

LIZELLE KEYSER
Paediatric Occupational Therapist

Dear Parents,

The activities in this handout are focusing on strengthening the hands to refine movement, for cutting and pre-writing skills. These activities have been developed for you to do at home with your child, with resources which you most likely might have within your home. You can choose from the activities, which best suit your child. The week schedule has an overview of all the activities.

Fine motor skills:

The pincer grasp is the fine grip between the tips of the thumb and index finger, where the thumb and index finger together form a circular shape. Practice lots of activities that increase the accuracy or strengthen pinch. Any activity that involves pinching with fingers against resistance will increase strength with regular practice.



Posting buttons:

Materials needed: Scissors, buttons, yogurt or recycling containers

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Cut a small rectangular hole in the top of the container with the scissors.
- If you want to colour or number match, you need a few containers.
- For colour matching, you can draw a circle of the colour you want on a paper and glue it on the container.
- For number matching, you can draw the number on paper and glue it on the container. The child then needs to add that amount of buttons into the container.



Play:

- The child posts the buttons through the hole, one at a time.

Sorting buttons:

Materials needed: Zip-lock food storage bag, hair gel/hand wash gel, food colouring, Sellotape, buttons, permanent marker.

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Draw two large circles with two different colours, one at the top left corner and the other on the right bottom corner, with a marker on the food storage bag. Make sure the circles clearly indicate two different colours e.g. blue and red.
- Fill the bag with some hair gel or hand wash gel. It should be just enough to have a squishy feeling when laid down, but not too much.
- Place the pompoms or buttons you want to use in a bag with the gel.
- Softly squeeze all the air out of the bag and close it.
- Sellotape the opening, to prevent leakage.



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Play:

- The child needs to move the pompoms or buttons with their finger to the correct coloured circle.

Sorting pompoms:

Materials needed: Tongs, paper cups/containers, pompoms

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Paste the colours on the front of the cups with Sellotape.

Play:

- The child uses the tongs to pick up and place the pompoms in the matching coloured cup.



Twisty:

Materials needed: two pipe cleaners

Steps to play:

- Fold the pipe cleaner in half.
- Twist it round and round.
- Then untwist it.



Threading beads:

Materials needed: Pipe cleaners, foam/box/styrofoam, beads

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Press the pipe cleaners into styrofoam or foam to 'stand up'

Play:

- Thread the beads in the correct coloured pipe cleaner.



Two handed activities:

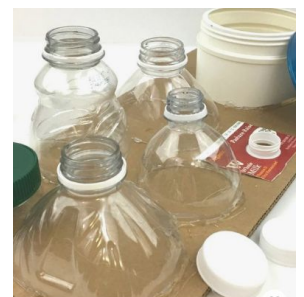
Screw on the lids:

Materials needed: empty bottles and containers with lids

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- You can either just place all the bottles and containers in a large bowl, with the lids beside them, or
- Cut them in half and glue them on cardboard.



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- If they find it difficult, you might consider giving one at a time.

Play:

- The child must screw on (and off) all the lids on the containers.

Squeezing pegs:

Materials needed: **Template shapes paper** (or normal paper), scissors, markers and 5 clothing pegs

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Template: Print and cut out shapes template. They will be more durable if you stick it on firmer cardboard or laminate them.
- If you do not have a printer, then draw different shapes with faces. ON each shape draw a circle with numbers one to five.
- Write numbers one to five on clothing pegs.



Play:

- The child needs to place the same number of pegs as the number on the circle.

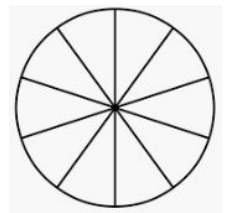
Peg numbers:

Materials needed: Paper plate, marker, stickers or coloured markers and 10 clothing pegs.

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Divide the paper plate into 10 sections, like a pizza.
- Place a different coloured dot and amount in each segment, starting from 1 to 10. You can use stickers or markers to draw the dots.
- Write 1 to 10 on the pegs.



Play:

- The child needs to place the pegs on the correct amount of dots.

Spoon it out:

Materials needed: Bowl, dessert spoon and lids or pastas

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Place the milk lids or pastas into a bowl with water.

Play:

- Scoop out the lids from the water with the spoon.



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All in the hand:

Materials needed: Small cotton wool balls or pompoms (or even beads)

Steps to play:

- Start with two objects such as Pom Poms, buttons, coins or beads. As the child is able to do the task, increase the number of objects.
- Use the dominant hand to pick up one object at a time and place it in the palm of the hand. Only use one hand.
- When both objects are in the palm of the hand, manipulate them back to the fingers one at a time to place in a container.
- While one object is manipulated by the fingers, the others are held securely in the palm of the hand by the other fingers (middle, ring and little fingers).



Strengthening with play dough:

PLAYDOUGH



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 2 cups of plain flour
- 2 cups of warm water
- 1 cup of salt
- 2 tbsp of vegetable oil
- 1 tbsp of tartar (optional)
- Food colouring
- Mixing bowl
- Saucepan

HOW TO MAKE IT

Mix all the ingredients together and stir over a low heat. The dough will begin to thicken and resemble mashed potato. When the dough pulls away from the sides and clumps in the centre, remove the pan from the heat and allow the dough to cool. If the dough is still sticky, you simply need to cook it longer. Keep stirring and cooking until the dough is dry.

Pinch the snake:

Materials needed: Play dough

Steps to play:

- The child rolls the play dough into a sausage. Make sure they keep their fingers straight. Rolling enables you to use your whole arms, bending and straightening the elbow.
- Once you have rolled out the dough, using your thumb and index finger, pinch the dough as hard as you can.
- Pinch all along the snake.



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- Alternative: Roll snakes to make the shapes.



Press in holes:

Materials needed: Play dough

Steps to play:

- Using both hands, press down onto the play dough, keeping arms straight. It is a good idea to stand up or kneel at a table, this encourages further pressure.
- Once the dough has been rolled out you can use different fingers to make prints in the dough. Keep your fingers straight as if you were pointing.
- Alternative: Use Legos to press into the dough, to make play dough prints.



Roll large balls:

Materials needed: Play dough

Steps to play:

- Roll large balls between the palms of your hands.
- Stick cut up straws or pieces of pasta in it to make a bug.

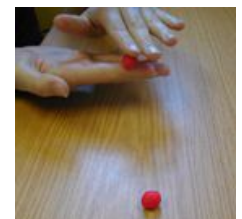


Roll small bird eggs:

Materials needed: Play dough

Steps to play:

- Use the tips of your fingers to roll small balls.
Make a basket with eggs.



Find the toy:

Materials needed: Large piece of play dough, small toys. Some children are safe with the use of beads (which works very well), others need larger objects such as small plastic insects or animals; or even pasta pieces.

Steps to play:

Presentation:



- Hide the toys inside of the playdough.

Play:

- The child must find all the toys in the playdough.



Pencil control:

Developing good pencil control is an important prerequisite for drawing and writing.

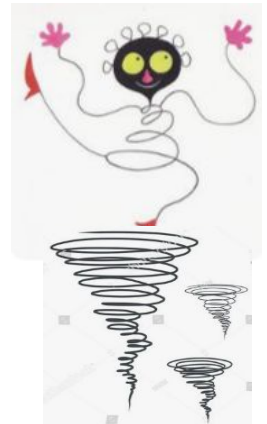
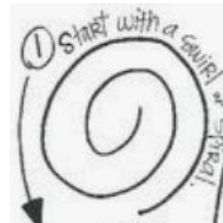
- Markers is easier to use than pencils, as they give immediate feedback, without much pressure used.
- If a student finds it difficult to hold a pencil in a stable grasp, it might be worth trailing a few pencil grips, to encourage and prompt a more stable pencil grasp. Pencil grips such as:
<https://www.tinknstink.co.uk/3-step-training-pencil-grips.html>
- Using a poster of how to hold your pencil as a reminder:
<https://www.sparklebox.co.uk/5941-5950/sb5947.html>

Draw a tornado:

Materials needed: Paper, crayons/markers

Steps to play:

- Practice to draw curly patterns, as if you draw a tornado or the shell of a snail.
- The parent can add in the detail to change the picture into a dance or snail, if your child is unable to.



Draw the square:

Materials needed: Paper, pencils/markers

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Draw a square.

Play:

- The child needs to draw a square around your square 5 times, bigger and bigger.



Draw a pattern:

Materials needed: Paper, pencils/markers, stickers

Steps to play:



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Preparation:

- Place stickers on a paper in a row, down either side of the page.
- Draw a few simple lines and curves you want to practice with your child, on another page e.g. four patterns/lines. You can also use a wooden block and draw the patterns on each side of the block (as in the picture).

Play:

- The child closes their eyes and presses their finger on the pattern page. They need to draw the nearest pattern. If you use the block, they need to throw it as a dice and draw the top pattern.
- Use your sticker page. Draw the pattern from the one sticker to the other, from left to right. You might need to demonstrate the first one.
- If your child finds it difficult to do, focus on doing easy lines e.g. draw a line across, draw only one zig-zag for the line, draw a curve line. You can also make it easier, by doing less stickers e.g. only two or three lines to do on a page.
- The aim is for them to draw from the one picture to the counterpart picture on the other side of the page.

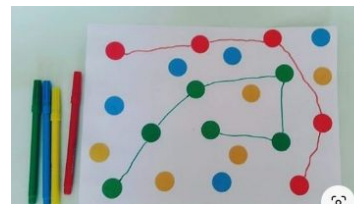
Connect the dots:

Materials needed: Paper, pencils/markers, stickers

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Place stickers across the page. If you do not have stickers, then draw dots across the page.



Play:

- The child needs to connect the same colour dots to each other.

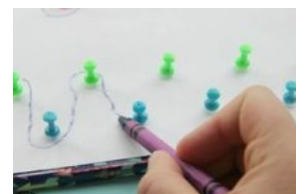
Push pin pattern:

Materials needed: Crayons/markers, paper, push pins, cardboard

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Put the paper on a thick surface such as cardboard.
- Place push pins into the paper, as in the picture.



Play:

- The child draws the pattern between the push pins.

Draw to the line:

Materials needed: Pencils/markers/crayons, paper

Steps to play:



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Preparation:

- Draw a curve or straight line in the middle (depending on your child's ability).
- Draw dots with three different colours on either side of the line.
- Some of the dots need to be 2 cm away from the line, others 5 cm.

Play:

- Draw from the dot to the middle line.

Highlighted patterns:

Materials needed: Highlighter pen (preferably yellow), stickers, pencil



Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Place stickers or draw simple pictures underneath each other along the left side of the page. It should be about 4 cm apart.
- From each sticker, draw a pattern (as in picture) to the other side of the page, using the highlighter pen.

Play:

- The child starts to draw with a pencil from the sticker along the path of the highlighter pen.
- Make sure you start first with the easier lines e.g. a straight or curvy line, before the more difficult lines.

Draw the line:

Materials needed: Pencils/markers, Paper



Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Draw a large rectangle on the border of the page.
- Start off with a simplified version of the picture, by only drawing four squares.
- If your child can do a more complex version, then divide the rectangle into 12 squares, as in the picture. (Three rows, four squares in a row.)

Play:

- The child draws lines to fill up the squares. The first square horizontal lines, the next vertical.
- Make use of various colours of markers to make it colourful.
- When starting the second row, make sure to start with vertical lines and then horizontal lines.

Bigger and bigger:

Materials needed: Markers, paper

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Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Draw a small triangle in the middle of the paper.

Play:

- The child needs to draw a triangle around the triangle you've drawn. Each time with a different colour.
- This is to develop line awareness for writing.



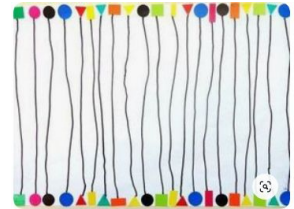
Draw to same shape:

Materials needed: Coloured markers, stickers, pencil, paper

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Use the stickers or draw shapes with the markers.
- Draw a row of shapes on the top of the paper.
- Draw the same shapes at the bottom of the paper. Make sure that the same shapes are lined up.
- Leave a space of at least 1 to 2 cm between each shape. If your child finds this easy, you can reduce the space between the shapes.



Play:

- The child draws from the top shape to the bottom shape, by matching up the pictures.

Handwriting skills:

We teach letter formation in letter groups. The letters in a letter group are formed the same way. The next letter group is the 'one arm robot letters' - r, n, m, h, b, k, p.

I've attached the **lowercase formation chart** and **number stories** handouts, which tells you how each letter and number should be formed. You will notice that all the letters in the group start with the same formation.

Use the worksheets below to practice this group of letters. Simply demonstrate one letter at a time on a separate page. Be sure to say the directions out loud while you model the letter.

Letter formation worksheet:

Materials needed: Printout of **Letter formation worksheet** pages 6 and 7 (one arm robot letters), pencil (If you do not have a printer, you can draw single lines across a page and let your child practice these letters)

Monday: Worksheet page 6 - letters r, n

Tuesday: Worksheet page 7 - letters m, h

Wednesday: Worksheet page 6 - letters b, k

Thursday: Worksheet page 7 - letters p, choose a letter

Friday: Worksheet 6 or 7: choose two letters

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Steps to play:

- The child first imitates your letter, by tracing over the letters in the boxes.
- The child imitates your letter, by writing it on the line.

Scissor skills:

Snipping is one of the first steps in learning to cut with a scissor. When holding a scissor, make sure your child holds it in a thumbs up position. It sometimes helps to draw a small smiley face on their thumb to remind them that the thumb needs to be at the top.



You might want to consider Mini Easy-Grip scissors, if your child finds standard scissors difficult to use.

<https://www.tinknstink.co.uk/mini-easi-grip-scissor.html>



We will first practice cutting on a straight line across the page and then to cut on a curve.

Bones for the dog:

Materials needed: Paper, marker and scissors

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Draw a dog kennel or four bones on the one side of the page.
- Draw a straight line from the other end of the page to each bone.

Play:

- The child needs to feed the dog a bone, by cutting on the straight line to the bone.



Catch some fish:

Materials needed: Paper, marker and scissor

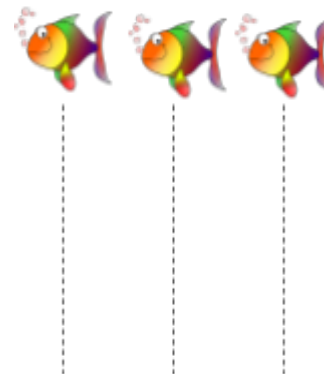
Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Draw four fish on one side of the page.
- Draw a straight line from the other side of the page to each fish.

Play:

- The child pretends to catch some fish, by cutting on the straight line up to each fish.



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Cho-cho train:

Materials needed: Paper, marker and scissors

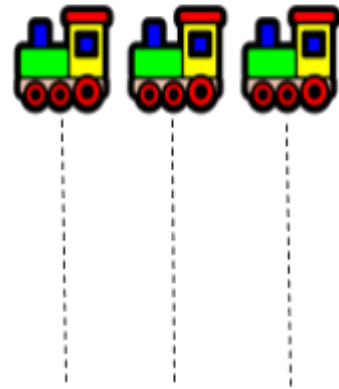
Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Draw four trains on the one side of the page.
- Draw a straight line from the other end of the page to each train.

Play:

- The child needs to ride the train, by cutting on the straight line to the train.



Cutting a curve:

Materials needed: Paper, marker, stickers and scissor

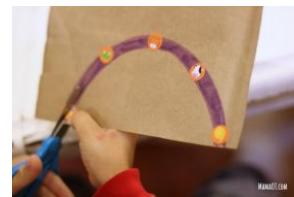
Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Draw a thick black line with a marker in a curve.
- Place stickers along the path as a visual guidance of where they need to cut.

Play:

- The child cut along the curved line, following the sticker path.
- Alternative. You can draw dots on the line and the child needs to place the stickers on the dots, before cutting it; to add an fine motor activity to your task.



Butterfly:

Materials needed: Paper, coloured markers and scissor

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Draw a simple butterfly with curved wings.
- You can place stickers on the edge of the wings as guidance to where to cut.

Play:

- The child cuts along the curved wings, to cut out the butterfly.
- Decorate the butterfly afterwards by drawing patterns, colour in and stickers.



Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further advice or have questions.

Kind regards,

Lizelle Keyser

Independent Occupational Therapist