

Dear Parents,

One of the things we will work on this year is **holding a pencil the "school way."** *I prefer not to use the term "right way" or "correct way."* Over the years, many school O.T. (occupational therapists) have demonstrated that holding a pencil "the school way" helps strengthen finger/hand muscles which improves control and alleviates fatigue when writing. At Open House, I mentioned the "pencil grip story" that I shared and modeled with the kids. (*see below*) It provides an age appropriate visual for holding a pencil (crayon, marker etc.) Now that the kids have the visual in their minds, I will frequently say..

***"The grownups are driving the car. The kids are in the back seat."***

They instantly know where to "pinch the pencil" with their index finger and thumb. It does feel odd to many children who have grown accustomed to holding a pencil with 3 or more fingers. The "school way" grip is meant to be helpful tool as students are writing. There is no consequence or admonishment for kids who have difficulty adapting to this different grip. I simply wanted make you aware of a way you could help practice at home or offer a reminder as your child is writing.

It's been my experience that you will see a difference as the year progresses. 😊

### "Drive the Pencil Trick"

Pretend your pencil is a car. Pretend your fingers and thumb are the family that is going to drive the car. The grownups are the only ones who can drive. The thumb and index finger are the grownups. They have to sit in the front seat. Not in the middle and not too close to the windshield. (*not tip of the pencil*). For safe driving, dad shouldn't sit on mom's lap (*thumb on top of index finger*) and mom shouldn't sit on dad's lap. (*Index finger on top of thumb.*) They need a little space between them. (*pinch pencil with thumb an index finger*) Just like a real car, the kids sit in the back seat with a seatbelt on. (*Tuck remaining fingers into the palm of hand.*)

