

# OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AND PHYSIOTHERAPY HOME ACTIVITIES

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# OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AND PHYSIOTHERAPY HOME ACTIVITIES

School isn't in session? Then let's work on fine motor, gross motor, visual motor, sensory, self-help and many more skills at home!

The following activities are quick activities that each work on a variety of important skills.

**\*\*Parent supervision is needed for all activities.\*\***

# BEGINNING FINE MOTOR SKILLS

1. If your kids are working on early fine motor skills, provide large open containers and various sized and shaped items, and practice putting in and taking out of the container.
2. Work on reaching by placing items in various places on table or wheelchair tray, or holding them up in front of your child in various places so they have to reach and grab the items before they put them into the container.
3. Work on pincer grasp (index finger and thumb grasping a small item) at snack time with goldfish crackers, cheerios, raisins, etc.



# STRINGING BEADS

1. Find household items such as beads, tube-shaped pasta (rigatoni, penne, etc.), or snip straws into pieces
2. Find string (If you don't have any sort of string, shoelace, pipecleaner, or even use a long spaghetti noodle)
3. Have child hold "string" with non-dominant hand and thread the "bead" with the dominant hand.
4. Tip: tie together and make a necklace or bracelet!



# CROSSING MIDLINE- RAINBOW ARCH

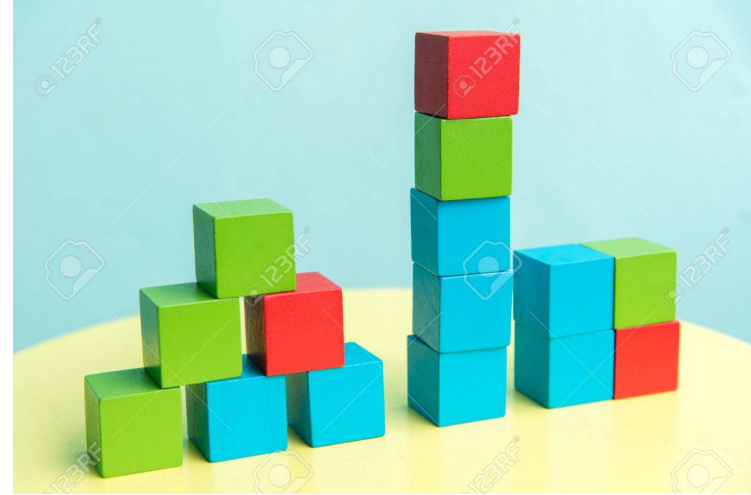
1. Place a large piece of paper (or regular pieces of paper taped together) on the floor.
2. Ask your child to sit on or below the paper.
3. Give the child crayons and ask them to draw an arch from one side to the other side.
4. You can grade this activity to meet their needs by:
  - a. Providing a visual demonstration
  - b. Cues as needed
  - c. Starting and ending dots on each side
  - d. If unable to hold a crayon, parent draw a “road,” and have child drive a car on the road.

Crossing the Midline  
with Rainbow Drawing!



# BUILDING WITH BLOCKS

1. Use blocks or other household items to stack and create designs with blocks
2. Make a design for your child and have them imitate the design, if they can.
3. Play bowling with blocks and a ball
4. Block Building Race: Roll a dice, use the amount of blocks that you rolled to create your tower, see who can get to 10 blocks first



# FINE MOTOR STRENGTHENING & PINCER DEVELOPMENT- TONG/TWEEZER FUN!

1. Find household items that can be picked up with tongs or tweezers... or just their fingers!
  - a. Items such as pom poms, cotton balls, pasta, beans, small toys, small food items, etc.
2. Use tongs/tweezers to sort the items (can sort into water bottles, cupcake tins, etc),
3. Play “feed the animal”- use tongs and tweezers to “feed” food to animals (decorate water bottles or cups)

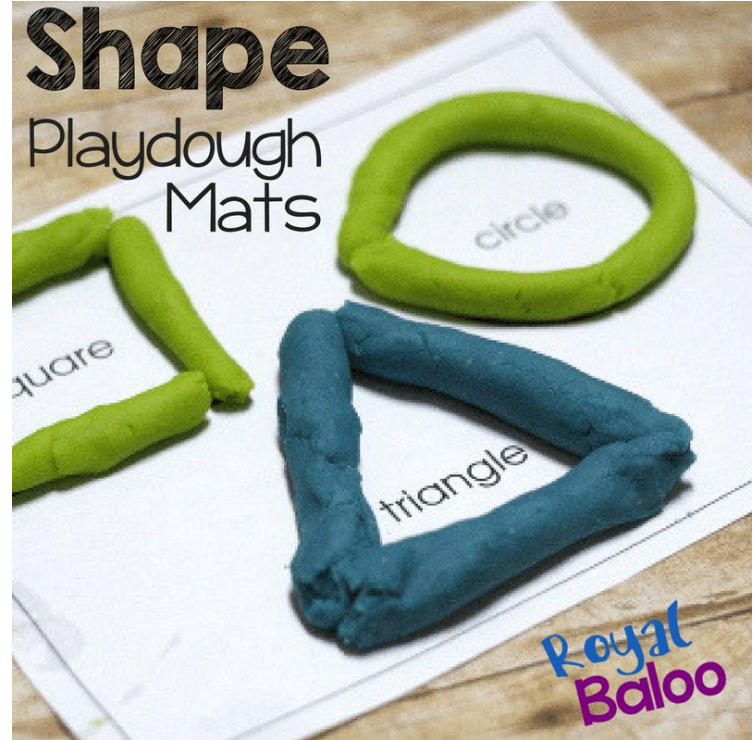
TIP: You can also use clothespins as an alternative to tongs/tweezers.





# FINE MOTOR STRENGTHENING & Pincer Development - TACTILE PLAY

1. Play with playdoh, putty or clay for hand strengthening activities:
  - a. Hide coins/small toys in putty and have your child find them
  - b. Roll logs, flatten pancakes
  - c. Make letters or shapes
  - d. Have your child hide coins for YOU to find





# FINE MOTOR STRENGTHENING & Pincer Development- Q-TIP PAINTING

1. Use q-tips or cotton balls (or paint brushes) to paint pictures
2. If you have access to a computer and printer, you can find q-tip painting pages online
3. If you don't have access to a computer or printer, you can draw a picture of your child to paint on or have them create their own



# FINE MOTOR STRENGTHENING

## -MUNCHIE BALL



1. Cut a slit in a tennis ball and decorate the tennis ball with facial features, eyes, etc.
2. Encourage child to place their thumb on one of the balls “cheeks” and their index finger on the other “cheek” and squeeze until the “mouth” opens
3. With other hand, child picks up small objects (coins, beads, small erasers) and places it into the Munchie’s mouth
4. Some tennis balls are softer than others, you can make the activity easier this way. You can find smaller tennis balls at the pet supply store for smaller hands.
5. This activity works on hand strengthening, bilateral coordination and pincer grasp

# SCISSOR SKILLS

1. Roll play-doh “spaghetti” and have your child snip smaller pieces
  2. Collect your child’s favorite color paint chips and practice cutting on the line.
  3. Draw curves/angles/shapes on index cards and have your child ‘cut on the road’.
- Because computer paper is flacid, construction paper, index cards, and card stock are easier to manipulate and cut.

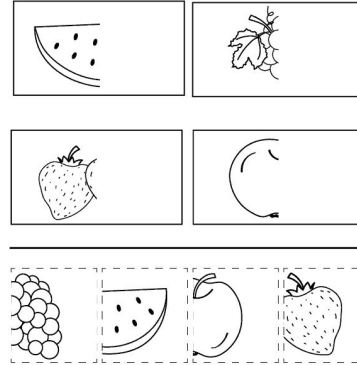


# SCISSOR SKILLS

4. Cut stickers: have your child place stickers at the top of lines drawn on paper (straight, wavy, zig-zag) and cut on the line to “eat” the sticker.
  - a. Peeling and placing the stickers is also good for fine motor and hand strength.
5. Cut paper plates into spirals to make wind twirlers, snakes, or other animals.
6. Cut and paste worksheets
  - a. Easy to find online

## Cut & Paste Fruits

Find, match and paste the pictures together.



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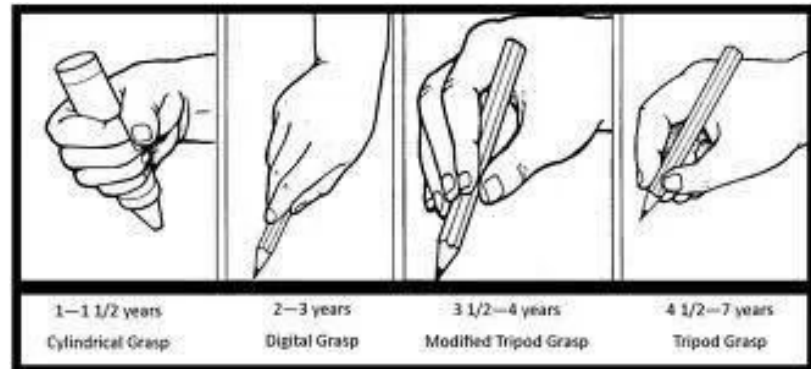


# PENCIL GRIP

- A good pencil grasp is one that allows fingers to move the pencil easily and precisely.
- The most common pencil grasp is the tripod grasp. Some students use a modification of this grasp quite functionally.
- Pencil control, rather than appearance of the grasp should be the priority. Some children develop a pencil grasp that is inefficient and can make writing or printing difficult. It can be very challenging to change a poor pencil grasp once it has been firmly established.

## Positioning the pencil

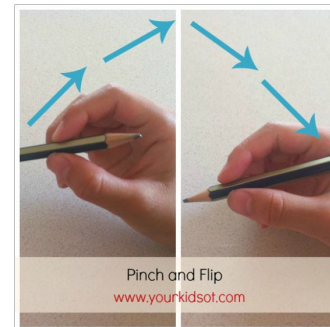
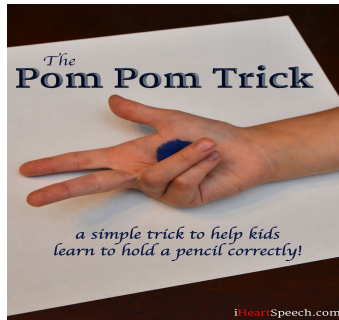
- The pencil is grasped between the tips of the thumb and index finger, and is supported against the side of the middle finger. The last two fingers are curved and rested against the table surface. This pencil grasp is often called a tripod grasp.



# PENCIL GRIP

## Strategies to Promote Proper Pencil Grasp

- Demonstrate correct pencil grasp and assist your child in placement of fingers on the pencil.
- Remind child of correct placement with visual and tactile cues such as tape or a rubber band one inch from tip, or by marking the pencil where fingers should be placed.
- Have children work on a vertical surface (e.g. Chalkboard, whiteboard, paper on a wall or easel). This encourages wrist extension, strengthens wrist and shoulder muscles and promotes a more mature grasp.
- **Short crayons, pencils or pieces of chalk can encourage a tripod grasp.**
- Give child a small piece of crumpled kleenex or small pom pom to hold with the ring and little fingers as a reminder to keep them tucked in.
- When correct grasp is achieved, have your child place paper over a rough surface such as sandpaper, and then make large scribbling movements. This will help your child feel the correct finger placement.





# PRE-WRITING SHAPES/STROKES

1. Find household items with straight sides such as popsicle sticks, Q-tips, pieces of spaghetti
2. Draw shapes with straight sides on the piece of paper (vertical line, horizontal line, triangle, square, rectangle, etc.)
3. Have your child use the items to “trace” the shapes



# PRE-WRITING

Strengthening the hands, arches of the hands (palms) and fingers, are all important. The entire strength of the tummy (core), shoulders, neck muscles all contribute in part for writing. Some strengthening ideas include:

1. Crawling games: Play hand soccer. Child bears weight on their hands and knees while tapping a soft indoor ball with the palm of their hand to score on the other player. Super fun and all ages can play.
2. Draw/Color in vertical surfaces: Writing on a vertical surface can help build arm and shoulder strength, as well as places the wrist in slight extension to help facilitate increased finger control.

# PRE-WRITING AND HAND STRENGTHENING CONTINUED

1. Palm strengthening/finger strengthening: It may be fun to add an indoor clothes line with the old fashioned clothes pins. You could suggest that your child hang up their clothing grouped by colors or other features such as size, etc. The squeezing of the clothespins is excellent for strengthening the arches of the hand.
2. Pinching clips of any kind is excellent, as well as rubber band activities (e.g. making those rubber band linked bracelets or stretching colored bands around tubes or nail boards).
3. Manipulate Putty or Playdough: Push, pull, stretch, roll, putty or playdough. This is a great activity to strengthen muscles of the hand.



# HANDWRITING PRACTICE

1. Practice forming letters in various tactile mediums such as shaving cream, sand, gel, etc.
2. Have your child write a letter to a friend or family member, make “to do” or grocery lists.
3. Make letters in the snow using a squirt bottle.
4. Remember handwriting rules:
  - Form letters top to bottom and left to right
  - Leave space between words
  - Keep “tall” letters tall, “small” letters small, and encourage “fall” letters to fall (j,g,p,q,y)
  - Keep letters on the line



# MOTOR WARM UP- BUILD AN OBSTACLE COURSE

1. Use household items and furniture to build an obstacle course
2. Use couch cushions, blankets, and chairs to make tunnels and “stepping stones”
3. Use painters tape on the floor for a “balance beam”, walking pathways, and jumping hurdles
4. Place puzzle pieces on one side and a puzzle on the other
5. Have your child go through the obstacle course and place the pieces on the puzzle



# GROSS MOTOR - ANIMAL WALKS AND YOGA

Imitate animals to work on core strength, balance, and motor planning.

- Bear walk
- Crab walk
- Frog jumps
- Donkey kicks
- Snake crawl
- Bunny hops
- And more...



Follow along to YouTube videos of yoga routines.

Check out these channels:

- Cosmic Kids Yoga
- Bari Koral





# GROSS MOTOR AND MOVEMENT BREAK IDEAS

- Play Catch- Practice throwing overhand and underhand
- Kick a ball
- Jumping Jacks or Snow Angels
- Jumping in the spot, forward and backward
- Hopping on one foot
- Stand on one foot with eyes open and closed
- Walking on a line- forward and backward
- Walk across the room just on the toes and then only heels
- Skip across the room



# PLAY OUTSIDE!

1. Paint the snow with a squirt bottle with mixed with paint or food coloring and water or use a paintbrush
2. Build a snow fort or a snowman
3. Use sticks and stones to form letters or shapes
4. Blowing and popping bubbles - Works on isolating fingers. Can also pop bubbles with one foot to encourage balance standing on one foot.
5. Go to the park or play in your backyard
  - a. At this time, it is not recommended to play on playground equipment unless it is in your backyard and not touched by other children
  - b. However, riding bikes, walking, running, skipping, jumping, hopping, completing jumping jacks and other non physical contact activities are all excellent activities to complete at the park



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# FLOOR TIME

1. Laying belly down on the floor is another great way to strengthen the upper body/core muscles and is also a great way to encourage proper wrist positioning for writing activities.
2. Some activities that can be done on the floor:
  - Drawing/coloring
  - Reading
  - Games
  - Puzzles
  - Playing with toys
  - Lego



# VISUAL PERCEPTION

## Figure ground at home:

- Play games to find objects in a cluttered area such as finding socks in a messy drawer or finding a specific item in the refrigerator
- Use hidden picture books such as “I spy”

## Visual Discrimination at home:

- Have child “correct” a paper with letters formed incorrectly
- Make flashcards with the correct and incorrectly formed letters

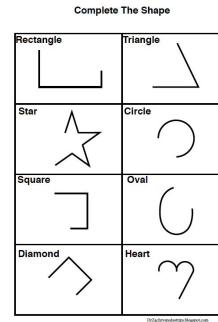
# VISUAL PERCEPTION CONT.

## Visual memory at home:

- Playing the game “Memory” using cards
- Place several objects on a tray, have the child look at the objects and then cover them after a few seconds. Ask the child repeat to you what he/she saw originally on the tray.

## Visual Closure at home:

- Complete half to whole drawings or take pieces of an image and ask child to guess what the image is.



## Form Constancy at home:

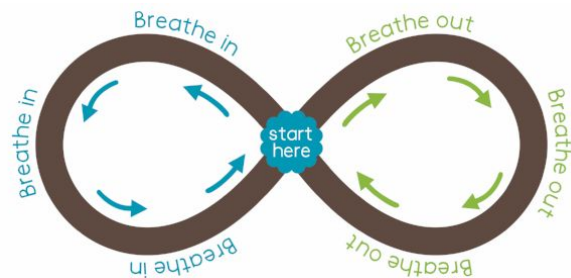
- Ask the child to point out the different objects in the home that are specific shapes (e.g. a clock is a circle, a table is a rectangle, etc.)
- Put together a puzzle with a few missing pieces. Ask child to identify which piece is needed to complete the puzzle.

# TABLE-TOP ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE VISUAL PERCEPTION

- Mazes
- Hidden picture worksheets
- Dot to dot worksheets
- Word searches
- Puzzles
- I spy games
- Where's Waldo
- What's different worksheets
- Connect Four
- Tic-tac-toe



# SELF-REGULATION - DEEP BREATHING



## LAZY 8 BREATHING

- Start with the eight on its side and start in the middle
- Go up to the left and trace the left part of the 8 with your finger while you breathe in.
- When you get to the middle again, breathe out while you trace the right part of the 8 with your finger.

## USE A STUFFED ANIMAL TO PRACTICE DEEP BREATHING

- Have child lay down on their back and put a stuffed animal on their belly. Have them breathe in and move the stuffed animal up, then breathe out and bring the stuffed animal back down. This helps teach kids to use their belly to take big deep breaths.

## USE A PINWHEEL

- Kids can practice breathing out slowly or more quickly, using the speed of the pinwheel as a measure. Then they can figure out which way works and feels best for them.



## USE A FEATHER

- Get some colored feathers and pick out one feather to use. It could be a color that they love or one that makes them feel calm. Breathe in and hold it for a count of 3, then breathe out going up on one side of the feather and down the other side.

# SELF-REGULATION - CALMING ACTIVITIES

**Quiet Area/Calming Corner:** Reducing stimulation can help children to calm down. Allow a child to retreat to a quiet area to calm down such as a corner in a classroom with pillows or a comfortable couch at home with a blanket.



**Wrap Up in a Blanket:** Wrap yourself up tightly in a blanket or sleeping bag to calm down.

**Slow, Rhythmic Movements:** Sit in a rocking chair or swing on a swing. If nothing is available, sit on your bottom and hug your knees. Gently rock back and forth on your bottom.

**Heavy Work Activities:** Participate in activities that require you to push, pull or carry items. Try walking with a stack of books, pull a loaded wagon or push a friend on a swing.

**Exercise:** Get moving. Exercise can help to calm the body. Try yoga, dancing, jogging, jumping rope or walking. Exercise outdoors for additional benefits.



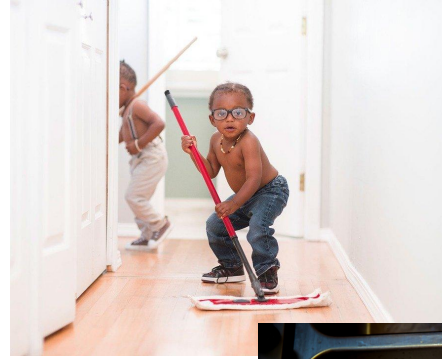
# DIY SENSORY BINS

1. Find a medium sized container or shoebox
2. Find items in your house that can be used for a sensory bin (uncooked beans, uncooked rice, uncooked pasta, etc.)
3. Ask your child to help you fill the box halfway (You can draw a line and have them fill it to the line for an extra challenge!)
4. Hide items in the box, such as puzzle pieces and toys.
5. Practice searching for the objects. Also try having them search for the object with eyes closed and see if they can identify the object just through touch.



# VOCATIONAL SKILLS FOR ALL AGES

1. Have your child participate in household chores with you when they are home
  - a. Folding towels/clothes
  - b. Sweeping and using the vacuum
  - c. Wiping down tables
  - d. Cleaning windows
  - e. Putting their clothes and toys away
  - f. Putting clothes in the washer
  - g. Cleaning dishes
  - h. Cooking simple meals or snacks



# VOCATIONAL SKILLS FOR ALL AGES

## **Play Activity: Toy Wash**

- Let your kids wash their plastic toys.
  - In the sink, tub, or bins/buckets.
- Add tear-free bubbles, sponges, towels and other supplies.
- Don't forget to dry them off before storing
- Not only is this a functional vocational activity but it also address:
  - Hand strength, fine motor skills, bilateral hand skills, and crossing midline.



# HELPFUL WEBSITES AND APPS

- **Fine Motor Skills:** <https://www.lwtears.com/> - Learning Without Tears is currently offering free access to several of their online resources.
- **Occupation Therapy Support:**  
<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/learn-at-home/diverse-learning-for-special-populations/occupational-therapy-supporting> - Provides activity packets for parents and app suggestions
- **Gross Motor Skills:** <https://theinspiredtreehouse.com/gross-motor-apps-for-kids/>  
GoNoodle  
Super Stretch Yoga  
Sworkit Kids

# HELPFUL WEBSITES AND APPS

- **Keyboarding Skills:**

[www.typing.com](http://www.typing.com)

[www.typingclub.com](http://www.typingclub.com)

- **Fine Motor Skills:** <https://otswithapps.com/tag/fine-motor-apps/>

The OT Tool Box <https://www.theottoolbox.com/31-days-of-learning-with-free-materials/>

iWriteWords App

iTrace - Handwriting for Kids App

Letter School App

Little Writer App

# HELPFUL WEBSITES AND APPS

- **Self-Regulation Skills:** <https://theinspiredtreehouse.com/self-regulation/>

Stop, Breathe, & Think Kids App

Breathe, Think, Do by Sesame Street App

GoNoodle

Mind Yeti App

- **Other Resources:**

[https://grcgcustomers.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/account4876975/6576200\\_1.pdf?0.9405035283981562](https://grcgcustomers.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/account4876975/6576200_1.pdf?0.9405035283981562) -

First/Then Visuals and Token Boards for Home

<https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html> - Scholastic Canada Learn at Home

<https://abilitiesmanitoba.org/docs/covid19-information-resources/fighting-boredom/> - Abilities MB