

# HOLD THE PENCIL LIKE THIS

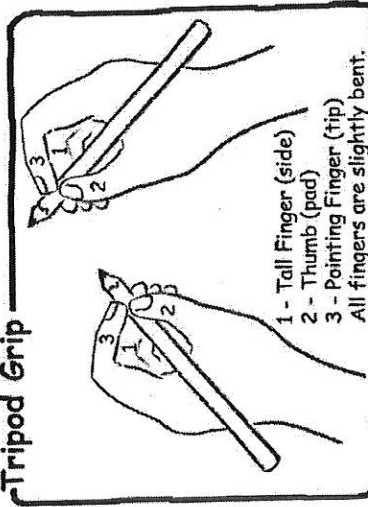
## Finger Position

Three fingers—the long finger, the thumb and the index finger—form a tripod to hold the pencil, as shown here.

## Index Finger Rests

Many people put extra pressure on the index finger, hyperextending the first joint. (Check for pressure in the knuckle.) The tip of the index finger should rest on top of the pencil.

## Tripod Grip



## Fingers Bend, Slightly

All five fingers should bend slightly. (Some people pull their fingers into a fist. Some hold a pencil with their thumb straight.) A ball should be able to fit inside the hand.

## Position of the Hand

The underside of the forearm and the thumb should line up. (Some people hook the hand toward the body, pushing the elbow away from the body.) Spend some time practicing on vertical surfaces, such as an easel or paper taped to a wall, since it is natural while working vertically to hold the hand up and drop the elbow down.

## Position of the Pencil

The pencil eraser should point toward the shoulder, however the pencil position is not critical if the hand position is good. This rule is most helpful for left-handers, since it allows a better view of the freshly written words and the hand does not smudge the words.

## How Does the Hand Feel?

Understand the amount of tension needed to grasp the pencil:

1. Have the child pretend to hold a small stone **tightly** in their tripod fingers as you count together to ten. Release the pretend stone and discuss how your hands felt while holding the stone.
2. Have the child pretend to hold a cooked pea **gently** in their tripod fingers and count to ten. After releasing the pretend pea, describe how your hands felt while holding the pea. How can a relaxed hand make writing easier?

## Don't do this!

