

# Key Area: Movement and Motor

## Developing Cutting Skills



Promoting Literacy  
Development

Children should progress through the following Stages 1 to 4 in order to develop good cutting skills.

### Stage 1

Children learn to hold scissors appropriately and to open and close scissors.

Children learn to place their thumb in the top ring of the scissors and their two or three fingers in the bottom ring.

At this early stage it is recommended that adults prompt children to produce the 'thumbs up' sign before taking hold of the scissors. If students require muscle strengthening or hand coordination practice, play a game of "Open Shut Them!"

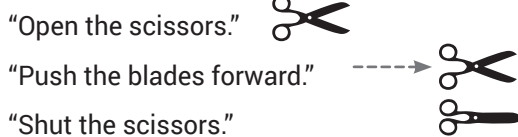


### Stage 2

Children learn to hold and snip paper.

Children learn to hold the paper in their non-cutting hand and to open the scissors, push the blade forward and shut the scissors resulting in snips to paper. Remember 'Thumps Up'.

To Make Snips...



### A Note About Dominance

Research suggests that the majority of children show a dominant preference by 3 years and most by school age, however some actually establish dominance as late as 8 or 9 years old. Making a preference is important as it allows the child to develop skill and endurance with that hand.

If a child has not yet made a preference, it is suggested that the child be encouraged to participate in activities:

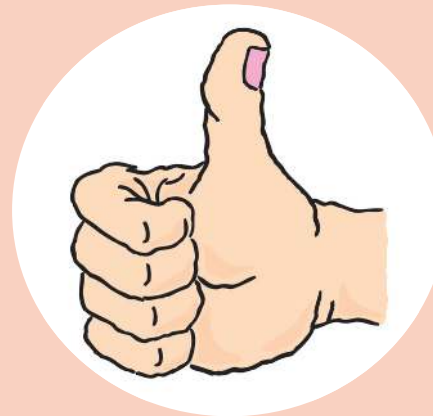
- that involve crossing the midline,
- that use both hands together,
- where both are active and
- where one hand does the work and the other one assists.

Don't try to choose the dominant hand but observe which hand is used the most often or is more skilful. It may also be helpful to refer the child to an Occupational Therapist for an assessment, prior to commencing year one.

### Developmental Norms For Children Learning To Cut With Scissors

At age 2 - 2½ years...

Child is able to open and shut scissors with two hands.

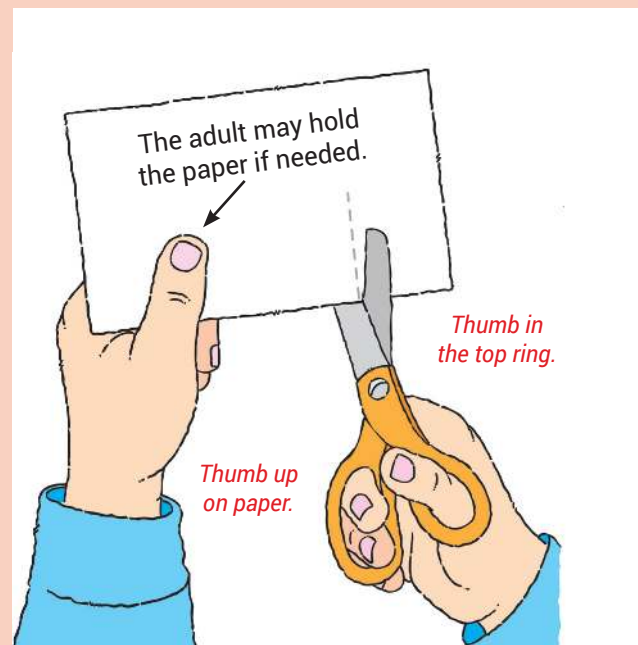


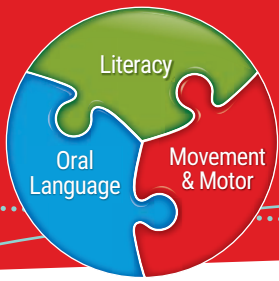
'Thumbs Up'  
Prompt children to produce the 'thumbs up' sign before taking hold of the scissors.

### Developmental Norm

At age 2½ - 3 years...

Child is able to snip paper. Child holds scissors in one hand (dominant hand is not likely established at this stage). The paper may be held by an adult.





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### Stage 3

Children learn to cut in a single direction and to cut along a line.

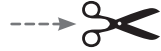
Children learn to hold the paper in their non-cutting hand with their thumb placed on the upside of the paper. With scissors held appropriately (i.e. 'thumbs up') children cut towards a target. Some children will need verbal guidance (e.g. "Open them, push them forward, open them, push them forward.") so that they understand how to apply the previously learned 'snipping' technique.

Some children may need adult verbal guidance.

"Open the scissors."



"Push the scissors forward."



"Open the scissors."



"Push the scissors forward."



"Shut the scissors at the end."



Remember 'Thumbs Up' for both hands.

### Stage 4

Children learn to cut corners and curves.

In addition to increased cutting line accuracy, cutting tasks require a significant amount of supporting hand movement.

As cutting becomes more complex, children may be inclined to want to turn their scissor cutting hand rather than turning the paper. Model how to turn the paper with 'Thumbs Up' on the non-cutting hand. The tinted thumbs on the worksheets help to indicate the repositioning of the hand when turning the paper. The adult may also like to give verbal guidance by saying "Turn the paper".

The following resource displays examples for hand movements while cutting shapes. It also contains multiple worksheets for practising cutting skills.

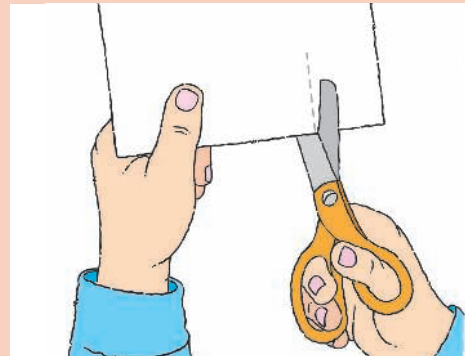
### Developmental Norms

At age 3 - 4 years...

Child is able to cut a 10cm piece of paper in approximate halves. No line is placed on the paper.

At age 3 - 4 years...

Child is able to cut along a 10cm straight line. Their cut line should not be wider than 1.7cm.



Child holds the paper with their thumb on the top.

Thumb in the top ring.

### Developmental Norms

At age 4 - 5 years...

Child is able to cut along a curved line. Their cut line should not be wider than 1cm.

At age 4 - 5 years...

Child is able to cut out a range of squares (and with sides measuring as small as 8cm). Their cut line should not be wider than 1cm.

At age 4 - 5 years...

Child is able to cut out a range of triangles (and with sides measuring as small as 8cm). Their cut line should not be wider than 1cm.

At age 4 - 5 years...

Child is able to cut out a range of circles (and with diameters measuring as small as 12cm). Their cut line should not be wider than 1cm.

At age 4 - 5 years...

Child is able to cut out a range of large, simple shapes while staying within a line that is 0.6cm wide.

At age 5 - 6 years...

Child is able to cut around corners (with wide angles) while staying within a line that is 0.6cm wide. The child is also able to manoeuvre their non-cutting hand to support the cutting.

At age 5 - 6 years...

Child is able to cut along curves while staying within a line that is 0.6cm wide. The child is also able to manoeuvre their non-cutting hand to support the cutting.

At age 5 - 6 years...

Child requires frequent practise to consolidate their cutting skills.

PLD's programs that develop the above skills can be viewed by searching the codes: Mcs123, Mcs4 on [www.pld-literacy.org](http://www.pld-literacy.org) mail@pld-literacy.org Phone: +61 (08) 9227 0846

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# Key Area: Movement and Motor

Fine and Gross Motor Developmental Milestones

## Now that I am 4 years old... I should be able to;



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### Tips for Home

- Encourage your child to undress and dress independently. Help only in the parts they have difficulty with.
- At mealtimes encourage your child to eat their meal independently. Prepare to get messy!
- Provide a range of manipulative activities, eg: play dough, drawing, cutting, gluing, puzzles, beads and pegboards.
- Build some outside playtime into your day, use your local parks or your backyard to run, climb, swing, jump and play ball.
- Join in activities with your child. It is more fun to play together.

### Causes For Concern

- Avoids or has difficulty with hand activities, eg: drawing, puzzles, scissor use.
- Has difficulty with dressing or eating.
- Stumbles or falls frequently or often bumps into people or objects.
- Has trouble keeping their eyes on what they are doing.
- Avoids or dislikes messy play or unexpected touch.
- Seems very busy and isn't able to calm or quiet self.
- Avoids or dislikes equipment that is fast moving or off the ground, eg: swings, roundabouts.
- Has difficulty matching colours, sizes and shapes.

Should you have any concerns about your child's development, consult an Occupational Therapist.

### Use My Body

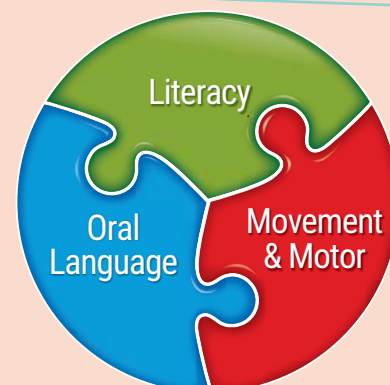
- To pedal a small trike
- Run around
- Climb up stairs
- Kick, catch and throw a large ball
- Balance on each foot for a moment
- Stand on tip toe
- Jump with both feet
- Sway and march to music
- Begin to hop on one foot

### Use My Hands

- To do simple finger actions to songs
- Build with construction toys
- Hold my pencil with thumb and fingers and draw simple lines
- Manipulate large buttons
- String beads onto a shoelace
- Complete simple puzzles
- Use scissors to make simple cuts

### Make Sense of the World

- Recognise up to 5 colours
- Show my age using my fingers
- Count 5 objects aloud
- Put 2 halves of a picture together
- Understand hot and cold
- Start to remember details on a picture
- Start to sort real objects



PLD's programs that develop the above skills can be viewed by searching the codes: Mhu4, Mcs123, Mpw, WBpw, Ppw, Mlff/Mlfc, DSPPf/DSPPc on [www.pld-literacy.org](http://www.pld-literacy.org) mail@pld-literacy.org Phone: +61 (08) 9227 0846

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# Key Area: Movement and Motor

Fine and Gross Motor Developmental Milestones

## Now that I am 5 years old...

## I should be able to;



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Development



### Tips for Home

- Have your child help with household chores, eg: setting the table, packing away toys, or putting clean crockery and cutlery away. It's great for matching and sorting.
- Encourage your child to be as independent as possible in dressing, eating, and grooming (ie: teeth brushing, hair brushing).
- Try and build some table activity time into your day, drawing, cutting and gluing. Use a wide variety of materials, and writing implements to keep it interesting.
- Grab a ball and throw it, kick it, bounce it and catch it!
- Play some outside games, eg: skipping with a rope, races that involve hopping, skipping, jumping, running, balancing.
- Join in activities with your child. It is more fun to play together.

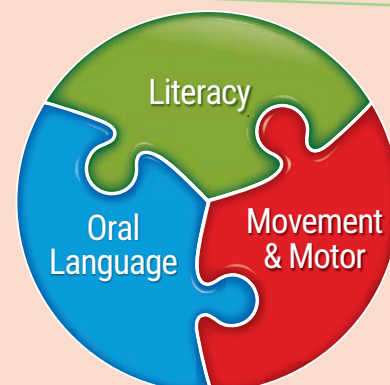
### Causes For Concern

- Avoids or has difficulty with hand activities, eg: drawing, puzzles, scissor use.
- Difficulties with dressing or eating.
- Stumbles or falls frequently or often bumps into people or objects.
- Has trouble keeping their eyes on what they are doing.
- Avoids or dislikes messy play or unexpected touch.
- Seems very busy and isn't able to calm or quiet self.
- Avoids or dislikes equipment that is fast moving or off the ground, eg: swings, roundabouts.
- Difficulty matching colours, sizes and shapes.

Should you have any concerns about your child's development, consult an Occupational Therapist.

### Use My Body

- To pedal a small trike around objects and make U turns
- Run around obstacles and turn corners with speed
- Walk up and down stairs with alternate feet
- Begin to bounce a large ball
- Balance on one foot for the count of 10
- Walk on tip toe
- Walk backwards
- Begin to jump rope
- Hop on one foot for several hops
- Balance on a wide beam
- Begin to skip on one foot
- Catch and throw a beanbag



### Use My Hands

- Use my pencil to draw a person and some simple objects
- Fasten small buttons and use a zipper
- Cut out large shapes with scissors
- Screw and unscrew lids, nuts and bolts
- Cut food with knife
- Brush my own teeth
- Colour in a simple picture

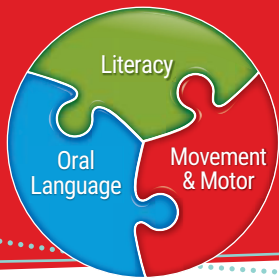
### Make Sense of the World

- Know most of my colours
- Use my eyes to follow moving objects
- Count up to 10 objects aloud
- Feel objects without looking and can identify simple shapes and objects
- Copy simple patterns
- Differentiate differences in size
- Complete an unfinished drawing
- Start to notice when something is missing

PLD's programs that develop the above skills can be viewed by searching the codes: Mprd, Mcs4, Mlff/Mlfc, DSY1f/DSY1c, DSS1f/DSS1c on [www.pld-literacy.org](http://www.pld-literacy.org) mail@pld-literacy.org Phone: +61 (08) 9227 0846

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When children first begin to draw using crayons, pencils or brushes they use a dagger grasp. In a natural developmental sequence they will hold the writing implement in a variety of grasps until they settle on a functional tripod grip for handwriting. The developmental sequence is a result of neurological and physical growth in the child.

As we look below at the development of different grasps and drawing skills we can observe that there is a natural progression as the child's fine motor skills develop. The complexity of the drawing skills increases as the child develops more control over the pencil or crayon in his or her hand. [See the following pages for more information.](#)

Dagger



## 12 Months to 2 Years

- Development of fine pinch grip and precise release of small objects
- Both hands develop skilled function and work together
- Crayon is held initially in the palm (*Palmar Supinate or Dagger grasp pictured right*).
- Movement mainly occurs from shoulder, the arm and hand move as a unit.
- Makes marks on paper with crayon
- Vigorous scribble in imitation
- Scribbles spontaneously
- Draws a stroke then obliterates by scribbling
- Imitates drawing a vertical line

Pronate



## 2 Years To 3 Years

- Crayon or tools may be held across all fingers, with the palm facing down. Digital Pronate grasp (*pictured right*) movement mainly occurs at the elbow, the forearm and hand move as a unit.
- Imitates drawing a circle
- Copies a horizontal line
- Copies a vertical line
- Draws 2 or more strokes when attempting to copy a cross

Quadropod



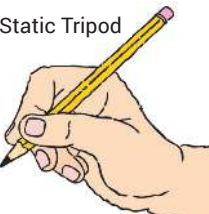
## 3 Years To 4 Years

- The fingers (often all four) are held on the pencil shaft opposite the thumb. Quadropod grasp (*pictured top right*). Movement can occur from the wrist, the hand moves as a unit with the fingers static. Static Tripod grasp (*pictured bottom right*). Adjustments to the pencil are made with the opposite hand (3½ - 4 years).
- Copies a circle
- Imitates a horizontal cross
- Imitates a zig zag line
- Joins two dots
- Draws a diagonal stroke by following a continuous dotted line
- Traces over a diamond shape (rounded corners)
- Draws a man with a head and one other body part e.g. arms, legs
- Traces and stays on most of the time a 7cm wide horizontal line.

Static Tripod

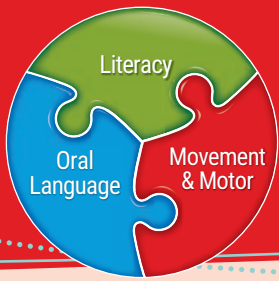


Static Tripod



## 4 Years To 6 Years

- Child developing ability to manipulate objects between the fingers and palm and rotate objects with the fingers.
- Uses a *Static Tripod grasp* (*pictured right*) of a pencil consistently
- Developing fine control to manipulate a pencil
- The thumb, index and middle fingers work as a unit for precise control of the pencil, the ring and little fingers provide support. Horizontal movement across the page occurs at the wrist elbow and shoulder (4½ to 6 years).
- Copies a diagonal line, a square, a diagonal cross, circle and triangle
- Draws a man with a head, arms and legs
- Colours in a simple picture staying mainly within the lines (no more than 0.6 cm)
- Draws a man with a head, trunk, arms, legs, feet and three facial features
- Connects a series of dots to make a simple drawing



# Key Area: Movement and Motor

## The Development of Appropriate Pencil Grip



Promoting Literacy Development

It is suggested that it is much easier to introduce and reinforce the proper way to hold a pencil than to try and change an inefficient one later in school life where the child has grown accustomed to using it for several years. It is felt that handwriting difficulties could be avoided in later years if there is an early emphasis on strong fine motor skills, learning how to hold a pencil and regular practice on how to use it.

The goal of a proper pencil grip is that it is stable, comfortable and is able to be moved with the smaller muscles of the fingers rather than the whole hand. One important feature of this type of grip is an open and rounded web space, the space formed by the thumb and index finger. It is much harder to move a pencil with finger movements if that is closed.

There are a number of ways to encourage the right grip. One idea is as follows:

Make ok sign with fingers. Place pencil between thumb and index fingers then drop the middle ring and little fingers under the pencil. The last joint of the middle finger sits next to the index finger so that it can support the underside of the pencil.

Children can be reminded to hold their pencil with their 'ok' fingers.

Alternatively the pinch action of the index finger and thumb, with the middle, ring and little fingers tucked into the palm mimics the action of a bird's pecking beak. Children can be reminded to make the bird's beak and hold their pencil.

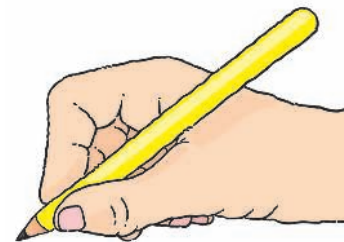
Sometimes children find it hard to keep their middle, ring or little fingers tucked into their palm, often they climb onto the pencil shaft too. Children can try holding a small marble or wishing stone in the palm of their hand as they write to help them maintain the right grip. There are also a large number of commercially available pencil grips that help children hold their pencils correctly as they begin to write.

Another useful activity to practise the right grip is too use extremely short pencils to encourage the child to use finger tips rather than the whole hand. The shaft of the pencil should rest gently in the webspace. Children can check to see if their pencil is 'lying back on its pillow'

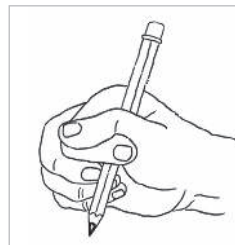
### What Is A GOOD Pencil Grip?

- The pencil shaft is held between pads of index finger and thumb of dominant hand.
- The middle finger sits along side the index finger supporting under the pencil.
- The ring and little fingers curl gently into the palm.
- There is an open, fairly circular web space formed by the thumb and index finger. This is where the pencil shaft will rest.
- Sometimes the pad of the middle finger on the pencil too, this is acceptable if the web space remains open.

See the following pages for more information.



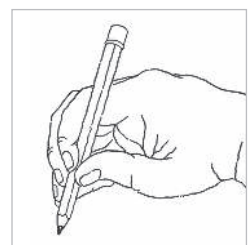
### What Is NOT A GOOD Pencil Grip?



Thump Wrap



Thumb Tuck



Supinate



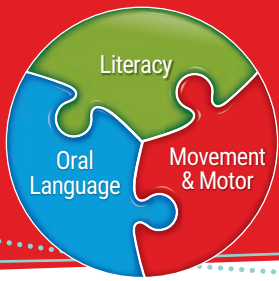
Transpalmar



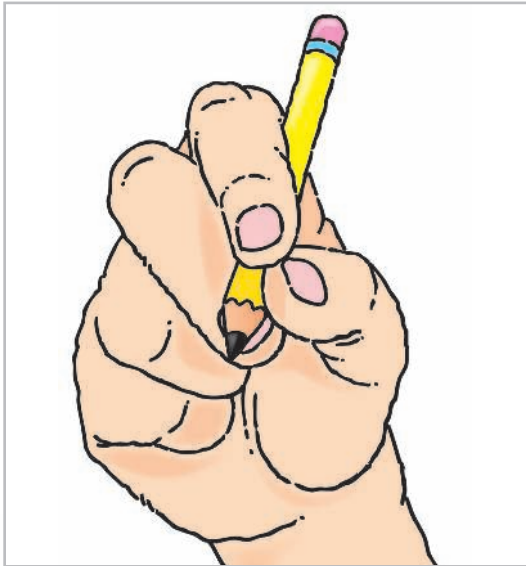
Interdigital Brace



Index Grip

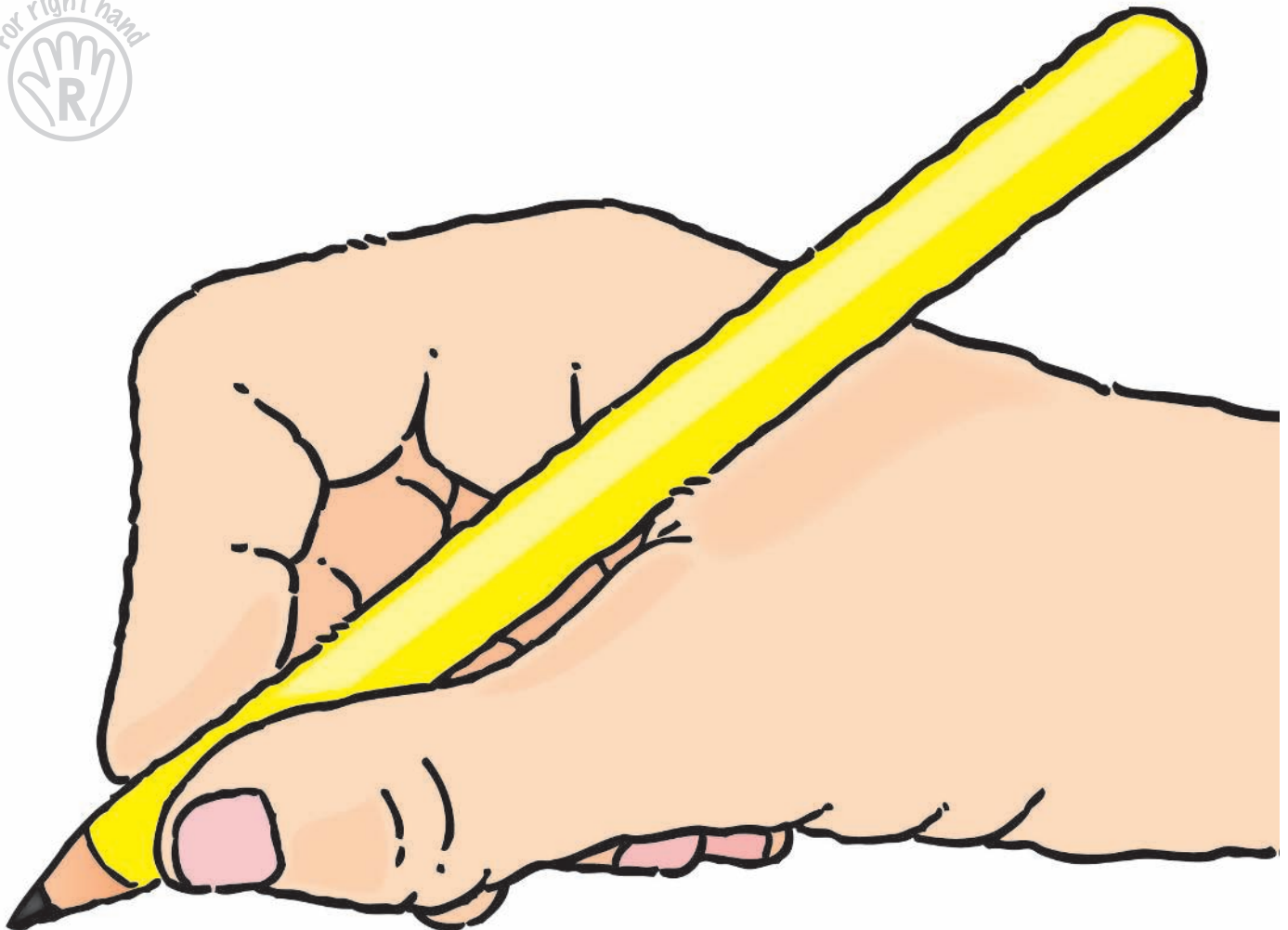


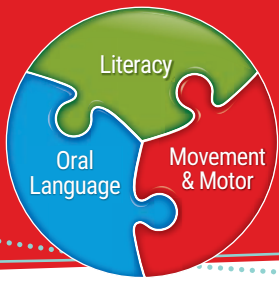
# Good Pencil Grip



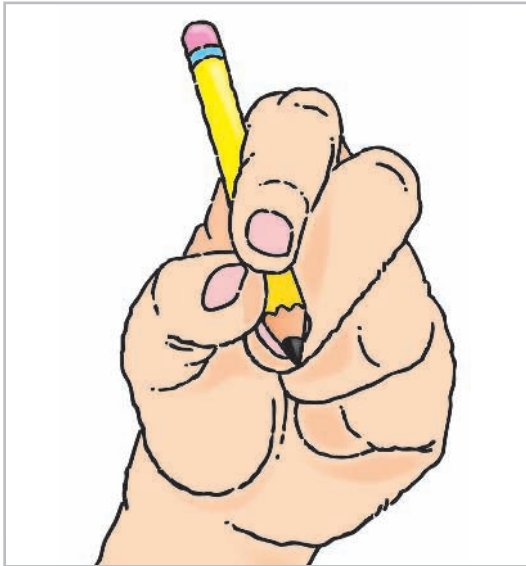
## What makes it easier?

- Big pieces of paper.
- Big crayons, brushes and markers (larger tools ensure children use the right muscles and hand and finger position for the activity and are less likely to adopt incorrect grasps to control the tool).
- Use thick outlines.





# Good Pencil Grip



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