

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.



Pinch the colour:

Materials needed: Paper plate, marker, coloured clothing pegs

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Draw coloured dots around the edge of the paper plate, at least 2cm apart.
- If you do not have coloured clothing pegs, you can draw the colour onto wooden clothing pegs. The clothing pegs colour should match up with the colours on the paper plate.



Play:

- The child needs to squeeze the clothing peg and match it onto the colour on the plate.

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.



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



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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).



Scoop and pour:

Materials needed: dry rice/lentils/beans/pasta, containers and spoons/scoops

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Place the dry rice/lentils/beans/pasta in a larger container with the spoon and scoop.
- Give the child a few smaller containers next to it.

Play:

- The child needs to scoop the dry rice with the spoon or scoop into the smaller containers to fill it up.



Posting pipe cleaners:

Materials needed: Pipe cleaners, strainer

Steps to play:

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.



Two handed activities:

Squeezing cotton:

Materials needed: kitchen tongs, cotton wool balls/pompoms, cupcake cases and marker

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Write a number (which your child can recognise) within the cupcake cases e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Play:

- The child must pick up the cotton wool/pompoms with the tongs and place it one by one in the cupcake case, until they are filled up with the correct amount e.g. a number 4, they will need to place 4 balls.



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Draw the shape:

Materials needed: Paper, pencil, various kitchen utensils

Steps to play:

- Place the kitchen utensils and cookie cutters on a page.
- Hold it with one hand steady and draw with your other hand around it, to draw its shape.
- Colour in and decorate the drawings.



Peg Numbers:

Materials needed: Paper, pen, scissors and clothing pegs

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Cut out four circles.
- Write numbers on the circles e.g 1, 2, 3, 4

Play:

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



Scoop and transfer:

Materials needed: Two large bowls, various plastic toys, large food spoon.

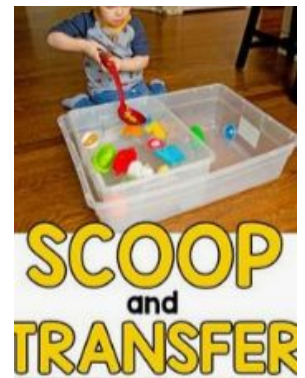
Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Place the plastic toys within a bowl of water.

Play:

- The child needs to scoop the toys out of the bowl of water and place it in the bowl next to.



Pasta and straws:

Materials needed: Playdough, penne pasta pieces, straws

Steps to play:

- Roll a large ball with the playdough.
- Stick the straws into the playdough, so that they are standing up.
- Feed the pasta into the straws. How many pasta towers can you make?



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

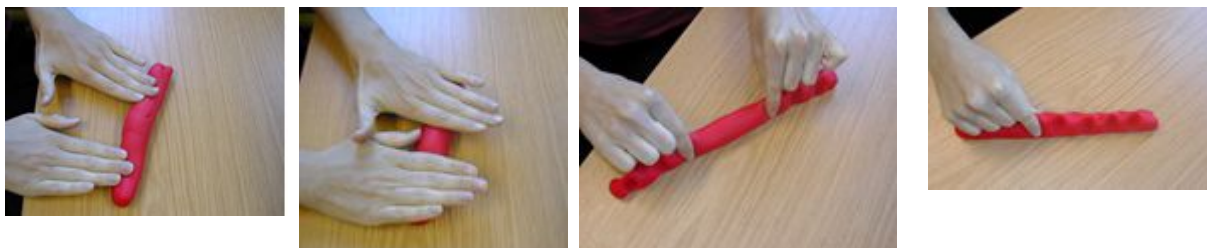
Mix all the ingredients together and stir over a low heat. The dough will begin to thicken and resemble mashed potato. When the dough pulls away from the sides and clumps in the centre, remove the pan from the heat and allow the dough to cool. If the dough is still sticky, you simply need to cook it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



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- 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.

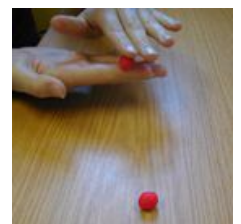


Roll small bird eggs:

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>

Stickers on a pattern:

Materials needed: Stickers (round works well), marker and paper

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Draw a shape with the marker on paper.

Play:

- The child needs to start at the one end of the shape and place the stickers next to each other along.



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.



Draw to the line:

Materials needed: Pencils/markers/crayons, paper

Steps to play:

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.



Circle the dot:

Materials needed: Paper, pencils/markers, stickers

Steps to play:

Preparation:



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

Play:

- The child needs to draw a circle with the correct colour around each dot.

Draw a path:

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

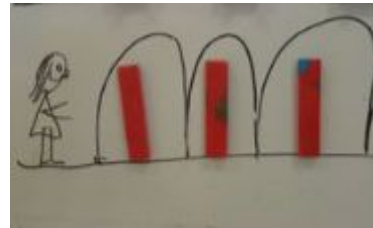
Steps to play:

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 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.



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 to same shape:

Materials needed: Coloured markers, stickers, pencil, paper

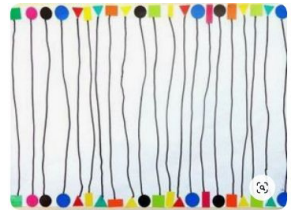
Steps to play:

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.



Bigger and bigger:

Materials needed: Markers, paper

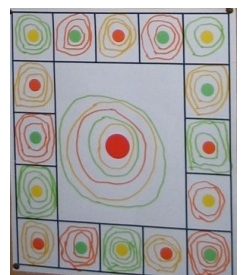
Steps to play:

Preparation:

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

Play:

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



Scribble art:

Materials needed: Coloured markers/pencils/crayons and paper



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Steps to play:

- Draw a large loop pattern across the page with a black marker.
- Colour each of the loops with a different colour.

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 'Ladder letters' - l, i, j, t, u, y.

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 4 and 5 (Ladder 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 4 - letters l, i, j

Tuesday: Worksheet page 5 - letters t, u, y

Wednesday: Worksheet page 4 - letters l, i, j

Thursday: Worksheet page 5 - letters t, u, y

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.

Write my name worksheet:

Materials needed: Printout of **Write my name** worksheet, pencil (again, if you do not have a printer, you can draw single lines across a page and let them practice on the line)

Friday: Follow the instructions on the worksheet

Steps to play:

- The child practices writing their name between two lines.

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>



Chicken feathers:

Materials needed: Turkey craft template, markers, scissor

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Print out the turkey template.
- Cut out the chicken and the outside of the feathers.

Play:

- The child need to cut the feathers on the vertical lines, every few lines (not every line)
- Glue all the feathers together as in the picture.
- Glue the turkey body on top.



Cutting hair:

Materials needed: Scissors, paper bag or just paper, markers

Steps to play:

- The child draws a face on the paper or paper bag and decorates it.
- They cut the top of the bag with snipper movements (one snip at a time) to cut hair for the bag person.



Hedgehogs:

Materials needed: Paper Plate, scissors, marker, glue

Steps to play:

Preparation:

- Fold the paper plate in half and glue together.
- Draw a hedgehog face as in the picture and cut out the nose.



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- Draw in the hedgehog's spikes.

Play:

- The child cut the hedgehog spikes by snipping.



Blast off:

Materials needed: Paper, marker and scissors

Steps to play:

Preparation:

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



Play:

- The child needs to "Blast off!" each rocket, by cutting on the straight line to the rocket.

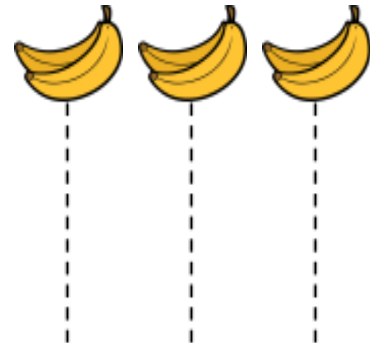
Feed the monkey:

Materials needed: Highlighter, black marker, stickers, paper and scissor

Steps to play:

Preparation:

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



Play:

- The child pretends to be a monkey fetching bananas, by cutting on the straight line up to each banana.

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

Kind regards,

Lizelle Keyser

Independent Occupational Therapist