

Golden Rules

- **DO follow your child's lead and interest.** Nothing will turn a young child off writing as fast as their well-meaning, anxious parent 'encouraging' them to follow dot-to-dot letter shapes. If school is fast approaching, and your child is still uninterested, try enlisting the help of an unsuspecting older child/hero to model an enjoyment in drawing or writing!
- **DON'T focus on writing-practice workbooks.** Children are taught how to make correct letter shapes when they start school. Your main focus is to help her engage in writing for a purpose, either real, such as writing a birthday card, or pretend, as in scribble writing for an imaginary car log book or pet passport.
- **DO give your child opportunities to develop her fine motor skills** (small hand muscles) through her play. In particular threading activities, building with Lego™, playing with small figures, doing puzzles and cutting with small child-sized scissors are all great practice!
- **DO involve your child in everyday writing opportunities** - making lists, writing notes or signing birthday cards.



How to hold a pencil

It can be VERY difficult to persuade an independent-minded 3-year-old that she isn't holding her pencil correctly. Nonetheless, it is worth trying! Getting a child into the habit of holding a pencil correctly saves a lot of bother later on. But if your child is one of those children who just can't be told, leave it alone. It is more important to keep them feeling positive! Here are some tips:

- Do give lots of praise.
- Don't start with a fountain pen! Younger children are better off with quite wide crayons or pencils, until they get the hold right
- Do show your child what you mean by holding the pen correctly yourself.
- Don't breathe down their necks! Try demonstrating *once*, explaining *once* and then turning your back and walking away! Mention it again a few days later. Sooner or later most children will try it out, possibly when they think you're not watching!
- Do remember - an older child or a different adult might have more success than you!
- Don't get into a physical tussle with your child's hand. You won't win!