



Occupational Therapy Handout Motor Skill Development

*** Did you know that by the time a child reaches three years of age, they need many opportunities to play with materials other than writing tools to prepare them for school?
*And that “floor time” and physical play are crucial for overall skill development?

There are many activities you can do with your child at home to help them develop all of the “*building blocks*” necessary for skill progression and independence.

Gross motor skills - Building Blocks

- ✚ Muscle Strength
- ✚ Posture and Balance
- ✚ Coordinated movement of both sides of the body
- ✚ Eye hand coordination
- ✚ Spatial Awareness (awareness of body in space and in relation to the environment)

Gross Motor Skills

Learning to make movements with all of our muscles in a coordinated way

* Involves the large muscles of the body

*This includes eye-hand coordinated skills such as ball skills.

Fine Motor Skills- Building Blocks

- ✚ Postural control
- ✚ Shoulder Girdle stability (shoulder and upper body strength and flexibility)
- ✚ Sense of touch
- ✚ Hand Function (the muscles of the hand and fingers need to work efficiently together for fine motor tasks)
- ✚ Bilateral Coordination (use of both hands together in a coordinated way)
- ✚ Visual Perception (the ability to organize and interpret information that is seen, and give it meaning)
- ✚ *Visual-Motor Integration*- skills that allows us to use our eyes and our hands in a coordinated and efficient way.

Fine Motor Skills

The ability to make precise and coordinated motions using the smaller muscles in our hands and fingers



Fun Activities for Home

Skill Area: Hand and finger strength

- ✚ Mold and create with playdough, silly putty or modeling clay: pull apart/push together; pinch; hide and pull out toys like marbles; push in sticks; push cookie cutters or other objects like pasta into the playdough.
- ✚ Color a picture with crayons by putting a plain sheet of paper over sandpaper, requiring more hand strength.
- ✚ Squeeze and create art projects using eye droppers- using food coloring, paint, plain water.
- ✚ Pick up objects with kitchen tongs, clothespins or tweezers. e.g.: cotton balls, pom-poms, cheerios.
- ✚ Use spray bottle to water plants, clean kitchen table, spray off side-walk chalk, melt toys in ice, etc.
- ✚ Paint or glue crafts using Q-tips for fine motor finger strength .
- ✚ Pop air bubbles from bubble packing material.
- ✚ Make crafts using a hole punch, hand stapler.
- ✚ Put items into jars/containers with lids so children have to open and close the lids themselves. E.g. small toys, craft supplies, candies.
- ✚ Squeeze out water from sponges, washcloths (have a race to see who can fill up a cup/ bucket first!)

Skill Area: Bilateral Coordination

- ✚ Ripping paper into small pieces.
- ✚ Building (pushing together, stacking, pulling apart) Lego, blocks, Tinker toys, etc.
- ✚ Tracing activities: tracing around stencils, items in the house, hands and feet
- ✚ Beading- use pipe cleaners, round shoelaces or string. If you don't have beads try beading macaroni, cheerio's, Fruit loops, etc.
- ✚ Lacing activities
- ✚ Stabilizing paper with one hand while coloring or drawing with the other.
- ✚ Listen to music with actions (e.g. 'Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes').
- ✚ Carrying something that requires 2 hands: tray, box, large ball, etc.
- ✚ Pour water or sand from one cup/container to another cup in the other hand, going back and forth.
- ✚ Ball Skills: throwing and catching a ball. If you don't have a ball, use rolled up socks, bean bag, etc.
- ✚ Place colored tape on the floor and instruct your child to balance and walk along the taped line (use straight, zig-zag and curved lines).
- ✚ Hop Scotch games
- ✚ Swimming, riding a bicycle, skipping rope.
- ✚ Walking like your favorite animal (i.e. bear, crab)

Most importantly, HAVE FUN!!!!!!!!!!!!!!