



Occupational Therapy Department

Classroom Strategies

Performance Concern: Hand Fatigue with Writing

General Information: Proper positioning, muscle tone, and joint stability in the trunk, shoulders, wrists, and hands are important for handwriting skill development. It is also important to develop the muscles of the hand for improved fine motor control; functional grasp; strength; endurance; and speed. Hand fatigue may be attributed not only to poor positioning and decreased muscle tone/endurance but also to the use of very firm pressure when writing.

Instructional Recommendations:

- If possible, reduce the amount of long written assignments and/or give the student additional time/breaks as needed.
- Have student write on a pad of paper, or a piece of poster board to decrease pressure if there is a concern with student writing with too much pressure.
- Try a soft pencil gripper to absorb some of the pressure if the student writes with too much pressure.
- Relax and stretch the hand during writing.

Additional Classroom Activities or Strategies to try:

- If fatigue is due to weakness, working in the vertical position helps strengthen the whole arm which is an important foundation skill for writing. Students may be encouraged to write and draw on a wall mounted chalkboard or easel.
- Activities with play dough or clothespins will help strengthen fingers and hands.
- Coloring activities strengthen fingers and hands.
- Be sure the desk is near the child's elbow height when sitting.
- Be sure the student can both touch feet to the floor, and sit straight up with back against the backrest on the chair.

Consult your school occupational therapist when additional support or interventions are needed.