

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 pompoms:

Materials needed: 10 Pompoms and an empty container such as yogurt, butter or a small tea box. If you do not have pompoms you can use any small toy or even rolling small pieces of paper in balls or cotton wool balls.



Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Cut a hole in the container's lid, a little bigger than one pompom to fit through the hole.
- Place about 10 pompoms next to the container.

Play:

- The aim of the game is for your child to pick up the pompoms one at a time and post it through the hole.
- If they try to take more than one, remind them to only pick up one.

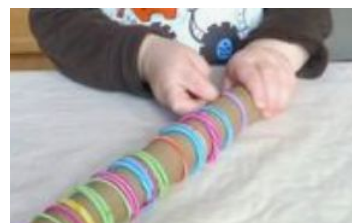
Feed the rubber bands:

Materials needed: 5 to 10 rubber bands or hair bands, cardboard tube or even a muffin pan turned over (use the back of the cups)



Steps to play:

- Hold the rubber band with two hands and place over the container, one at a time.



Posting straws:

Materials needed: Straws, scissors, any container with small holes (a box with small holes will also work)

Steps to play:

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Preparation:

- If you only have a cereal box, poke a few small holes on the large flat side of the box.
- The holes in your container must be large enough for a straw to fit through.

Play:

- Let your child cut the straws in large pieces e.g 5cm. If your child can not cut, then cut the pieces before hand for them.
- The child should post the straw pieces through the holes, one at a time.



Tapping the colours:

Materials needed: Coloured lollipop sticks or coloured paper strips. 5 different colours

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Let your child spread their hand out on the table.
- Place the lollipop sticks (or paper strips) on a table, one colour under each finger.
- It might be necessary to tape it at the one end with Sellotape if the paper slips.

Play:

- When an adult calls the colour they must touch the lollipop stick with that finger. One finger at a time.



Posting pipe cleaners:

Materials needed: Pipe cleaners and box (any size box works even cereal boxes or larger boxes)

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Poke small holes on the top and sides of a box with a screwdriver.
- The holes need to be large enough for pipe cleaners to fit through.
- Place a bunch of pipe cleaners next to the box.

Play:

- The child must take one pipe cleaner at a time and post it into a hole.

Alternatives:

- If the child finds pipe cleaners difficult, practice first with long straws. As the straws are firmer, it is easier to do.
- If your child is able to match colours, you can colour each hole with a colour of the pipe cleaners. They then need to match the pipe cleaner to the correct coloured hole.
- If your child is able to match numbers or letters, you can sellotape a small paper number at the end of each pipe cleaner. Write the number or letter next to the hole on the box.



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They need to match the number/letter on the pipe cleaner with the number/letter on the box.

Two handed activities:

Feed the cotton monster:

Materials needed: kitchen tongs, cotton wool balls, 2 bowls

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Place cotton wool balls into one bowl.
- Place an empty bowl near it.

Play:

- The child must pick up the cotton wool with the tongs and place it one by one in the empty bowl.



Squeezing pegs:

Materials needed: clothing pegs, empty shoe box

Steps to play:

- Give your child an empty shoe box and some clothing pegs.
- The child needs to press the clothing peg and place it on the edge of the shoebox.
- You might need to assist them the first few tries, to understand how to open and close the peg. Do this by putting your fingers over theirs when pressing.



Alternative:

- You can place stickers on the edge of the box. The child needs to place the pegs on the stickers.
- If you use coloured pegs, you can place a coloured dot on the edge of the box. The child needs to match the colour of the peg with the colour on the box.

Peg Numbers:

Materials needed: four containers, clothing pegs

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Tape numbers onto the containers e.g 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Play:

- The child needs to place the same number of pegs as the number on the container, on the edge of the container.



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Peg balls:

Materials needed: smaller pompoms or cotton wool balls (4 different colours), 1 peg, 4 containers

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Place one coloured pompom in each of the containers to indicate which colours go where.



Play:

- The child uses the peg to pick up the pompoms and place it in the correct coloured container.
- Alternative: Place a written number in the bowl. The child needs to place the correct amount of pompoms (one at a time) in the bowl.

Threading heart:

Materials needed: Cardboard or selofame takeaway container, screwdriver, string or wool

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Cut a shape out of the cardboard or takeaway container.
- Press holes about 1 cm from the side and 1cm from each other, all along the edge.
- Tie a knot in the string and put it through the first hole.



Play:

- The child must lace the string all along the edge.



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.

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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.
- Alternative: Roll snakes to make a face on a turned over bowl.



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: Find other objects 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 hedgehog.



Roll small bird eggs:

Materials needed: Play dough



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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>

Drawing on your back:

Materials needed: Paper, markers/crayons, tape, coffee table or dining room chair

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Tape a paper to the bottom of a low coffee table or dining room chair. The height needs to be as such, for the child to lay on their back under that chair and draw on the paper. This again encourages hand motions, rather than full arm motion when drawing.

Play:

- The child can draw a picture in this position. It can also be a colouring in page to colour.



Follow the road:

Materials needed: Paper, marker, car or train

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Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Draw with the marker various lines on the paper. You might want to draw a few different pages.
- Start off with simple lines e.g. straight, wavy and zig-zag; then others that are more complex.

Play:

- The child must place the car at the start of the line and follow the line with the car or train to the end. You might need to demonstrate and guide their hand initially.
- This develops the concept of pencil control and following lines, as what you would do when using a pencil.



Button the pattern:

Materials needed: Buttons (or even stickers), marker and paper

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Draw a pattern with the marker on paper.

Play:

- The child needs to start at the one end of the pattern and place the buttons next to each other along the pattern.
- You can also do this with stickers.



Draw on your tummy:

Materials needed: Paper, crayons or markers



Steps to play:

- The child lay on their tummy to draw. This encourages the use of hand movements, rather than using the whole arm in drawing.
- Draw a picture, by using curly and wiggly lines.



Draw a path:

Materials needed: Crayons/markers, paper and wooden blocks/lollipop sticks/large stickers

Steps to play:

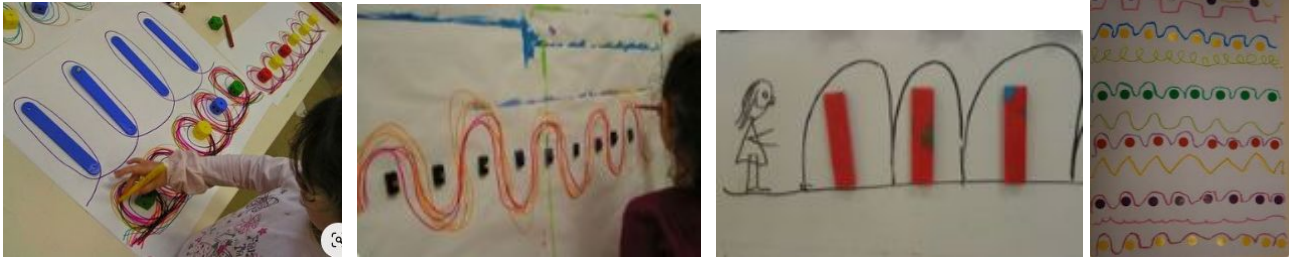
Preparation:

- Place the blocks in a row, at least 5 cm apart.
- Draw the pattern you want to practice, between the blocks, as in the picture.

Play:

- The child draw the pattern between the blocks/stickers
- Some ideas:



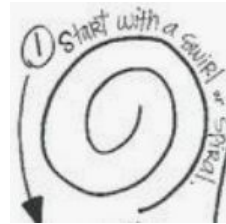


Draw a tornado:

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.



Colour in the circles:

Materials needed: Pencils/markers/crayons, paper

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Draw small circles on a page. The size of the circles will depend on the ability of your child.

Play:

- Provide the child with small crayons or pencils to colour in the circles. Try to stay in the lines.
- Alternative:
 - Draw larger circles, if your child finds the small circles harder to colour in.
 - Use a few colours. Colour in the circles with the same colours.



Fruit paths:

Materials needed: Paper, stickers and markers

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Place the coloured stickers across the page as in the picture. If you do not have stickers, you can also draw a simple picture or shape instead.

Play:

- Demonstrate what you expect to your child with a pencil.
- The child needs to draw the pattern from one end to the other, without touching the stickers.



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Draw a pattern:

Materials needed: Paper, pencils/markers, stickers

Steps to play:

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.

Match the peg:

Materials needed: Pegs, paper, crayons/pencil/marker

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Place pegs around the edge of a page.
- If you want to add a matching element to the game, you can draw either with colours, numbers or letters on the pegs.
- Make sure that you place the matching pegs on opposite sides of the page.

Play:

- The child draws from one peg to the matching peg on the other side.



Pre-writing skills:

Materials needed: C is for Caterpillar worksheet

The first page of the worksheet is self explanatory.

Monday: Page 2 & 3 - C is for caterpillar: Draw from the caterpillar to the apple.

Tuesday: Page 4 & 5 - Draw from the car to the stop.

Wednesday: Page 6 & 7 - Draw from the cat to the milk.

Thursday: Page 8 & 9 - Draw from the children to the cake.

Friday: Page 10 - Draw from the green to the red dot. Now draw without the dots.

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. I've attached a 'cutting across' worksheet. If you are unable to print this, there is instructions to how to make:

Bones for the dog:

Materials needed: Paper, marker and scissors, worksheet

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, worksheet

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.



Cho-cho train:

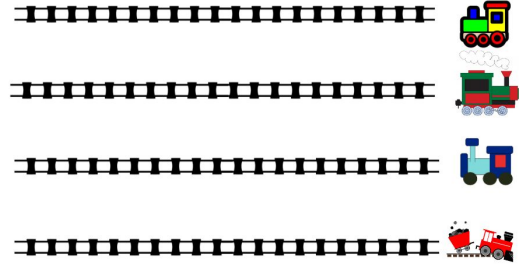
Materials needed: Paper, marker and scissors, worksheet

Steps to play:

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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.

Feed the monkey:

Materials needed: Paper, marker and scissors, worksheet

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Draw four bananas on the left hand side of the page.
- Draw four monkeys on the right hand side of the page. Draw a line between the bananas and the monkeys.



Play:

- The child needs to feed the monkey a banana, by cutting on the straight line to the monkey.

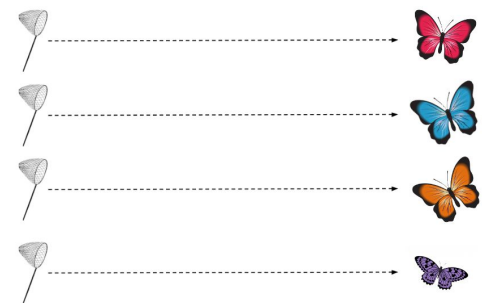
Catch the butterfly:

Materials needed: Paper, marker and scissors, worksheet

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Draw four nets on the left hand side of the page.
- Draw four butterflies on the right hand side of the page. Draw a line from the net to the butterfly.



Play:

- The child needs to catch the butterflies, by cutting on the straight line to the butterfly.

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

Kind regards,

Lizelle Keyser

Independent Occupational Therapist