

Pediatric Development Center



~ Newsletter ~



2009

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.aota.com

www.skillbuildersonline.com

www.kidscraftzone.com

Backpack Strategies for Parents and Students: Pack it Light, Wear it Right Provided by the AOTA

*Aching back and
shoulders...weakened
muscles...tingling
arms...stooped posture.*

Does your child have these symptoms after wearing a heavy school backpack? Carrying too much weight in a pack or wearing it the wrong way can lead to pain and strain. Parents can take steps to help children load and wear backpacks the right way to avoid health problems.

Loading a backpack

- Never let a child carry more than 15% of his or her body weight. This means a child who weighs 100 pounds shouldn't wear a loaded school backpack heavier than 15 pounds.

- Load heaviest items closest to the child's back (the back of the pack).

- Arrange books and materials so they won't slide around in the backpack.

- Check what your child carries to school and brings home. Make sure the items are necessary to the day's activities.

- On days the backpack is too loaded, your child can hand carry a book or other item.

- If the backpack is too heavy, consider using a book bag on wheels if your child's school allows it.

- Both shoulder straps should always be worn. Wearing a pack slung over one shoulder can cause a child to lean to one side, curving the spine and causing pain or discomfort.

- Select a pack with well-padded shoulder straps. Shoulders and necks have many blood vessels and nerves that can cause pain and tingling in the neck, arms, and hands when too much pressure is applied.

- Adjust the shoulder straps so that the pack fits snugly to the child's back. A pack that hangs loosely from the back can pull the child backwards and strain muscles.

- Wear the waist belt if the backpack has one. This helps distribute the pack's weight more evenly.

- The bottom of the pack should rest in the curve of the lower back. It should never rest more than four inches below the child's waistline.

- School backpacks come in different sizes for different ages. Choose the right size pack for your child's back as well as one with enough room for necessary school items.



Wearing a backpack

After a long day of school work, have some therapeutic craft fun at home!:

Glitter Animals



Materials:

- * Finger paint
- * Rice, sand, glitter or sparkles
- * Piece of paper with the outline of an animal on it

Directions:

1. Give your child a piece of paper with the outline of an animal on it.
2. Have your child color the picture with finger paint.
3. Sprinkle glitter on the paint.

Therapeutic Benefits:

- * Increase awareness of individual fingers (helps with pencil grasp)
- * Sensory experience
- * Applying pressure through open hand leads to development of the arches of the hand (pencil grasp)

Suggested Modifications:

Place the paper on a vertical surface such as a wall, easel or chalk board.

- * Increase shoulder stability (overall fine motor function)

* Develop wrist stability (pencil grasp & printing)

Add sparkles, rice or sand to different finger paints to vary the textures of the paint.

* Increase the sensory experience and improve integration of the tactile system (overall motor performance and sensory development)

Draw a shape around the picture and have your child trace this border with finger paint and index finger.

* Develop isolated finger movement and separation of sides of hand (pencil grasp)

* Reinforce the movement for drawing the shape (printing)

* Reinforce the feeling of the shape (visual perception)

Pick up glitter with tips of index finger and thumb, and sprinkle onto paper.

* Develop precision rotation, separation of sides of hands, small muscles of the hands, and isolation of fingers (pencil grasp)

Source: Skill Builders

Finger Paint

- 1 c. cornstarch
- 3/4 c. and another 1/4 c. of cold water
- 2 c. hot water
- 1 envelope gelatin
- 1/2 c. Ivory Flakes
- Food coloring

Mix together cornstarch and 3/4 cups cold water. Soak one envelope unflavored gelatin in 1/4 cup of cold water. Stir 2 cups hot water into the cornstarch. Cook

and stir until mixture is clear and boiling. Remove from heat and blend in gelatin. Then add Ivory Flakes, stirring until the flakes are dissolved. Cool. Divide into small covered containers. Add food coloring.



Make Your own Glitter

Materials:

Large Bowl

Plastic Squeeze Bottle (such as those used for ketchup/mustard)

Flour

Salt

Water

Food Coloring

Directions:

Mix equal parts of flour, salt and water in a large bowl. Pour mixture into plastic squeeze bottles. Add food coloring to make different colors of glitter. The salt is what gives the designs a glistening glitter