

How to Teach a Child to Hold a Pencil Correctly

Teaching a child how to hold a pencil correctly is a crucial part in them being able to write and draw. Writing can be difficult because, like all muscles, fine motor muscles need built up. The key to teaching a child to hold a pencil correctly is practice, practice, practice the correct way of holding a pencil so that the student can build up the motor skills....

Most schools will teach children the tripod method because this is the most common way to hold a pencil correctly. I actually have a fun little alligator trick to help you teach a child to hold a pencil correctly...

#1 Work on Posture

First and foremost, work on posture. Having good posture, feet on the floor and back straight is important to help students form good habits when writing. Not only will their writing look better, but they will have less back problems later in life.

#2 Work on Fine Motor Muscles

Before beginning their writing practice, stretch those little muscles out. Give them playdough, goop, or slime to roll and manipulate in their hands. Just like with any activity, exercise is key to building endurance.

#3 Practice Picking up the Pencil

The way a child picks up a pencil is how they are going to try and use the pencil. If a pencil is picked up with a full fist, it is going to be difficult for them to transition to a tripod grip. Instead, have kids practice picking their pencil up using only their thumb and pointer finger. Do this several times.

#4 Place Pointer Finger on Top

In order for a child to have the most control, teach them to put their pointer finger on top of the pencil. Their pointer finger and thumb should work together to hold the pencil. Teach them to hold the pencil as close to the tip as possible.

#5 Only Use the middle Finger as a Guide

Teach children to only use the middle finger as a guide to help with writing. The pencil should be rested on the middle finger, but not held with the middle finger. Practice resting the pencil and holding it loosely with the thumb and pointer finger.

#6 Make Them Use a Helper Hand

It may come naturally to use to use our other hand to hold the paper because we have written for so long. For kids, however, it isn't that simple. Make sure to teach them to use their helper hand (the hand they are not writing with) to hold the paper steady as they write.

#7 Use Tips and Tricks

If you see children struggling, here are some tricks and tips that can help them get the right grip for them:

- Use shorter pencils: Shorter pencils are easier to control than longer ones. It also encourages the child to pick the pencil up correctly as there is less room to add more fingers or hold it in weird ways.
- Teach the pinch and flip: Have the point of the pencil facing the child. Tell them to pinch the pencil by the tip and flip it over so it is sitting correctly in their hand.
- Crumble up a piece of paper: Have the child crumble a piece of paper into a ball and have them hold it in their hand while picking up the pencil. This will prevent the child from doing the fist grip.
- Use Pencil Grips: Pencil grips are great tools for helping kids learn to write.

