Developmental levels of pencil hold

1. **Whole-hand grasp: using a fisted hand.**
   - Around 1–2 years.
   - Use of upper body muscles.
   - Movement comes mainly from the shoulder with the arm moving as a unit.

2. **Beginning to use the fingers: no longer using whole-hand grasp.**
   - Around 2–3 years.
   - Use of forearm.
   - Movement is still quite stiff but there may be some wrist movement.

3. **Holds pencil between thumb and two fingers: no longer using whole-hand grasp.**
   - Around 3–4 years.
   - Both of these grips are the crude beginnings of the tripod grip. The hand tends to move as a unit, with limited wrist movement.

   Children at this stage need more experiences that will strengthen their muscles (cutting, working with dough etc.) to increase readiness for a precision pen hold.

4. **Moving towards the tripod grip.**
   - Around 4–6 years.
   - Holds pencil near point between first two fingers and thumb and uses it with good control.
   - Finger movements and wrist now in play.
   - Moving to a comfortable and efficient tripod grip: a precise three-way or tripod use of thumb, index and middle fingers.