happy Writing!