



## CRAYON GRASP

### The Development of Crayon Grasp.

The way a child holds their pencils and crayons develops throughout the preschool years. By the time a child reaches kindergarten, he/she should be holding their pencils and crayons with a "tripod" grasp (*thumb bent, pointer finger pointing to the tip and resting the crayon on the side of the middle finger with the last two fingers curled into the hand*).

A correct grip needs to be taught. There are activities below that will help you to encourage the muscle development to facilitate a mature grasp of writing utensils. Research shows that 50% of 3 year-olds have the ability to hold their crayons correctly. Children need to establish good habits early with your help.

#### **DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES IN CRAYON GRASP:**

2 YEAR OLD: Uses all fingers to hold the crayon in the hand with the arm raised.

3 YEAR OLD: Same as above with the arm on the table but not very stabilized. The helping hand should be beginning to help hold the paper by this stage.

4 YEAR OLD: Beginning of mature grasps with the elbow in the air (whole arm writing).

5 YEAR OLD: Mature grasp with the arm and hand planted on the paper.

### ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE GRASP

1. Encourage the use of upper body muscle activities such as playground equipment, balls, animal walks, pushing and pulling. This provides stability at the shoulder which facilitates grasp as well as develops the hand muscles.
2. Tactile activities such as playing in sand, shaving cream, finger-paint, play-dough, etc. Tactile integration is an integral foundation to hand skills.
3. Use of vertical surfaces such as easels, chalkboards, dry erase boards or paper taped to the wall. This builds strength in the arms and shoulders. It also places the wrist in a good position for writing.
4. Use of broken crayons-this naturally encourages a proper grasp and develops the muscles of his hand.
5. Provide lots of opportunities to handle manipulatives such as stringing beads, lacing cards, buttons, snaps, pop beads, clothespins, stickers, etc.
6. Do not use pencil grips at this age. Continue to provide instruction on proper grasp and experiences to develop their small hand muscles.

