



Pencil Grips

Use them or lose them?

Some things to consider:

***Children 5 years old and younger are still working on finger strength and coordination. They should be using a variety of writing tools and approaches to learning grasps and allowed to explore what feels best as there are a variety of functional grasps. Pencil grips are not appropriate for this age.**

***7-8 years old and older have established grasp patterns and muscle memory. Trying to change a grasp could cause stress, especially if a child is already struggling.**

***Grasp patterns on pencils may switch during long writing tasks.**

Schwellnus et al., (2012)

***Grasp patterns don't effect legibility.**

Schwellnus et al., (2012), Donica et al., (2018), Denise & Swinth (2001)

***Kids often lose pencil grips or don't use them.**

***Pencil grips are expensive!**

***Dynamic tripod, lateral tripod, dynamic quadrupod and lateral quadruped are all functional grasps. Why are we only focusing on the first one?**

***A soft grip can help a child who is gripping a pencil so tightly his fingers are blanching.**

***Using a rubber band on a pencil can give a child a target. Other low cost DIYs can work if a grip is needed for a trial.**

***Try reducing handwriting tasks for low-tone kids or kids with hypermobile joints instead of using grips. While writing by hand is an important proven component of learning to read, spell, and memory for notes taken, alternatives to writing by hand are numerous and widely used.**

Schwellnus, H., Carnahan, H., Kushki, A., Polatajko, H., Missiuna, C., & Chau, T. (2012). Effect of pencil grasp on the speed and legibility of handwriting in children. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 66(6), 718-26. Dennis JL, Swinth Y. Pencil grasp and children's handwriting legibility during different-length writing tasks. *Am J Occup Ther*. 2001 Mar-Apr;55(2):175-83. Donica, D.K., Massengill, M., & Gooden, M.J. (2018). A quantitative study on the relationship between grasp and handwriting legibility: does grasp really matter? *Journal of Occupational Therapy, Schools, & Early Intervention*, 11, 411 - 425.