

"Sleeping Fingers", "Busy Fingers", and Pillows

Marianne Gibbs, EdD, OTR
Gibbs Consulting, Inc.
www.writeoutofthebox.com



Understanding that certain fingers have specific jobs when experiencing the Box activities and writing is critical. When children understand the following 3 terms and can apply them to their own hand it is more likely that accurate hand skill pattern development will occur. **Tripod grasp position is expressed by the child-friendly terms: Busy Fingers, Sleeping Fingers, and Pillow.**

Sleeping Fingers: Ring Man and Pinky are the Sleeping Fingers. They stabilize the hand in order for the Busy Fingers to work efficiently. Increasing a student's awareness of his Sleeping Fingers promotes tripod pencil grasp development. The Sleeping Fingers "sleep" in the palm of the hand on a Pillow.

Busy Fingers: Thumb, Pointer, and Middle Man are the Busy Fingers when holding a pencil and writing. They hold and manipulate implements such as tweezers, strawberry hullers, mini tongs, etc...in specific Box activities. By separating the Busy Fingers from the Sleeping Fingers the student is using his hand in a way that approximates a tripod pencil grasp.

Pillow: A Pillow is any object that can be held comfortably in the sleeping fingers thus emphasizing the separate roles of the 2 sides of the hand. Sleeping Fingers stabilize the hand so that the Busy Fingers can efficiently manipulate implements, toys and eventually writing tools such as pencils and pens. Pillows can be pom poms, a cotton ball, make-up sponge, penny, piece of candy, marble, etc... Pom poms come in a variety of sizes and can therefore be changed according to how much emphasis the student needs on the Sleeping Fingers (e.g. Use a larger size to provide increased emphasis to the student).

Please visit www.writeoutofthebox.com for more information about how to develop fine motor skills in young children.