Developing an Effective Pencil Grip Guide

This progression should be used to deliver effective and targeted provision for gross and fine motor skills development. Carefully planned activities will enable all children to make progress and ensure that their pencil grip is not a barrier to their writing.

Pencil Grip Development Stages

	**Palmar Supinate Grip** This is a whole fist grip where the hand is positioned vertically with all fingers curled around the pencil. The crayon/paintbrush will be held in a closed fist and they will use movement from their shoulder to produce whole arm movements to make marks on the surface. During this stage, children may prefer to use vertical surfaces. **Ranges of movement needed for development:** • Palm arches or dexterity in fingers to support mark making tool. • Strengthening of muscles in arm and developing from a shoulder pivot to a wrist pivot.
	**Digital Pronate Grip** In this grip, all 4 fingers and the thumb are used to grip the pencil in a vertical position with the palm of the hand facing downwards towards the paper and the fingers pointing downwards. The movement comes from the shoulder and elbow. Vertical surfaces may be the preferred choice of creativity. **Ranges of movement needed for development:** • Dexterity in wrist, finger dip and pip joints
	**Inverted Tripod Grip** This grip uses 3 fingers (index, middle and ring fingers) and the thumb and can be either static or dynamic. A 'static' grip is where the fingers are locked in position, with the hand muscles doing little work so the pencil movement is coming largely from the wrist and above. A 'dynamic' grip is when the fingers can move the pencil allowing for more precision. This child has nearly adopted the most efficient grip. They are using their index and middle finger along with their thumb to grip the pencil however the web space is much smaller in this stage. Web space is the area between your thumb and index finger. **Ranges of movement needed for development** • Dexterity in final finger joints
	**Triangulation or Tripod Grip** The child will hold the pencil between the thumb and index finger with the pencil supported on the middle finger. The ring and little fingers are gently curled inwards. This gives an open wide web space which means the movement comes from the fingers. **Ranges of movement needed for development:** • Pivoting joints for the thumb and fingers.

Activities to support children to demonstrate the Palmar Supinate Grip

Building using large scale bricks, boxes etc. Children are developing their backs, core, shoulders, elbows, arms and hands.	**Painting with decorating brushes** Children are developing their muscles in their shoulders, arms, elbows and core. They can paint with paint or water on the floor, walls or onto rolls of paper.
Sweeping and washing using brooms and brushes. Children are developing their backs, shoulders, core muscles, elbows and arms	**Large scale weaving** Children are developing their backs, shoulders, core muscles, elbows and arms. This can be done on a fence, a goal net or climbing frame, using strips of material or long scarves.
Squirting liquid using spray or paint bottles Children are using the muscles in their arms, wrists and their elbows to aim and squirt – may be used to squirt numbers, phonemes, write on the ground or walls.	**Rolling** Children are developing their backs, shoulders, core muscles, elbows and arms. This may be used as part of loose parts play, or as an obstacle course challenge.
Waving scarves / ribbons Children are developing their core, backs, shoulders, elbows and arms. They may use these to dance or to write numbers and letters in the air.	**Using tongs** Children are using the muscles in their arms, wrists and their elbows to aim, open and close tongs to lift, move and place larger objects.
Aiming and throwing Children are developing their core, backs, shoulders, elbows and arms. May be used to match numbers and amounts or phonemes with words.	**Stirring and mixing** Children are developing their core, backs, shoulders, elbows and arms. Use sand trays / mud kitchen / role play.
Messy play Children are developing their core, backs, shoulders, elbows and arms. Use shaving foam and food colouring – children can draw and write using fingers.	**Messy play** Children are developing their core, backs, shoulders, elbows and arms. Use cooked spaghetti.
Gardening Children are developing their core, backs, shoulders, elbows and arms. Have gardening tools available including, wheelbarrows, rakes and spades.	**Balancing** Children are developing their core, backs, shoulders, elbows and arms. May be part of large loose parts play using crates, planks of wood etc.

Activities to support children to demonstrate the Digital Pronate Grip

Tweezers and pom poms Children are developing their elbows, arms, wrists and fingers. Large pom poms and simple tweezers should be used at this stage.	**Weaving** Children are developing their elbows, arms, wrists and fingers. Old rackets and ribbon, material strips or laces can be used to weave patterns and shapes.
Posting Children are developing their elbows, arms, wrists and fingers. Large counters with large slots, or tennis balls with slots cut in for "feeding".	**Hammering** Children are developing their elbows, arms, wrists and fingers. Use hammers with melon and golf tees if and when woodwork is not available.
Building Children are developing their elbows, arms, wrists and fingers. Smaller blocks should be used than in the palmar supinate activities.	**Tweezers** Children are developing their elbows, arms, wrists and fingers. Children tweezer hidden items from inside gloop or other messy substances.
Pegging Children are developing their elbows, arms, wrists and fingers. Children can peg out clothing, artwork to dry, shapes, letters, numbers etc.	**Painting** Children are developing their elbows, arms, wrists and fingers. Children use plastic cutlery and paint to paint pictures.
Tweezer/finger and thumb picking up Children are developing their elbows, arms, wrists and fingers. Children follow a shape or a pattern and place small items along it using fingers or tweezers.	**Twisting and wrapping** Children are developing their elbows, arms, wrists and fingers. Children wrap and unwrap wool or pipe cleaners around a stick.

Activities to support children to demonstrate the Inverted Tripod Grip

Attaching Children are developing their wrists, fingers and dip and pip joints. Children make chains of the carabiners, or attach and release to a net or metal cake cooling rack.	**Threading** Children are developing their wrists, fingers and dip and pip joints. Children thread small beads onto pipe cleaners to make patterns/set number caterpillars.
Covering Children are developing their wrists, fingers and dip and pip joints. Children stretch and cover tubes with elastic bands or loom bands.	**Linking** Children are developing their wrists, fingers and dip and pip joints. Children make lengths of plastic links – can be linked to number recognition.
Balancing Children are developing their wrists, fingers and dip and pip joints. Children use tweezers to pick up small blocks and balance them on top of each other.	**Scooping / fishing** Children are developing their wrists, fingers and dip and pip joints. Children use a straw or a stick to lift hoops/loom bands out of water.
Threading Children are developing their wrists, fingers and dip and pip joints. Children thread Cheerios onto strands of spaghetti (can be done with laces and beads.)	**Weaving** Children are developing their wrists, fingers and dip and pip joints. Children weave paper or ribbons through slits in a piece of paper.
Tweezers Children are developing their wrists, fingers and dip and pip joints. Children use small tweezers to pick up and sort beads, beans etc.	**Hammering and balancing** Children are developing their wrists, fingers and dip and pip joints. Children hammer golf tees into polystyrene and then balance marbles on the top using tweezers.
Twisting and wrapping Children are developing their wrists, fingers and dip and pip joints. Children wrap pipe cleaners in and out of pine cones.	**Threading** Children are developing their wrists, fingers and dip and pip joints. Children thread pipe cleaners into a colander, and thread beads onto the pipe cleaner.

Activities to support children to demonstrate the Triangulation or Tripod Grip

Twisting and wrapping Children are refining their finger and dip and pip joints, using pivoting movements for the thumb and fingers. Children wrap elastic bands around corks or narrow tubes.	**Fastening and unfastening** Children are refining their finger and dip and pip joints, using pivoting movements for the thumb and fingers. Children screw and unscrew nuts and bolts – can be done through holes in a colander. Children can also practise fastening and unfastening buttons and zips.
Stretching Children are refining their finger and dip and pip joints, using pivoting movements for the thumb and fingers. Children stretch loom bands between pegs in a peg board.	**Threading** Children are refining their finger and dip and pip joints, using pivoting movements for the thumb and fingers. Children thread small beads onto spaghetti.
Squeezing Children are refining their finger and dip and pip joints, using pivoting movements for the thumb and fingers. Children pipette coloured water into recesses in a bath mat.	**Twisting** Children are refining their finger and dip and pip joints, using pivoting movements for the thumb and fingers. Children lock and unlock padlocks.
Hammering Children are refining their finger and dip and pip joints, using pivoting movements for the thumb and fingers. Children push cloves into oranges.	**Attaching** Children are refining their finger and dip and pip joints, using pivoting movements for the thumb and fingers. Children make chains of the carabiners, or attach and release to a net or metal cake cooling rack.
Painting Children are refining their finger and dip and pip joints, using pivoting movements for the thumb and fingers. Children use half a cotton bud to paint shapes, letters and numbers.	**Tweezering** Children are refining their finger and dip and pip joints, using pivoting movements for the thumb and fingers. Children use the tips of their fingers to pick sequins off sticky backed plastic.
Threading Children are refining their finger and dip and pip joints, using pivoting movements for the thumb and fingers. Children use the tips of their fingers to thread laces through a peg board.	

List of suggested resources:

- Large boxes/ bricks
- Brooms and brushes
- Empty spray or paint bottles
- Old rackets with spare material/ ribbons
- Beanbags
- Gardening tools
- Decorating brushes
- Tongs and tweezers with pompoms
- Kitchen utensils
- Crates, tyres, planks of wood
- Washing line with various sized pegs
- Hooks and clips
- Metal cooling rack
- Hammer and golf tees
- Laces and beads
- Pipe cleaners and pine cones
- Small elastic bands and peg boards
- Pipettes
- Cotton buds