



### A note from your student's occupational therapist

Here are some ways to promote your student's fine motor, visual motor, and self-regulation skills over this extended spring break:

- Engage in activities that promote finger isolation and hand strength
  - See attached handouts
- Participate in activities that promote visual motor skills, such as:
  - I Spy with a Twist (see handout)
  - Hidden Picture Finds
  - Puzzles
- Encourage participation in activities that require bilateral coordination
  - See attached handout
- Engage in conversation about feelings and perspectives of others:
  - The Zones of Regulation visual is a helpful way to check in with our feelings
  - Discuss the way our behaviors make other people feel
  - Using the terminology from the We Thinkers! social thinking curriculum that we use at school will be helpful for this
- When handling a difficult or stressful situation, try these calming strategies:
  - Deep Breathing Techniques (see attachment)
  - Deep pressure input through hugs and gentle head or hand squeezes
  - Taking a break in a calm quiet space
  - Taking a movement break (e.g. take a walk outside, do a simple scavenger hunt, build a fort, dance to music, etc.)

Best regards,

Miss Bridgid

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# Tools to Grow at Home

## What to Know & How to Develop Fine Motor Skills Preschool - School Age Children

### FINGER ISOLATION



#### What Parents Need to Know:

- The ability to move each finger individually, or one at a time, is important for precise and careful use of each hand.
- Well developed controlled finger movements are needed for tasks such as using a pencil, typing, using musical instruments, & tying of shoelaces.

#### Try This!

- ☐ Flicking Games - use index finger to flick a marble, cotton balls, small pom-poms, coins, or balls of paper at a target. Use your imagination!
- ☐ Bubbles - pop with your index or pointer finger
- ☐ "I Spy" - use index or pointer finger to point at objects or pictures in a book
- ☐ Tracing - use one finger to trace large shapes, letters, & numbers. Consider using a sand or shaving cream tray to do so
- ☐ Finger Puppets-use one or several at a time
- ☐ Finger Snapping-give it a try!
- ☐ Finger Paint-use only your index or thumb to paint
- ☐ Poke - try to use one finger at a time to pop bubble wrap
- ☐ Place a different picture sticker on the pad of each of four fingers. Child uses his/her thumb to touch the sticker (and finger) that is specified by the parent
- ☐ Play dough - push individual fingers into dough one at a time
- ☐ Hand lotion - child holds one finger out at a time to have lotion applied
- ☐ Got It - child places his/her hand palm down & flat on a table. Parent touches a single finger; the child tries to lift up only that finger
- ☐ Finger Games - "Itsy Bitsy Spider" & "Thumbkin"



#### Special Instructions:

# Tools to Grow at Home

## What to Know & How to Develop Fine Motor Skills Preschool - School Age Children

### FINGER & HAND STRENGTH

#### What Parents Need to Know:

- Adequate hand and finger strength is required to exert enough force to match the qualities of the object to be grasped and manipulated.
- Without adequate strength, child will not be able to use tools and/or operate objects as required.
- The child may fatigue before the task is completed.



#### Try This!

- ☐ Squeeze - sponges in the sink/tub, stress balls, paper into balls, play dough, or clay
- ☐ Resistive tools - given help as needed, children enjoy using a hole punch, basting tool, garlic press, and eye dropper
- ☐ Spray Bottle - fill a small plastic bottle with water & encourage your child to use his/her fingers to squeeze the lever to spray. Great for outdoors and bath tub.
- ☐ Flicking Games - use index finger to flick a marble, cotton balls, small pom-poms, coins, or balls of paper at a target. Use your imagination!
- ☐ Hammering - Use a toy hammer to pound golf tees into foam blocks.
- ☐ Use Legos, Duplo, K'Nex, Tinker toys, or similar building blocks
- ☐ Clothespins - squeeze onto the edge of a can or clothesline
- ☐ Play dough & Clay - mold, squeeze, roll, tear, and pinch

#### Special Instructions:



# Tools to Grow at Home

## What to Know & How to Develop Fine Motor Skills Preschool - School Age Children

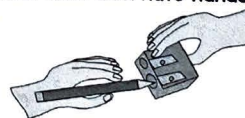
### **BILATERAL HAND USE: USING BOTH HANDS TOGETHER**

#### What Parents Need to Know:

- Bilateral refers to the use of both hands, and both sides of the body.
- The use of both hands together in a smooth manner is very important for feeding one's self, dressing, playing, and school tasks.
- Bilateral hand use includes using both arms/hands at the same time for the same action, such as using a rolling pin.
- It also includes using the same action at alternate times, such as dribbling a ball with one hand, then the other hand.
- Finally, it includes the ability to use different sides of the body for different movements, such as holding the paper down when writing.

#### Try This!

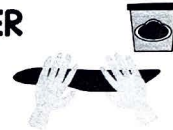
- ☐ Scissors - some children will snip, others cut on lines, and others will cut around shapes
- ☐ Tear pictures out of a magazine to make a collage
- ☐ Tear small pieces of colored construction paper and paste onto another picture to "add color"
- ☐ Use both hands to pull apart construction toys (Duplo, Lego)
- ☐ Pull apart and put together pop beads of different sizes
- ☐ Pull - use both hands to pull a wagon or pillow case full of toys
- ☐ Push - use both hands to push a box full of toys
- ☐ Ball Games - play catch with both hands, bounce a large ball with both hands, throw a ball with both hands, bounce a ball with alternate hands, throw the ball at the wall-bounce-then catch
- ☐ Sharpen crayons or pencils



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### **BILATERAL HAND USE: USING BOTH HANDS TOGETHER**



#### Try This!

- ☐ Jump Rope
- ☐ Play Dough - use both hands to roll dough with a rolling pin. Use a "garlic press" to squeeze out dough, use a plastic knife to cut the dough
- ☐ Play "Zoom Ball"
- ☐ Stand up to Color - child stands at wall or easel and uses one hand to hold paper up & other hand to color/print/paint
- ☐ Stencils - trace within and outside of their borders
- ☐ Lacing Cards - one hand holds the lacing card and the other laces through the holes. Determine the lacing pattern such as up the hole, and then down the hole, repeat
- ☐ Stitching - older children can perform simple hand stitching or sewing of buttons
- ☐ Pouring - water, sand, or dry rice from one container to another
- ☐ Tying knots & bows
- ☐ Folding laundry - fold towels, wash cloths, socks, etc.
- ☐ Folding Paper - Older children can try origami crafts
- ☐ Washing dishes - even young children can wash child safe dishes with supervision.



#### Special Instructions:





# Outdoor Sensory Motor Scavenger Hunt

Can you find something...

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> to climb?                  | <input type="radio"/> to jump over?            |
| <input type="radio"/> to play catch with?        | <input type="radio"/> to walk across?          |
| <input type="radio"/> to crawl under?            | <input type="radio"/> to balance on your head? |
| <input type="radio"/> to roll across the ground? | <input type="radio"/> that is rough?           |
| <input type="radio"/> that is heavy?             | <input type="radio"/> that is soft?            |
| <input type="radio"/> that is smooth?            | <input type="radio"/> that is hard?            |
| <input type="radio"/> that is squishy?           | <input type="radio"/> that is loud?            |

# I SPY

## WITH A TWIST!

### Colors

I SPY SOMETHING...

RED  
ORANGE  
YELLOW  
GREEN  
BLUE  
PURPLE

### Numbers

I SPY 2 ANIMALS

I SPY 3 TREES

I SPY 4 CARS

I SPY 5 FLOWERS

### Textures

I SPY SOMETHING ROUGH

I SPY SOMETHING SMOOTH

I SPY SOMETHING BUMPY

I SPY SOMETHING SOFT

I SPY SOMETHING HARD

### Actions

I SPY SOMETHING YOU CAN THROW

I SPY SOMETHING YOU CAN BALANCE ON

I SPY SOMETHING YOU CAN JUMP OFF OF

I SPY SOMETHING YOU CAN CLIMB

### Letters and Sounds

I SPY SOMETHING THAT BEGINS WITH...

I SPY SOMETHING THAT ENDS WITH...

I SPY SOMETHING THAT RHYMES WITH...

### Memories

I SPY A PLACE WHERE WE CAMPED OUT ONE  
NIGHT

I SPY A PLACE WHERE WE HAD A PICNIC

I SPY A PLACE WHERE WE PLANTED SEEDS

I SPY A PLACE WHERE YOU LEARNED TO RIDE  
YOUR BIKE

### Animals and Habitats

I SPY A PLACE WHERE A BIRD WOULD LIVE

I SPY A PLACE WHERE A SNAKE WOULD LIVE

I SPY SOMETHING A BUG WOULD EAT

I SOMETHING A SQUIRREL WOULD EAT

### Shapes

I SPY SOMETHING THAT'S A...

CIRCLE

OVAL

TRIANGLE

SQUARE

RECTANGLE

DIAMOND

### Space and Distance

I SPY SOMETHING THAT'S CLOSE BY

I SPY SOMETHING THAT'S 10 FEET AWAY

I SPY SOMETHING THAT'S CLOSER THAN...

I SPY SOMETHING THAT'S WAY UP HIGH

I SPY SOMETHING THAT'S FARTHER AWAY  
THAN...

### Other Senses

I SPY SOMETHING THAT SMELLS SWEET

I SPY SOMETHING THAT MAKES A BUZZING  
SOUND

I SPY SOMETHING THAT'S COLD

# 25 Heavy Work Activities

## for small spaces

- Massages
- Bear hugs
- Play with a Body Sock
- Yoga Poses
- Pulling resistance bands with hands
- Playing passing games with weighted stuffed animals
- Weighted sensory bottles
- Animal walks
- Wall pushes
- Chair dips
- Tossing and catching heavy bean bags
- Boxing with boxing gloves against a mat or bolster
- Roll a therapy ball up and down the wall
- Squeezing putty or play dough
- Playing tug of war with Pop Toobs
- Tearing paper (especially heavier card stock)
- Crumpling paper and shooting into a garbage can
- Pushing and pulling Squigz
- Cooking activities (e.g. kneading, stirring thick dough)
- Stepping up onto a chair or bench and jumping down (with close supervision!)
- Squeezing sensory balloons (filled with dry beans, dry rice, or play dough)
- Digging in a tactile bin of wet sand or Kinetic Sand
- Writing on and then wiping off or erasing a dry erase board
- Pushing feet against resistance band tied to the legs of a desk
- Wall sits

# CALMING BREATHING TECHNIQUES

## 1 || Infinity Breathing

Visualizing an infinity symbol, or even tracing the symbol with one finger while breathing in and out, can be a helpful tool for kids to achieve a smooth, even breath cycle. Have kids inhale as they follow one half of the symbol and exhale as they follow the other half.

## 2 || Balloon Breathing

Another helpful breathing technique is to have kids visualize a balloon inside their bellies. As they breathe in, the balloon expands and as they breathe out, the balloon deflates.

## 3 || Alternate Nostril Breathing

For this breathing exercise, kids bring attention to their breath by holding one nostril closed as they breathe in and then holding the other nostril closed as they breathe out.

## 4 || 4 Count Breathing

Have kids breathe in for a count of 4, then pause to hold onto the breath for a count of 4, breathe out for a count of 4, and pause when the breath empties for a count of 4.

## 5 || Counting Breaths

For an even easier version of the technique above, simply have kids count their breaths until they get to 10 (counting 1 on the inhale, 2 on the exhale, and so on). Then, have them start over at 1.

## 6 || Beach Breathing

This is one of our favorite breathing visualization techniques. Have kids imagine that they're standing on the beach. As they inhale, have them imagine that they're drawing a wave up onto the sand. As they exhale, have them imagine the water receding back into the ocean or lake. Repeat.

## 7 || Draw a Square Breathing

This one adds a visual component to the 4 Count Breathing described above. On their desk or table, have kids trace a horizontal line with their fingers for a count of 4 as they breathe in (the top of the square). Then, trace downward to form the side of the square as they hold the breath for a count of 4. Then they trace horizontally again to make the bottom of the square as they exhale. And finally they trace upward to form the other side of the square as they hold their breath out. Repeat.

## 8 || Making an Object Move With the Breath

This is a great one to try with younger kids! Have the child lie on the floor with a toy or other small object resting on her tummy. Tell her to try to make the object rise and fall slowly by breathing deeply.