

**SETTING UP YOUR  
CLASSROOM: GRADE  
ONE**



**TIP 1: Have a variety of writing tools available in the classroom.**

- Larger diameter tools are easier for little hands to grasp and use.
- Shorter length tools (1-2 inches) encourage the students to use a proper 3-finger grasp and hold the tool lower down in the correct spot (e.g. primary pencils, broken crayons or Pip-Squeak markers).
- Consider having a variety of pencil grips available when students need more help with their pencil grasp development.
- Mechanical pencils may help some students lighten their heavy pencil pressure.

**TIP 2: Choose printing paper that is simple and easy for beginners.**

- Use paper with wider spaced lines or that has a top line, dashed middle line and baseline.
- Provide models of printing around the classroom (consider alphabet strips on each desk for quick reference).



**TIP 3: Incorporate working on vertical or slanted surfaces.**

- Vertical surfaces may increase visual attention and improved posture, wrists and hand position.
  - ➔ Use easels, chalkboards and/or Smart Boards.
  - ➔ Encourage students to complete activities while lying on their stomachs (propped up on their elbows).
  - ➔ Use slant boards (make by placing a clipboard on top of an empty four-inch binder).
  - ➔ Use iPads propped on a slant board or by using the prop provided on the case.



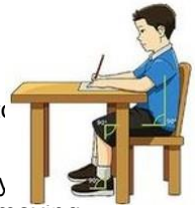
**TIP 4: Choose cutting supplies that are user-friendly.**

- Consider using thicker paper that is easier to manipulate (e.g. construction paper or card stock).
- Spring-loaded or self-opening scissors (e.g. Loop or Koopy) may help students who have a difficult time opening and closing regular scissors



**TIP 5: Set up classroom with a universal design that addresses different student needs.**

- Have different desk and chair heights available in the classroom. When seated, a student's feet should be flat on the floor and the desk should be 1-2 inches above their bent elbow.
- Some students may benefit from their coat hook or locker being at the end of the row to provide for more space and easier access.
- Incorporate frequent movement breaks throughout the day to help your students stay alert and focused. Save the last few minutes of every lesson to get your students moving before starting the next activity.
- Set up an area with comfortable seating and access to calming activities (e.g. reading, listening to music with headphones or deep breathing).



**TIP 6: Consider alternative seating options.**

- Give students the opportunity to generate more movement when seated (e.g. shifting weight, bouncing gently, engaging postural muscles for balance or leaning into a support or cushion).
- Alternative seating provides movement so the student might not get in and out of their seat as often and can focus better on the lesson or activity.
- Include a selection of air cushions, wobble stools, standing tables and floor cushions



**TIP 7: Contact the Occupational Therapist at your school for more suggestions.**