

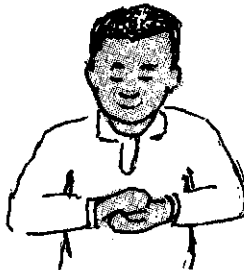
# Good Posture Can Be Fun

## Arms and hands

Here are some warm-ups that children enjoy.



Push palms



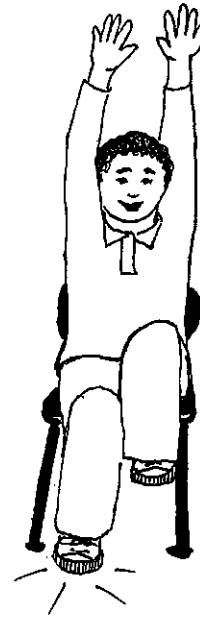
Pull hands



Hug yourself tightly

## Total posture—Stomp!

Stomping is fun and really works! Sit down and show the children how to stomp their feet and wave their arms in the air. Have them shout, "Na, na, naaah, na, na, naaah," with you while waving and stomping. Nothing's better for getting them to sit correctly. Their feet will be on the floor and parallel in front of them. The arm movements make their trunks straight. The noise and chaos lets them release energy, but it's totally under your control. When you have them stop stomping, they'll have good posture and be ready to pay attention. Use stomping a few times a day.



## Head and shoulders

Do this anytime you find your children sagging.



Raise shoulders up



Pull shoulders back



Let them down

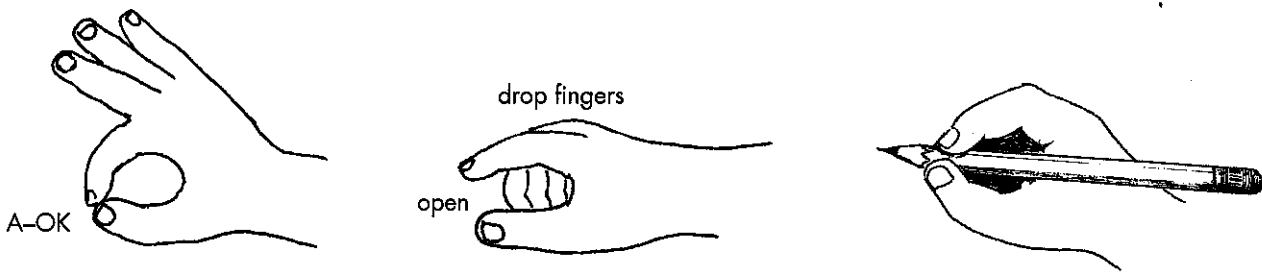
# Hold the Pencil

You can put an end to awkward or even fisted pencil grips. Using these tips, your students will hold the pencil with the right combination of mobility and control. Children are "plastic"—they can be molded gently into good habits. These tips make it easy and fun for children to learn a correct pencil grip.

## A-OK

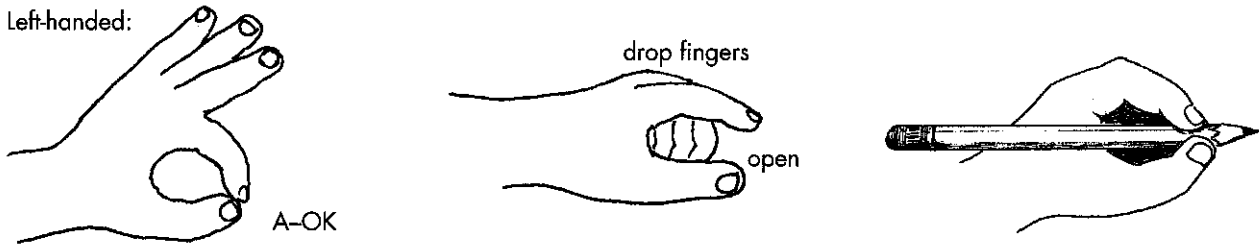
Teach children how to hold the pencil correctly. This is the A-OK way to help children. The pencil is pinched between the thumb pad and the index finger pad. The pencil rests on the middle finger.

Right-handed:



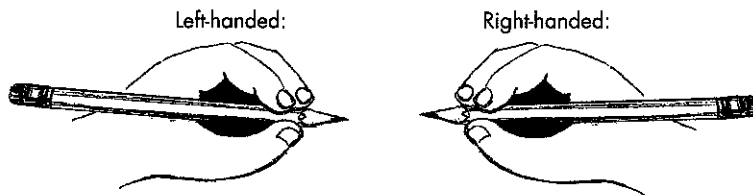
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| 1. Make the A-OK sign. | 2. Drop the fingers.<br>Open the A-OK. | 3. Pinch the pencil. |
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Left-handed:



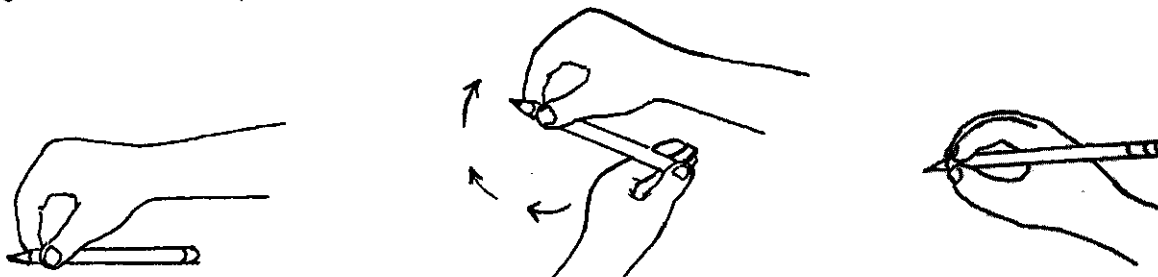
## Alternate grip

A good alternate grip is a pinch with the thumb and two fingers. The pencil rests on the ring finger.



## Flip the pencil trick

Here is another method. It is a trick that someone showed me and I've found it so effective and so much fun I've been sharing it ever since. Children like to do it and it puts the pencil in the correct position. (Illustrated for right-handed students.)



Place pencil on table pointing away from you. Pinch pencil and pick it up. Pinch the pencil where you should hold it—on the point where the paint meets the wood.

Hold the eraser and twirl it around.

Voila!

## Teach the correct pencil grip in three easy steps

This step-by-step technique is a great way to develop a correct pencil grip or to fix awkward ones. The trick is that you don't teach the grip and writing with the grip in the same teaching session. Separate the teaching into these three stages and you will be impressed with how easy the correct grip becomes.

**Pick up**—Have the child pick up the pencil and hold it in the air with the fingers and thumb correctly placed. Help position the child's fingers if necessary. Tell your students, "Wow that is a perfect pencil grip. Now make a few circles in the air with that perfect pencil grip." Don't let the students write on paper. Just have them pick the pencil up correctly, wave it in the air and gently drop it down. Do this for a few days, until the students can automatically pick up and hold the pencil correctly.

**Scribble-wiggle**—Give each student a piece of paper with a dot (about three times the size of a period) in the center of the paper. Have the students pick up the pencil, hold it correctly, and put the pencil point on the dot. The little finger side of the "pencil hand" rests on the paper. The child makes wiggly marks through and around the dot without lifting the pencil or hand. (The "helping hand" is flat and holds the paper.) The advantage of this step is that children develop their pencil grip and finger control without being critical of how the writing looks.

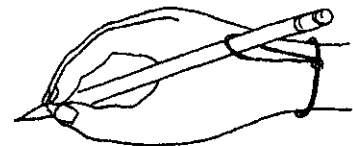
**Write**—Have each student pick up the pencil, hold it correctly and write the first letter of his or her name. Add letters until the children can write their names easily with the correct grip. This will get your students off to a wonderful start. When helping students with poor pencil grips, only insist that they use their new correct grip for writing their names. This will give them frequent practice with the new correct grip. Then slowly build the amount of work that they must do with the new correct grip.

## Using pencil grips

If a child continues to have difficulty holding the pencil, there are a variety of grips available at school supply stores, art/stationery stores and catalogs. Their usefulness varies from grip to grip and child to child. Experiment with them and use them only if they make it easier for the child to hold the pencil correctly.

## Rubber band trick

Check the angle of the pencil. If it's standing straight up, the pencil will be hard to hold and will cause tension in the fingertips. Put a rubber band around child's wrist. Loop another rubber band to the first one. Pull the loop over to catch the pencil eraser. This may keep the pencil pulled back at the correct angle. If so, you may make or buy a more comfortable version that uses pony tail holders.



## Pencil driving tip

Name the fingers: The thumb is the "Dad," the index finger is the "Mom." The remaining fingers are the child and any brothers, sisters, friends, or pets. (Use driver and passenger names to suit child's family.) Say the pencil is the car. Just like in a real car, Dad and Mom sit in front and the kids, friends, or pets sit in back. For safe driving, Dad and Mom face forward (toward the point of the pencil). Dad shouldn't sit on Mom's lap (thumb on top of index finger) and Mom shouldn't sit on Dad's lap (index finger on top of thumb)! If children use an overlapping or tucked-in thumb, remind them that no one can sit on anyone's lap while driving! This is a summary of a tip from Betsy Daniels, COTA/L, and Christine Bradshaw, OTR/L. Betsy's daughter did the illustration (copyrighted and used with permission).

