

GETTING READY TO USE UTENSILS

The same grasp is used for holding an eating utensil (spoon, fork, knife) as on writing tools. Practicing a correct grasp during meal time offers a great way to reinforce a grasp pattern that is applicable to writing.

SPOON

Pick up the utensil in your preferred/dominant hand holding it by the handle.

The thumb on top with the utensil resting on the pointer (index) and middle finger. The ring and little fingers are curled up.

The arm moves to scoop up the food in a thumb down (pronation) then thumbs up (supination) pattern.



FORK

The same grasp as described above is used to pierce food and eat with a fork. In order to use the side of the fork to cut food, you change to a different grasp.

The fork is angled on its side.

The pointer (index) finger is straight along the side of the fork.

The thumb and middle finger pinch together to hold the fork.

The pointer (index) finger presses the fork down through the food to pierce.



KNIFE

The preferred/dominant hand holds the knife in a thumb down (pronated) grasp.

The pointer (index) finger is straight along the side of the knife handle with the sharp side of the knife pointing down.

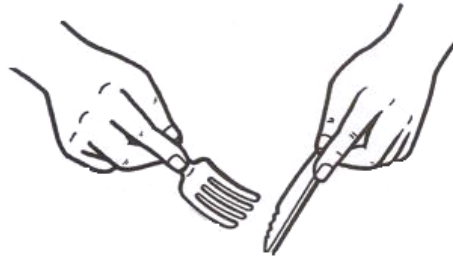
The thumb and middle finger pinch together to hold the knife.

The helper/non-dominant hand holds the fork in a thumb down (pronated) grasp.

The pointer (index) finger is straight along the back of the fork handle with the fork tip pointing down.

The thumb and middle finger pinch together to hold the fork.

To cut, the fork holds the food still while the knife moves in a back and forth motion to cut the food.



Tips to Promote Success with Utensils

- Use utensils with short, thick handles
- Consider using the “claw grip” (See pencil grip handout)
- Use of a non-slip ap/bowl/plate
- Use a plate/bowl that has a rim/edge to assist with loading food on the utensil
- Begin with foods which are easy to scoop/pierce (ie. hot dog, melon)
- Practice cutting and piercing using playdough or putty
- Consider use of the “buncher” (See handout on buncher grip)
- Refer to “Utility Hand Hold” handout
- If the student is still experiencing difficulties and may benefit from adapted utensils, an Occupational therapy referral may be warranted