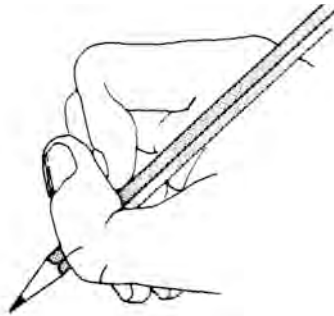


Faults in Holding a Pencil

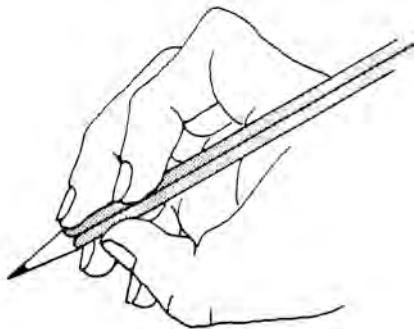
A faulty grip may be a factor that prevents a number of children from achieving the aims of handwriting. Common faults are outlined below.

- The child grips the pencil too tightly. This is indicated by whitening of the knuckles and heavy pressure on the paper. Ask such children to imagine they are holding a drinking straw or something they must not squeeze too tightly, or use a plastic sleeve (see below).
- The child grips the pencil too close to its point, obscuring what is being written. This is often combined with holding the pencil too tightly.
- The child crosses the thumb over the pencil to rest against the first joint of the forefinger.



Thumb crossed over pencil

- Some children may hold both the forefinger and the middle finger on top of the pencil with the ring finger as support underneath.



Forefinger and middle finger held on top of pencil

- Problems are also caused when children hold the ring and little fingers too tightly curled into the palm of the hand.

Correcting Faults

When they are first learning to write, children who hold their pencil incorrectly should be constantly supervised and helped to hold it correctly. Triangular plastic sleeves can be obtained which slip over the pencil and are designed to help children learn the correct grip. These are most effective when used during the first two years at school since, like any habit, an incorrect grip is very difficult to change when it is well established.



Plastic sleeve in use