

"Working with a knowledgeable hand therapist can make the difference between success and failure in complex hand surgical cases. The therapist extends the continuum of our care, as well as functioning as coach and trainer for our patients."

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As children grow, the way they use their hands to grasp and hold objects changes. The examples below show common grasp patterns and how they develop over time.

Grasp Pattern Development

Age Range	Grasp Pattern	Example	Description & Functional Significance
2-4 Months	Ulnar Palmar Grasp		Holds object against the pinky side of palm. Important for early voluntary grasping of larger toys.
4-6 Months	Palmar Grasp		Holds objects with the whole hand. Allows for exploring large toys.
6-7 Months	Radial Palmar Grasp		Uses thumb side of hand to hold objects. Provides better control of larger toys.
7-8 Months	Radial Digital/ Three-Jaw Chuck		Uses thumb, index, and middle fingers to hold object; more fingertip use. Improves control and manipulation of larger objects (blocks).
7-9 Months	Raking Grasp		Uses fingers to "rake" or pull small objects into hand. Only used for small objects such as self-feeding of small items (beads, Cheerios).
8-10 Months	Inferior Pincer Grasp		Uses pads of thumb and fingers to pinch objects. Allows for finger feeding and small object manipulation.
10-12 Months	Neat Pincer Grasp		Uses tips of thumb and finger to pinch objects. Advances self-feeding and object release.
2-3 Years	Digital Pronate Grasp		Holds tool with whole hand, palm down for early scribbling.
3-4 Years	Static Quadrupod/ Tripod Grasp		Holds tool with 3-4 fingers, moves from arm. Provides increased control in drawing.
4-6+ Years	Dynamic Tripod		Moves fingers while wrist stays steady. Allows for efficient handwriting and endurance.

Note: Visual examples of grasping patterns can be viewed through the Peabody Developmental Motor Scales, Third Edition (PDMS-3). Images were created through AI generation.

To locate a hand therapist in your area, visit the
American Society of Hand Therapists at www.asht.org or call 856-380-6856.