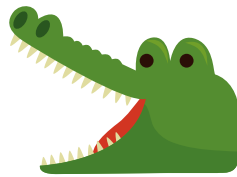


# Alligator Pencil Grasp

A HELPFUL GUIDE TO HOLDING YOUR PENCIL



## Alligator Fingers

How to hold a pencil.



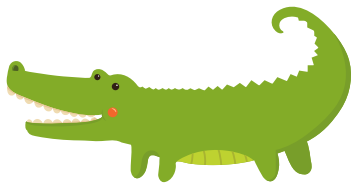
1 To teach the correct way to hold a pencil, you can have the child pretend his/her dominant (writing) hand is an alligator.

2 Open and close the alligator's mouth – and show that the alligator is hungry and wants to eat the pencil!

3 Now that the alligator is holding the pencil in his mouth, place the pencil on the bottom jaw of the alligator, and close the alligator's mouth on the pencil.

4 As the alligator eats the pencil, he doesn't like the taste of the pencil, so he puckers his lips. (Show your children what it means to pucker your lips!)

5 He puckers his lips and curls his jaws in the shape of an 'o' – and clenches the pencil in his teeth.



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# TYPICAL PENCIL GRASP DEVELOPMENT FOR HANDWRITING

10 Months  
Pincer Grasp



12-15 Months  
Palmar Supinate Grasp



2-3 Years  
Digital Pronate Grasp



3-4 Years  
Quadrupod Grasp



3-4 Years  
Static Tripod Grasp



5-6 Years  
Dynamic Tripod Grasp



## Functional Grasp

Improper pencil grasp can cause a child to experience pain and fatigue while writing as well as decrease writing speed. A functional pencil grasp is important as it allows children to write more efficiently, enabling them to keep up with their school work.

In order to develop a functional pencil grasp a child must have the necessary strength and stability, not only in the small muscles in their hands, but also in the larger muscles closer to the centre of the body. These larger muscles develop first and are responsible for postural control, shoulder stability, arm strength and wrist strength.

It is important to keep in mind that we don't necessarily need a perfect grasp, however a functional grasp is important in order for students to keep up with writing demands at school and prevent them from experiencing unnecessary stress to the joints in their hands.



## Practice Can Be Fun!

**Did you know you can work on tripod grasp using everyday items found around the home?**

There are so many ways to improve pencil grasp and the fine motor skills needed for strong hands using materials like cardboard boxes, straws, and other household items.

- Push toothpicks into a spice container.
- Thread beads onto dry spaghetti poked into play dough. (Work on color matching with this one, too!)
- Thread cereal onto string.
- Push acorns into play dough.
- Drop dry beans into small containers.



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