

Pediatric Development Center



~ Newsletter ~
September
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We provide occupational therapy evaluation, treatment and consultation for children with developmental delays, autism/Asperger, cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome, sensory processing disorders, attention, behavioral concerns, handwriting, and other areas of weakness. Contact us for further information:

125 Presumpscot St.
Portland, ME.
(207) 699-5531

Good Resources:

www.do2learn.com

www.abilitations.com

Write from the Start by: Ion Teodorescu & Lois M. Addy

Handwriting Without Tears & Cursive Success by: Jan Z. Olsen, OTR

Handwriting & Desk Posture

There may be two factors that contribute to a child's difficulty assuming and holding sitting postures while performing table-top fine motor tasks.

FIRST: Poorly designed and/or fitted sitting and writing furniture.

SECOND: Low body awareness, which is observable in many young children. They lack postural sensitivity for making minute adjustments to keep their bodies upright in space. The chair height should allow the child's heels firm contact with the floor. The height of the desk should be two inches above the bended elbow when the child is seated squarely on his chair to write. The slant of the paper should run parallel to the line of the arm when the hands are relaxed and together at midline on desk surface.



Pencil Holding

The best way to hold a pencil is by using a tripod grasp. When using this grasp the hand gets less tired and the movements are more precise. Achieving this grasp will take practice. Finding time each day to review the skills will be especially helpful during

kindergarten and first grade. Pencil grips can be used to help promote proper grasp. There are many different grips. Finding the one that works best for you will help to keep your fingers in the best position.

THE GRASP: For a tripod grasp: hold the pencil between the tips of your thumb and your pointing finger and support it against the side of your middle finger.



Fine Motor

Fine motor skills are foundation requirements for good eye-hand coordination (so a child can draw, write, turn pages, use utensils and other tools, build with legos and do jigsaw puzzles), for precise eye-motor movement, and for articulating speech and expressing language.

Poor hand coordination skills may present themselves in children who:

- * avoid ordinary classroom activities such as writing exercises, art projects, and science experiments
- * avoid the use of tools, such as crayons, pencils, scissors,

hole punches, staplers, screwdrivers, or tweezers
* have poor handwriting
* have poor self-help skills
* are considered a “messy eater”

Right Writing

“Writing is a complex task that involves much more than just holding a pencil or pen. It requires good head and shoulder stability to position the forearm and wrist correctly, adequate touch skills to feel the position of the pencil in the hand, and visual perception skills to see and form letters correctly. Many children have problems with handwriting because of difficulties in one or more of these areas.

Tips For Healthy Handwriting:

Children need lots of “heavy work” input to the arms in preparation for writing. Wheelbarrow walks, crawling through play tunnels, hanging from a bar, and riding/pushing a scooter board are all great ways to build up the neck, shoulder and hand muscles.

Pre-writing sensory activities are a must for handwriting success. Drawing with the fingers in shaving cream, finger paint or baby powder are great fun and provide plenty of sensory input to the hands.

Remember to strengthen the hand muscles! Squeeze putty or hide simple objects such

as pennies or pegs in modeling clay or putty and have the child use fingers to poke around and find the hidden items.

Tools that involve crossing the middle of one’s body, using hands together in activities, activities requiring each hand to do something different, and using the legs and/or arms in activities such as jumping, hopping on one foot, skipping rope, jumping jacks or riding a bike or scooter, are activities that enhance communication between the two sides of the brain. Teachers and parents are excited when these brain boosters translate into write-on success!”

Source:
www.abilitations.com

Grasp & Hand Strength Ideas

- * Sidewalk chalk on driveways & chalkboards
 - * Spray bottles
 - * Hole punchers
 - * Sewing or lacing
 - * Pick up stick games
 - * Lite Bright or peg boards
 - * Opening lids
- Source: Kimberlee Wing,
OTR/L

Golf Peg Push-In



Overview:

“The student has to pick up each golf peg using their pointer and thumb. Once they pick it up, they place it in the hole on the lid. They use their pointer finger to push the peg through the hole.

Skills Taught:

Fine Motor
Pincher Grasp

Materials Needed:

Tall container (Crystal Light containers work great)
Golf pegs
Scissors (to cut a hole in the lid)

Directions:

Take an empty plastic container and cut a hole in the lid. All the kids have to do is pick up each gold peg (using their pointer finger and thumb) and place it in the hole on the lid. The student then has to use his/her pointer finger to push the peg through the hole.”

Source: www.do2learn.com

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