



## Assessment Means Form: Grip & Manipulation

**Assessment Overview:** Teachers should aim to assess students in the most naturalistic environment first (i.e., observation) before moving on to more intentionally structured activities (i.e., the Situation).

**What Teachers Need to Know and Observe:** The grip and manipulation construct progression was designed to reflect the development of proximal (middle of the body) to distal (wrist and fingers) motor control. This means that control of fine motor movement begins with stabilization of the trunk and whole arm movement, then control extends from the shoulder to the elbow, and finally to precise wrist and finger control.

**Observation Instructions:** Use the suggested activities and materials to create opportunities to observe grip and manipulation. If the child demonstrates the ability to hold and manipulate the object they are using (scissors, pencil, crayon, etc.), but is having difficulty following the line to cut, staying in the lines to color, or copying the letter correctly in writing, it may be a visual issue - not a fine motor issue. If the child is struggling with grip and manipulation skills, observe while using other materials (e.g., if child is struggling while using a no. 2 pencil, look for opportunities to observe child using a thicker writing implement such as a marker).

| Potential Opportunities for Observation  | Potential Materials   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Art center (e.g., Cutting with scissors, writing, drawing, painting or coloring)</li> <li>➤ Writing center/time (e.g., Writer’s Workshop)</li> <li>➤ Cafeteria or snack time (e.g., eating with utensils)</li> <li>➤ Picking up objects (e.g., blocks, counting bears)</li> </ul> <p><i>NOTE: Children's performance should only be documented when working at an appropriately sized table or work area (to maximize opportunities to observe shoulder, elbow, and/or wrist movements). Children may sit or stand.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Variety of writing implements (e.g., primary pencils and Number 2 pencils, standard crayons and jumbo crayons, markers of different sizes)) and paper</li> <li>➤ Scissors* (both right and left handed) and paper</li> <li>➤ Eating utensils</li> <li>➤ Fine motor manipulatives (e.g., Legos, counting bears, coins, buttons)</li> </ul> <p><i>* Grip and manipulation skills should not be documented while children are using adaptive scissors because finger placement in loops cannot be observed.</i></p> |

**Observation Prompts:** Instruction on fine motor activities (e.g., modeling, hand-over-hand, etc.) should only be provided AFTER documenting child’s skills or behavior. Remind students who are sitting to sit up straight with both feet on the ground (to support trunk stability).

**Placing a Child on a Progression:** With all progressions, the goal is to identify the level at which the child is solidly performing. If the child is inconsistent at a given level, as children often are when they are learning a new skill, the correct placement is at a lower level. The teacher needs to collect enough evidence to be confident that the child is correctly placed on the progression. This will include multiple pieces of evidence where the child demonstrates the skill level at which he/she is placed and at least one documented instance of allowing the child the opportunity to demonstrate his/her skills/behavior at the next highest level. It will be difficult to place some children on a progression. Children who are not yet at Skill A should be marked as “Emerging” for that progression. Children who have reached the highest level of a progression should be marked at that highest level.



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| Fine Motor (Grip and Manipulation) Observation Examples by Skill Level   |  |
|--|--|
| Skill Progression  | Observation Examples   |
| A. Uses early fine motor skills (e.g., fistful grip, palmar grasp, or early scissor grip) to hold and/or manipulate items, with whole arm movement.  | <i>When painting at an easel, Damion grasps the paintbrush using five fingers [fistful grip or palmar grasp] and paints in large strokes using his whole arm.</i>  |
| B. Uses a more refined grip (e.g., using thumb and finger [pincer grip] or tripod grip) to hold and/or manipulate objects with whole arm movement and increased stability from the shoulder. | <i>Violet grasps a paintbrush using two fingers and thumb [tripod grip] and paints in large strokes using her whole arm.</i>   |
| C. Uses refined wrist and finger movement, beginning to transfer control of movement from the shoulder to the elbow.   | <i>Orion grasps a paintbrush using two fingers and thumb [tripod grip] and paints in small strokes moving more from the elbow than from the shoulder and showing some wrist control.</i>                               |
| D. Uses hands with minimal elbow movement and primary control from wrist and fingers.  | <i>Jamie grasps a small paintbrush using two fingers and thumb [tripod grip] and paints precisely using small strokes that show greater wrist control by filling in a tree trunk while painting with water colors.</i> |



## Grip & Manipulation Situation

### Friendship Wreath Activity

**Suggested Group Size:** Small group, large group, or individual setting.

**Situation Instructions:** The teacher reads a book aloud about friendship and engages children in a discussion about why the characters were friends, how they became friends, and how they settled arguments. The teacher listens to children's ideas about what they think makes a good friend. After the conversation, the teacher explains that they will work together to create a friendship wreath and states the purpose of the activity (e.g. "You have a classroom of new friends"; "Friends lend a helping hand"; "Our hearts feel happy when we have friends").

The teacher shows children the materials for the activity and provides the following steps:

1. Choose your paper (teacher holds up several pieces of paper in different colors, each with an outline of a large heart).
2. Draw a picture on the heart (teacher holds up a paper with an outline of a large heart and has a picture on it).
3. Cut out the heart (teacher holds up scissors and a paper with an outline of a large heart).

The teacher observes children in groups and/or individually as they make hearts for the friendship wreath. As the children cut out their heart and draw a picture on it, the teacher observes for **Grip & Manipulation (& Hand Dominance)** while children use the writing instruments and scissors. The hearts are joined together to create a large friendship wreath and displayed.

#### **Situation Prompts:**

- Remind students who are sitting to sit up straight with both feet on the ground (to support trunk stability)
- Remind students of next step in activity if needed.

**NOTE: There is no Task for the Grip & Manipulation construct.**

#### Materials

- ✓ Book about friendship (grade-appropriate)
- ✓ Handout with an outline of a large heart (at least 4-5 inches across) on 8 1/2 x 11-inch paper \*
- ✓ Scissors (both right and left handed)
- ✓ Multiple colors of paper and writing implements (to support child engagement)
- ✓ Variety of writing/drawing implements of differing size/thickness to support all grips (e.g., primary pencils & No. 2 pencils, standard crayons & jumbo crayons, markers of different sizes)

\* Heart should be drawn/printed with a high contrast color (e.g., black line on light colored paper) so it is easy for children to see.

NOTE: Adaptive scissors should not be provided if the teacher is observing for grip and manipulation.