TYPICAL HAND GRASP DEVELOPMENT FOR FINE MOTOR SKILLS
CRUDE PALMAR GRASP

0-5 months old

By age 3.9 months a baby should be able to grasp a rattle or other objects.

By age 5.2 months a baby will reach for objects with their whole arm using a crude palmar grasp (grabbing at objects with the pinkie finger side (palmar side) of their hand).
PALMAR GRASP

6 months old

A baby will start using their entire hand to grasp at objects, including some thumb movement.

Palmar Definition: Palm side or inside part of the hand.
RADIAL PALMAR GRASP

7 months old

A baby will begin involving the thumb and all fingers, while using more of the thumb side of their hand to grab objects or using a “radial palmar grasp.”

Radial Definition: thumb side of the hand.
RAKING GRASP

8 months old

By 8 months a baby will start to use a raking type grasp. This involves bending (or flexing) the fingers to bring objects into the hand and closer to them.
Between 8-10 months old a baby will start to perfect the pincer grasp using a Radial Digital Grasp. A radial grasp refers to the fingers from the middle finger to the thumb doing the grasping. As pictured, the child tends to use the pads of their fingers to grasp instead of the tips.
INFERIOR PINCER GRASP

8-10 months old

The difference between the inferior pincer and regular pincer grasp is all in the placement of the finger tips. The index and thumb are used for this grasp and the pads of the fingers are used for holding the object.
By age 10.2 months, a baby should be able to use a thumb-finger grasp (pincer grasp). A true pincer grasp is using the tips of the pointer/index finger and thumb.

You may also see this referred to as the “pincher” grasp, however the correct term is “pincer”.

PINCER GRASP

10 months old
PALMAR SUPINATE GRASP

12-15 months old

A young toddler will begin to use a palmar supinate grasp. It is a fisted grasp with the thumb wrapped at the top of the writing utensil or objects. This is considered a primitive grasp.

Palmar Definition: palm side, or inside part of the hand.

Supinate Definition: palm facing up or forwards.
DIGITAL PRONATE GRASP

2-3 years old

This is the beginning of an efficient looking hand grasp (transitional grasp). The fingers are now pointed down towards the bottom of the writing utensil, however all the fingers are being used along with a lot of arm/shoulder movements.

Digital Definition: Thumb side of the hand.

Pronate Definition: Palm facing down or backwards.
QUADRUPOD GRASP

3-4 years old

This grasp is also referred to as a 4 finger grasp, 3 fingers on the writing utensil and then resting on the 4th finger.

A quadrupod grasp can be considered an efficient grasp, some children just need an extra finger to help support the pencil.
STATIC TRIPOD GRASP

3-4 years old

This is considered a 3-finger grasp, the index and thumb pads resting on the pencil, with support from the middle finger, forming a tripod. The writing movement comes from the wrist and hand instead of just the fingers.

Static refers to the movement of writing coming from the entire hand and wrist, with no movement of the fingers (the fingers remain “static” or not moving). The forearm may or may not rest on the table for support.
The most mature and efficient grasp for handwriting. This grasp is described as a 3 finger grasp, two fingertips on the writing utensil (thumb and index) with the pencil resting on the middle finger, forming a tripod. The index and thumb form a complete open circle (web space), pinching the pencil between. The 4th and 5th fingers are tucked in the palm of the hand.

Dynamic refers to the movement of writing coming from the fingers (thumb, index, and middle), with minimal to no wrist movement. The forearm rests on the table for support.