Prerequisites/Activity Ideas for Holding and Managing a Pencil

- Head and neck stability

- Trunk Stability: Students must have this to use two arms effectively in activities. Look for “W” sitters. Encourage side, long, and tailor sitting. Allow for sitting options at circle time, be flexible because your students may not be. In order for students to stabilize their core, feet should be supported on the floor when sitting in chairs.
  - Activities: Gross motor play, snowball, superman, exercise ball, sock pull, hand presses/push ups

- Shoulder Stability: This is critical—it allows for control of arm, hand, and fingers.
  - Activities: Push-ups, rocking on all fours, wheel barrow, crab walk, bear crawl, use of vertical surface

- Forearm and Elbow Stability: supports wrist, hand and fingers appropriately.
  - Activities: Tummy writing, one-handed marble retrieval out of putty

- Wrist Stability: Allows for dynamic movement of fingers as in holding a pencil and writing.
  - Activities: twisting jar lids, Chinesse yo-yo, Twisty Puzzle (Rubix Cube), using a table top easel (anything on a vertical surface), butcher paper under tables to draw or write, slant board (binder to write on top of)

- Grasp and Release Patterns: Promotes strength and timing coordination of hand use.
  - Activities: Squirters (rubber duck), squeeze balls, Mr. Mouth tennis ball, hole punch

- Isolated Finger Control; Students realize they have 10 fingers.
  - Activities: Finger plays, spin tops, Lite Brite, stringing beads, “I love you” sign, clothespins, play pointing games such as “I Spy”, finger puppets, finger games (Where is Thumbkin, Itsy Bitsy Spider), finger painting

- Web Space: Maintain “O” shape with thumb and index.
  - Activities: Zip Lock bags, “Straw Wars”, putty balls (just using thumb and index finger), beading, push coins into piggy bank, tweezer activities, screw and unscrew nuts and bolts, pinching clothes pins, pop bubble wrap
• Palmar Arches: Hands can “cup”:
  o Activities: shake dice and jingle bells, rubber bands, “more” sign, mini slinky, pouring and scooping activities

• Separation of Hand: This is critical. The two halves of the hand have different jobs.
  o Activities: Animal Grabbers, spray bottles, using scissors, snapping fingers, wind-up toys, spin tops, crayon stubs, mini hole punch, mini locks, tweezers, tongs, picker-uppers, (3) busy fingers-(2) sleeping fingers (with a pillow such as a cotton ball, pom pom)

• Shift: The ability to make small pencil adjustment without thinking about it.
  o Activities: inchworm (inching their fingers up or down the pencil without assistance from the other hand), single page turning, play dough, Wikki Stix

• Translation: Single handedly move objects between fingers and palm. Leads to more efficient stroke making when writing.
  o Activities: coins in vending machine, pick up buttons one at a time and store in the palm.

• Rotation: use fingers in precise rotation movement such as turning a coin or other small object without wrist movement
  o Simple Rotation Activities: play dough, jar lids, nuts and bolts
  o Complex Rotation Activities: turning a coin, turning pencil in 1 hand to erase