



## 6 Ways to Improve Pencil Grasp

### 1. Use Toys and Tongs:

One way to improve hand strength is by building with Legos and other toys that involve snapping items together or by using tongs to pick up items. You can use regular kitchen tongs to pick up cotton balls or other small items. Tongs and tweezers encourage your child to squeeze with their thumb and other fingers.

### 2. Play With Putty:

By pressing, rolling, and stretching it children build dexterity and strength. Play Doh can also be helpful.

### 3. Use Vertical Surfaces:

Drawing on chalkboards, dry erase boards, and paper taped on a wall, can all help build strength into the shoulders and improve body awareness.

### 4. Small Things for Small Hands:

Small broken crayons are a great way to naturally get kids to use an efficient grasp. Other small writing tools can be golf pencils or small broken chalk.

### 5. Pencil Grips:

There are many available online. Some therapist favorites are Grotto Grip and The Claw. It is a good thing to try several different ones to find out which one is most effective with a child.

### 6. Bubble Wrap:

Any time you can incorporate the unique popping sound with a bubble of air you have a winner. Allow child to pinch thumb and each of their other fingers one at a time. You can often get scrap bubble wrap free at stores such as TJMaxx or Ross Dress For Less.



## 15 Commonly Used Classroom Tools

Give your child the benefit of learning how to use the following classroom tools so that the school day will go smoother.

1. **Sink Hardware-** No child can get thru school without needing to wash their hands.
2. **Paint brushes and sponges-** Kids strengthen their fine motor skills with these tools.
3. **Crayons and pencils-** remember that small things are best for small hands. Use broken crayons and regular size pencils.
4. **Glue Sticks-** Let child don and doff cap as well as place glue on smaller item to be glued.
5. **Scissors-** This is a wonderful brain builder. Try making a collage or cutting out a picture of choice.
6. **Stapler-** This can be harder than it looks, and it uses proprioceptive and auditory input.
7. **Paper clips-** Try clipping cardstock paper first since it might be easier.
8. **Hole Puncher-** This is great for grip strengthening and it is fun.
9. **Tape-** This is often used to fix mistakes in the classroom, and the sticky quality can be soothing.
10. **3 Ring Binders-** This is a tricky one to learn and can be scary for some kids.
11. **Zippers and Containers-** Remember to look at what it takes to use clothing and lunch boxes.
12. **Folders-** This is often where the homework gets placed.
13. **Combination Locks-** Usually this is a middle school tool on lockers.
14. **Keys-** These are often overlooked and taken for granted.
15. **Gloves-** While this is rare, it is expected that a child know how to don and doff a glove.