

Activities to Promote Increased Pencil/Crayon Pressure

Compiled by Deanna Iris Sava, MS, OTR/L

Several occupational therapists contributed to the ideas that were compiled into this list. Before engaging in any fine motor tasks, several areas should be addressed including posture, sensory processing issues, trunk and shoulder stability, visual motor and visual perceptual skills, and hand functioning. Once these areas have been addressed as needed, the following fine motor activities may be helpful to improve your child's fine motor issues.

1. Place a piece of carbon paper between the worksheet (or whatever paper child is writing on) and a blank piece of paper. Tell the child this is a game of "magic," and if they press real hard when they write (or draw), it will come through on the blank piece of paper, like magic.
2. Place a sheet of sandpaper under the sheet they are coloring. I stabilize everything with a clipboard
3. Take turns with a squiggle pen
4. Use markers, Erasermate pens, rollerball pens, or a #1 pencil
5. I use a crayon that sticks into a holder shaped like a cartoon character. When the crayon is pushed down with enough pressure, it either makes a noise or plays music, depending on the character. I found them at toy stores (Toys R Us). Hearing the noise or the music has been an incentive for some students I have worked with to push harder. I wouldn't recommend it for everyday use, however, just for practice with the OT or at home
6. Small wrist weight or hand weights
7. Short pencils or crayons
8. Rubbing plates -- you have to press down hard to see the picture appear
9. Weight bearing activities on the arms, such as wheelbarrow walks, crab walks, bear walks, donkey kicks, etc.
10. Use a vertical surface such as chalkboard or slant board for part of the day
11. Try using a number 1 pencil which has softer lead and requires less force to produce a darker result. I found these at Staples after reading about them in TRICS
12. Crayola has recently come out with crayons called Color Slicks (Walmart). Their purpose is to produce more vivid colors without the need for as much pressure or coloring over and over on the same spot

Activities to Promote Increased Pencil/Crayon Pressure
Deanna Iris Sava, MS, OTR/L
Page Two

13. Another idea is to use a push pin in a stetro grip. Draw a simple shape on paper and place the paper on a carpet square. Have the child poke holes along the line keeping the holes very close together. The child can then tear the shape out
14. Have the student make a color wheel where they apply graded pressure from dark to very light
15. Use activities with spring-opening clothes pins to develop finger strength. Have the child form fingers into an “O” as he/she is performing the activities
16. Give the child proprioceptive feedback by having him/her “warm-up” with theraputty before writing