

Dear Parent(s):

This letter is designed to bring the following classroom information to your attention:

### **Coloring**

“Coloring is such a common activity that we often forget the great benefits it has for developing coordination, grip, and strength. By observing how a child colors, you can determine readiness for handwriting. You can observe your kindergartener for the following skills while he or she is coloring:

- Attention
- Crayon grip
- Control
- Posture, strength, endurance
- Use of the helping hand (The helping hand is your child’s non-dominant hand and it should be used by your child to hold and move his or her paper.

Most kindergarteners still need help with coloring. To help them color:

- Choose easy to color, appealing pictures.
- Help them hold the crayon correctly.
- Demonstrate coloring on a separate piece of paper.
  - Side to side (horizontal) strokes.
  - Up and down (vertical) strokes.
  - Little circular motions.
  - Staying in the lines or following the direction of the lines.

Typically, the shape of the picture will determine the stroke your child uses. If your child can’t organize their strokes to accommodate the shape of the picture, encourage them to color up/down because that is the easiest.” (Information obtained from Handwriting Without Tears Kindergarten Teacher’s Guide.)

### **Little Hands, Little Crayons**

“With all the fun writing tools available today it’s hard to decide which tools are age appropriate. The crayon is the best tool for preparing a child for handwriting. Crayons create a natural resistance and build strength in the hand. The FLIP Crayons available from “Handwriting Without Tears” are perfect for little hands because they require children to hold the crayons with their fingertips. Larger tools elicit a more fist grip. As adults, we write with pencils that are in proportion to our hands. Shouldn’t children do the same? In addition, the dual colors and tips encourage children to flip the crayons while coloring, promoting the development of fine motor skills. FLIP Crayons are great for kindergarteners, who will be excited to color with something unique.” (Information obtained from Handwriting Without Tears Kindergarten Teacher’s Guide.)

With the above in mind, I have purchased a classroom set of FLIP crayons for my

kindergarteners to use in the classroom and have also purchased one gift set for each of my students to use on their homework at home. Your kindergartener is bringing their gift set of FLIP Crayons home with them today. Please help your kindergartener find a safe place to keep their FLIP Crayons to use on their homework, for if they are lost I will be unable to replace them.

### **Correct Crayon Grip**

“The standard way for children to hold their crayon (pencil) is illustrated below. If you write using a grip that is different from the tripod grip shown below, alter your grip while working with your child. Children are born imitators. When they are watching you write or color, always demonstrate the correct grip because they tend to do as you do.” (Information obtained from Handwriting Without Tears Kindergarten Teacher’s Guide.) This often reminds me of the following expression: “Monkey see, monkey do.”



When working with the children in the classroom, I like to tell them “Thumb and pointer on the sides and middle finger underneath.” If your child has a tendency to use their ring finger and pointer, have them hold something small like a cotton ball with these two fingers as they are writing or coloring.

### **The Crayon Song**

Your kindergartener will be learning the following song to assist them in learning the correct crayon grip in kindergarten.

#### The Crayon Song

Pick up a crayon  
Pick up a crayon  
This is easy to do

Pick up a crayon  
Pick up a crayon  
I just tell my fingers what to do

My thumb is bent

Pointer points to the tip  
Tall Man uses his side

I tuck the last two fingers in  
And take them for a ride  
Now I'm holding it just right  
But not too tight  
Every finger knows what to do

And now I have a big surprise  
A big surprise for you  
Let's drop'em and do it again.

Repeat song  
End with- Every finger knows what to do

(Information obtained from Handwriting Without Tears Get Set for School CD.)

### **Importance of Correct Crayon Grip**

“It is extremely difficult to correct the grips of older children because we have to re-teach them motor patterns. Old habits die hard. Older children need time to get used to a new way of holding a pencil or crayon. It takes a lot of repetition, persistence and practice.” (Information obtained from Handwriting Without Tears Kindergarten Teacher's Guide.)

The earlier we begin to reinforce a correct grip with our children the easier it is for our children to learn it. If a child has not learned a correct grip by the time they are to learn cursive in third grade, they may never learn to write in cursive.

Your assistance in ensuring that your child is using a correct crayon grip on his homework at home is necessary in your child's development of a correct crayon (pencil) grip.

Yours in education,

Mr. Washburn