

OT Based Resources and Activity Ideas for Families

Fine Motor Coordination

Activities:

- String beads
- Pop beads
- Pulling caps off markers and pens and replacing them
- Stretching rubber bands
- Using squeeze and spray bottles
- Ripping paper
- Use various size tweezers to pick up small items
- Buttoning
- Twisting twist ties or pipe cleaner
- Playing with small blocks or Lego's
- Placing coins through a slot
- Open close zip lock bags
- Play with play dough, (find hidden toys inside)
- The game: Operation

Grasp

Activities:

- Have child write on a vertical surface. This enhances wrist extension and proper positioning.
- Have child hold a pom-pom or cotton ball with ring and pinky finger while using a pincer grasp (using the pointer and thumb to pick up small objects) or while performing pre-writing strokes.
- Use broken chalk or crayons. This naturally supports the use of a mature tripod grasp.

Ability to Cross Midline

Activities:

- Place supplies and writing tools in such a way that the child has to reach across the body to obtain items.
- Create a crawling obstacle course that requires students to climb over, under, and through while on their hands and knees.
- Scooter board activities. Making sure that the child uses both arms in an alternating pattern.
- Toe touches, reaching across to touch the opposite foot.
- Practice tying shoes and working with other clothing fasteners.
- Play flashlight tag. Have children lay down on the floor and dim lights. Have children follow your flashlight beam with theirs.
- Play partner clapping games (i.e. Miss Mary Mac, See See My Playmate).
- Play Simon Says to support crossing midline (i.e. put your right hand on your left hip).
- Draw a large path on the white board/paper and have student trace the path with a toy car or finger. Then have them erase the board using big movements.
- Dot-to-dot worksheets.

Bilateral Coordination

Activities:

- Finger painting at desks or on an easel.
- Throwing and catching a big bouncy ball or beach ball. This requires the use of both hands for each action.
- Ripping paper (newspaper, construction paper, etc.)
- String beads or macaroni/pasta.
- Practicing buttons, zippers, snaps, lacing cards, and tying.
- Have one child Blow bubbles and having peers pop bubbles using two hands.
- Staple or punch holes in paper.
- Wring out a sponge and wipe off a table.
- Sharpen pencils or staple papers.
- Open and close jar lids.
- Seal and unseal Ziploc bags.
- Push together or pull apart pop beads.
- Cutting with scissors.
- Gluing objects onto paper for craft activities.
- Drawing with both hands at the same time. Can also use a magna doodle.

Body Stability

Activities:

- Completing activities while on hands and knees (puzzles, blocks).
- Animal walking (crab, bear, etc.)
- Encourage children to try different positions during play, work, or group time (lying on stomach while resting on elbows or side lying).
- Complete pre-writing shapes while on their tummy.
- Chair and/or wall push-ups.
- Hang up artwork on wall with clothespins
- Completing activities on a vertical surface (writing on the dry erase board, painting on an easel).
- Play games such as Twister.
- Yoga positions.
- Cleaning the white board, chalkboard or windows.
- Have children hit a balloon or beach ball back and forth without letting it drop to the ground.
- Pushing or moving classroom furniture or equipment.

Arm and Hand Strength

Activities:

- Use large tweezers to pick up small marshmallows, cotton balls or pom poms.
- Squeeze a stress ball, play dough or putty.
- Use eye droppers to pick up colored water and make designs on coffee filters.
- Use a spray bottle to water plants or to “melt monsters” drawn on the white board or chalk board. Fill the spray bottles with food coloring and make designs in the snow.
- Play on the playground (monkey bars and climbing walls).
- Crumple newspaper in one hand and shoot baskets into the garbage.
- Use pop-beads or pull tubes for warm up activities.
- Squeeze different sized clothespins and place on edge of a container.
- Use a single hole punch to make confetti.
- Play games that incorporate tug-of-war, wheelbarrow walking, or animal walking games to strengthen the arches of the hand.

In-Hand Manipulation

Activities:

- Cut play dough with child scissors or plastic knife, then roll play dough into tiny balls. (see directions for how to make your own play dough attached)
- Flatten play dough/putty and cut.
- Practice manipulating buttons or snaps on shirt.
- Open and close Ziploc bags.
- Lacing activities (use lacing boards, beads or pasta) or lace shoes.
- Have children open/close various size jars and lids, particularly lids that can be twisted off.
- Moving coins from palm to finger tips and place them in a slot container like a piggy bank.
- Lay out coins or buttons on the table and have a contest to see who can flip the coins over the fastest (without moving coins to the edge of the table).
- Use large tweezers to pick up fruit snacks or small marshmallows.
- Play “Bed Bugs” game or “Operation.”
- String beads, noodles, buttons, and cheerios.
- Play Connect Four-have child pick up three pieces at a time and hold them in his or her hand.
- Dice games.

Scissor Skills

Activities:

- Hand strengthening activities such as squirt guns, playdough, putty, and squeeze toys.
- Bilateral activities such as sewing cards, tearing paper or stringing beads.
- Roll play dough into a long tube and have child cut tube into small pieces.
- Have child cut out paper snips and use paper snips to create an art project.
- Graduate thickness of paper. Start with cardstock, progress to construction paper, then paper bags and then traditional paper.
- Cut using various media once the child can stabilize the paper efficiently: aluminum foil, wax paper, straws, yarn, sandpaper or fabric.

Visual Perception and Integration

Activities:

- Have child color, cut out and put back together handmade puzzles.
- Cut the front of a cereal box to make a puzzle.
- Make letters and numbers out of pipe cleaners, wiki sticks, or play dough.
- Put plastic letters and/or numbers in a plastic bag. Have child reach inside bag and grasp letter. Have child identify the letter before pulling it out to verify if they are correct.
- Make flashcards with letters and numbers that are incorrect (backwards, upside down, missing parts, etc). Have child identify and rewrite number or letter correctly.
- Write letters or draw shapes in the air. You can also turn off lights and use a flashlight to draw shapes or letters.
- Trace, imitate or copy pre-writing strokes from near and far point distances: horizontal line, vertical line, circle, cross, diagonal lines, square, X and triangle.
- String various sized beads.
- Mazes or trail tracing activities.
- Dot to dot activities.
- Play Jacks or Pick Up Sticks.
- Hammering with plastic hammer and nails.
- Lacing board activities.
- Throw bean bags or tennis balls at a target, hoop or basket.
- Paint shapes or letters with a paint brush and paint.
- Have student sort objects according to shape and size.
- Practice imitating block designs.
- Board games such as Candyland and Chutes and Ladders.
- Play games that have to do with directionality and positioning. (Simon says "Stand behind your chair." "Sit on top of your desk.")
- Draw pre-writing shapes and letters on tabletop, using shaving cream, pudding or in a tub of sand.
- Catch and throw different size balls from various distances.
- Color inside large, progressing to small shapes, staying inside the lines.

Handwriting

Activities:

- Draw an individual box for each letter corresponding to the height and width of the letter.
- Have students evaluate their own work, circle where they go outside the lines or poor spacing.
- Highlight lines on the paper or use stripped paper (blue/white) for a visual prompt to stay within
- Use index finger on non-dominant hand or popsicle stick/straw as a continual visual spacer
- Use M&M's or skittles as spacers between words
- Place a dot between each letter
- Use graph paper and allow 1 letter per box (or notebook paper sideways)
- Have student skip a line in their writing
- Dots for beginning and end points for each letter
- Practice small versus tall letters

- ❖ Handwriting without tears is currently offering a service to help support distance learning. Parents can create a free account and have access to all handwriting without tears teachers workbooks for letter formation and other handwriting practice etc.

<https://www.lwtears.com/programs/distance-learning>

- ❖ See attached Letter Cards

Letter Formation and Reversals

Activities:

- Connect the dots in letter formation
- (decrease the number of dots depending on the students level)
- Provide arrows to show where to start and the direction of the line (to start from the top rather than the bottom.)
- Play games to teach left/right.
- Have students correct their own work, have them draw arrows to show the correct direction a letter should go.
- Use slant or vertical boards in writing
- Highlight in a magazine all b's in one color and d's in another (or m/w's, p/q's, etc)
- Form letters with clay
- Have students' form letters with their own body
- Trace letters in multiple textures, pudding, sand, on carpet

Outside Activity Ideas

- Paintbrush and water: Take a paintbrush and a bucket of water and have your child "paint" the sidewalk or fence. You can take the paintbrushes to a swimming pool too for more fun.
- Bubble solution: 12 cups of water 1 cup of dish soap 1 cup of cornstarch 2 Tbsp baking powder - now go out and make some bubbles!
- Add baking soda to empty water table or container. Just for the fun of it, sprinkle glitter over everything. Fill spray bottles with vinegar and food coloring and spray the baking soda. When the kiddos use all their vinegar, fill up the containers with water and give them scoops and spoons.
- Use an empty two-sided water table or two bins or containers would also work well. Fill one side with cold water and one side with warm water. Then add a bunch of marshmallows. Takes longer if you add marshmallows one by one. Use different sizes and colors.

Learning Shoe-Tying:

Though many kids' shoes now feature Velcro closures, learning to tie one's own shoes is still considered to be milestone that children should master by 5 or 6 years of age. Here are several different methods for teaching this skill:

1. **Bunny Ears** Probably the most common method for teaching kids to tie their own shoes is the "Bunny Ears" method. Tell the child that he needs to make his shoelaces into "bunny ears." First, he needs to secure a knot for the bunny's head. Take the laces and cross them over to make an "X". Then, pull one ear through the bottom of the "X" and pull tight. Say, "Now we need to give bunny some ears." Loop the laces into "bunny ears". Tell the child that now we need to "make the bunny ears tight so they don't fall off". Then make another "X" using the "bunny ears", slide one "ear" under the "X" and pull tightly.

2. **Bi-colored laces** This is a great tip that can really make learning to tie much easier. Take two laces in two different colors and cut them down the middle. Then sew them together to make two bi-colored laces. Lace a pair of old shoes with these funny shoe-strings. Using bi-colored laces can really help a kid who has trouble remembering his right from his left. You can use any learning-to-tie method in combination with your bicolored laces.

3. **Cardboard cut-out shoe** Take a cardboard box and cut out an over-sized shoe shape. Have your kid decorate the shoe in any way he wishes. Using a pen, poke holes for laces. Use the bi-colored lace tip above, but instead of cutting the original laces in two, use two entire laces sewn together to create one long, bi-colored shoestring. Lace the shoe and use any teaching method, using this cut-out. Some kids find it easier and more interesting to practice on an over-sized model.

4. **The Squirrel and the Tree** This is a fun method that utilizes a kid friendly story and movements that help kids understand and remember the basic steps to shoe tying. Tell the child to create "tree roots" by making a starter knot. Make a tree with a long thin loop; hold the loop in the child's right hand. With his left hand, take hold of the lace and tell him that a squirrel runs around the tree and jumps into the hole under the tree and comes out the other side (he'll need to switch hands at this point which can be difficult for some kids). Many parents prefer this trick because it teaches the kid to tie shoes with the single loop method.

5. **Loop It and Swoop It** This is a less childish, but still memorable way of teaching a child to tie in the traditional single loop method. Teach your child to tie his shoes using the standard tying method, but as you go through the motions say, "loop it, swoop it, pull." Do this over and over while repeating the same

How to Make Homemade Playdough

Below is a list of play-dough recipes that you can make at home with your child. Be sure to include them in the process of making the dough, like measuring the ingredients and mixing. Find a rolling pin and cookie cutters to encourage touch input to muscles of the hand and touching of different textures.

Rubbery Playdough

2 cups baking soda

1 1/2 cups water

1 cup cornstarch

Mix with a fork until smooth. Boil over medium heat until thick. Spoon onto plate or wax paper.

Nature's Playdough

1 cup flour

1/2 cup salt

1 cup water

2 tablespoons oil

2 tablespoons cream of tartar

beet, spinach, and carrot juice

Mix flour, salt and oil, and slowly add the water. Cook over medium heat, stirring until dough becomes stiff. Turn out onto wax paper and let cool. Knead the playdough with your hands until of proper consistency. Use as is, or divide into balls and add a few drops of the vegetable juices to make green, pink, and orange.

Playdough

4 cups flour
1/4 cup powdered tempera
1/4 cup salt
1 1/2 cups water
1 tablespoon oil

Mix together flour, powdered paint and salt. Mix water and oil, and food coloring if desired. Gradually stir the water and oil mix into the flour mix. Knead the playdough as you add the liquid. Add more water if too stiff, more flour if sticky.

Kool-Aid Playdough

2 1/2 to 3 cups flour
2 cups boiling water with 1 package Kool-aid (any flavor)
3 tablespoons corn oil
1/2 cup salt
1 tablespoon alum

Mix ingredients and knead with flour (may take up to 1 extra cup). Use more if the dough draws moisture in high humidity. Keeps well, has a nice fragrance and is very colorful and very flexible.

Oatmeal Playdough

1 cup flour
2 cups oatmeal
1 cup water

Gradually add water to flour and oatmeal in bowl. Knead until mixed (this playdough is sticky, but unique in texture.) Model as with clay.

Tip: Add cornmeal or coffee grounds in small quantity for texture.

Alum Playdough

2 cups flour
1 cup salt
2 tablespoons alum
1 cup water
2 tablespoons oil
liquid food coloring

Pour dry ingredients into large pan. Stir together to mix. Stir oil and food coloring into the water. Pour liquid into the dry ingredients while mixing, squeezing and kneading the playdough. If too sticky, add more flour. Keeps best in the fridge.

Just Like the Real Playdough (so they say)

1 cup flour
1 cup water
1 tablespoon oil
1 tablespoon powdered alum
1/2 cup salt
2 tablespoons vanilla
food coloring

Mix all dry ingredients. Add oil and water. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until reaching the consistency of mashed potatoes. Remove from heat and add vanilla and food coloring. Divide into balls and work in color by kneading the playdough.

Nutty Butter Playdough

1 cup peanut butter
1 cup powdered milk
1 cup honey
1 cup oatmeal

Mix together and play.

Homework ideas for Coloring and Writing

Coloring is a great way to work on so many important skills:

- strengthens a tripod grasp (when crayon is held correctly).
- child works on important motor coordination skills when having to color in the lines.
- works on wrist and finger movers when coloring small items instead of using whole arm movements (an important skill for handwriting).
- improves hand endurance/tolerance to paper pencil activities (so your child doesn't feel tired with writing assignments).

Tips:

- Break crayon: by breaking crayons and making them very small it almost forces your child to pinch it correctly (make sure the webspace is open).
- Wiki: wrap a wiki stick at the base of a crayon and ask your child to hold by pinching on the wiki when coloring and tuck all other fingers in the palm.
- Gripper: Grippers work on pencil crayons because it's easy to put on and off but not on crayons as these can easily break (except for Twisties).

Favorite coloring tools:

CRAYOLA Twisties: They are soft and easy to color with.

CRAYOLA Pip squeaks: when teaching to color you want to think SHORT and FAT...markers that are short allow for better control and fat ones provide a larger surface area for correct finger placement.

Using Plastic Sleeves

Using plastic sleeves is a way to avoid making so many photocopies (while saving trees) and kids love to write with dry erase markers. They are more willing to complete worksheets this way!

Tips:

- With Worksheets: Place worksheets in the plastic sleeve, have your child complete with a dry erase marker and reuse!
- Motor Coordination: Draw a fun curvy road with a light marker (make lines thick) and ask your child to trace by staying in the lines the whole time and not getting out of the road. This will work on motor coordination.
- Sizing: Practice making letters smaller and smaller by drawing different sized boxes on white paper, place in a sleeve and have your child practice.
- Copy Words or practice letters: Write a word or letter and make a box under it for your child to copy.
- Tracing: Write words or letters with a highlighter on white paper, place it in a plastic sleeve and have your child trace letters with a dry erase marker.
- Tic Tac Toe: Fun reusable way to play Tic Tac Toe word games
- Mazes: Great for mazes so children can erase easily and try again if they make a mistake.

All ideas come from www.MissMancy.com