

## 10 SUGGESTIONS TO Increase PENCIL PRESSURE WHEN WRITING

Do you work with students who have difficulty applying pencil pressure when writing? Students can start out writing lightly and then continue to get lighter and lighter. Sometimes teachers have had success using markers to write with instead of pencils. Here are a few additional ideas on how students can increase pencil pressure.

Here are 10 ideas on how to increase pressure when writing:

1. Try using markers or gel pens to make marks instead of pencils.
2. Use a weighted pencil or hand/wrist weights to increase input to the hand.
3. Write on carbon paper – the child **must** press hard to make the marks go through the paper.
4. Push holes through paper to provide an example of applying pressure.
5. Put paper over bumpy material such as rough sandpaper or plastic needlepoint canvas. Write on the paper and you will have some tactile feedback.
6. Colour using shading to demonstrate that different shades require a different amount of pressure.
7. Use a dull pencil, golf tee or wooden dowel to write in clay.
8. Warm up by squeezing a stress ball or upper extremity weight bearing activities such as wheelbarrow walking, or wall push ups.
9. Strengthen the fingers and grip with clothe peg activities.
10. Strengthen the fingers with hole punch activities.

## 10 SUGGESTIONS TO Reduce PENCIL PRESSURE WHEN WRITING

When students press too hard during handwriting tasks, the hand can fatigue, paper can rip and legibility may decrease. Recently, a reader asked for tips and suggestions to help decrease pencil pressure for when students press too hard during handwriting tasks. Here are 10 suggestions to help children reduce pencil pressure when writing:

1. Write on carbon paper – the child must write softly so the marks barely go through the paper.
2. Colour using shading to demonstrate that different shades require a different amount of pressure.
3. Provide extra input to the hands before the students write. Warm up by squeezing a stress ball\_ or upper extremity weight bearing activities such as wheelbarrow walking, or wall push ups.
4. Fine tune the fingers and grip with clothes peg activities.
5. Wrap clay around pencil – if student changes the shape of the clay the student is applying too much pressure.
6. Use a mechanical pencil – if student applies too much pressure the tip will break off.
7. Use a slant board – when the student’s wrist is positioned in extension it can improve pencil control.
8. Place student’s paper on top of a flimsy book or Styrofoam – if student presses too hard the pencil will poke through paper.
9. Provide sample of handwritten work with correct pencil pressure. Write one word too light, one word just right and one word too hard to represent the differences in pencil pressure.
10. Explain to students exerting too much pressure when writing can fatigue the hand. Have students practice writing lightly, writing just right and pressing too hard. Can they feel the differences in their hand?

Provide sample of handwritten work with correct pencil pressure. Write one word too light, one word just right and one word too hard to represent the differences in pencil pressure.