

Ideas and Games to Help Children Reduce Pencil Pressure When Writing

Hand and Finger Strength Activities to do Before Writing:

- Squeezing a stress ball
- Making holes with a hole-punch
- Peg things up using clothes pegs
- Playing with playdough - creating smaller details and long, thin shapes
- Finger Gym Exercises:

The OT Toolbox – Finger Aerobics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3VpARNgbb8c>

One from the Left (A class favourite!): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CX-jFsVtR4>

Fun Finger Gym: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Roj9Kc6a-bw>

Shading Pictures Challenge

Can you colour in a picture using only different shades that you can make with one pencil? Experiment with how hard and soft you need to press to change the shade.

This lets children experiment with how much pressure they need to apply to make a mark on the paper and help find an amount of pressure that is comfortable for them.

Ghost Writing Game

Can you write very lightly on paper and then rub out the words without leaving any marks? Ask an adult to try and read the words after they've been erased. If the words are not able to be read, then you win the game. If they can read it, the adult is the winner!

Writing with a Mechanical Pencil

Can you write with a mechanical pencil without making the end snap off? If too much pressure is applied when writing with a mechanical pencil, the end will snap off.

This will help children understand the amount of pressure needed to write.

Plasticine Pencil Challenge

Try wrapping Plasticine or clay around the pencil. Can you write a sentence without changing the shape of the Plasticine or clay too much? If you change the shape of the clay or Plasticine then you are applying too much pressure when you grip, and are probably applying too much pressure on the paper too.

Writing on a Softer Surface

Can you write a sentence on a piece of paper on a softer surface like on the carpet without the pencil making a hole in the paper? If you apply too much pressure when writing on a softer surface, the pencil will break through the paper.

Feel it in your hand

First write a sentence pressing hard with your pencil. Then write it so it barely touches the paper. Write the same sentence a third time and try and find somewhere in between. Can you feel the difference in your hand? Which was easier? Which looks better?