



Trouble with Heavy Pencil Pressure

Compiled by Linda Cammaroto

This list is compiled from information shared by OT's on the school list serve.

Paper Support

- **Mouse Pad**
- **Sheet of Dycem**
- **Craft Foam** - place underneath the paper.
- **Rubbermaid rubber-backed shelf liners.**
The waffled texture and really puts holes in the paper if a student uses too much pressure.
- **Construction Paper (few sheets)** as a "blotter" under their writing paper.
- **3- Ring Binders** - especially the slightly padded nylon type.

Handy Items

- **#3 Pencil** - not as dark as #2 when the student uses too much pressure.
- **Mechanical Pencil** - pencil will continue to break until the child learns not to exert too much pressure - Instant Feedback!
- **Theraputty** - keep in their desks (in a container, of course) that they can use to "warm up their hands for writing" (give them proprioceptive input prior to writing).

Shifting Hand Weight

Some of these children have difficulty shifting the weight in their hands and only use the little finger side of the hand to provide stability for the hand. They may also have sensorimotor or perceptual problems and use the deep pressure on the pencil to give their brains feedback as to how the pencil is moving on the paper. Shift the weight of their hand toward the little finger side, and use the index, middle and thumb to hold the pencil as follows:

- **Play with Clay** - rolling and flattening it with the little finger side of the hand. Explain to students that this is where the child needs to press when writing, not on the tip of the pencil.
- **Ghost writing** - Have the child write a word lightly on the paper and then erase it without leaving any marks.
- **Reward programs** - work for some children.
- **Verbal cues** - before a writing assignment to write lightly may be helpful.
- **Heavy Work** - 10 push-ups before writing can relax the hand and prepare it for writing
- **Pencil Drawings** - color in spaces in different shades of gray.
- **Verbal Prompts** - write lightly and erase.