

# Exceptional Children Information for Parents

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Public Schools of North Carolina  
State Board of Education  
Department of Public Instruction

<https://ec.ncpublicschools.gov>

## Occupational Therapy Activities for Home

[Taken from NESCA](#)

Here are some activities that can be done in the home to keep the development and learning going!

If your child's occupational therapy (OT) evaluation mentions difficulty with fine motor coordination, consider incorporating these activities into your day.

- Sort marbles, pompom or coins. Using fingers to pinch and pick up small objects helps to build strength and solidify grasp and grip patterns. Increase the difficulty of this activity by having kids push pompom and marbles through small holes or manipulate coins through slits in a tub or box.
- Play with playdough or putty. Make shapes using cookie cutters, push beads into putty and pull them all out, roll playdough into a snake and use different pinches to create patterns from head to tail. Pinches to consider include thumb and index finger, thumb and index+middle finger and thumb against the side of the index finger (lateral pinch).
- String beads, cheerios or pasta with holes. This activity promotes bilateral coordination, fine motor control and grasp patterns. Scaffold this activity by starting with threading on pipe cleaners, moving to dry spaghetti and finally working to thread onto string.
- Practice using tweezers to pick up small objects.

If your child's OT evaluation mentions difficulty with visual perception or [visual motor integration](#), try these!

- Puzzles! Doing a puzzle requires multiple visual perceptual skills, as well as the fine motor precision to fit pieces together.
- Word searches. Word searches require horizontal and vertical tracking, letter discrimination and visual figure ground ability. Consider scaffolding this activity by finding word searches that only have horizontal words, have both horizontal and vertical, or have horizontal, vertical and diagonal words.
- Sorting activities. Objects can be sorted by color, shape, size, texture and a plethora of other characteristics. Consider using objects found in the home, such as pens, buttons, silverware or simply items in a junk drawer for sorting activities.
- Mazes, Hidden Pictures and Spot the Difference activities can all be found online.
- Copying activities. Draw pictures using horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines, circles, squares, triangles and crosses and have your child try to copy them exactly. This activity works on visual motor integration specifically.

If your child's OT evaluation mentions difficulty with endurance, postural stability or core strength, try these!

- Draw or play while lying on the ground. Tummy time is often thought of as an activity to help our newborns, but lying on your tummy and using the muscles needed to keep the upper body and head stable can be beneficial for building strength in most of our kids.
- Yoga! Incorporate an online video or movement break into your daily routine.
- Pretend to be different animals! Walk like a bear, slither like a snake, hop like a frog or trot like a horse. Mimicking these animals is a great activity to do while listening to music and uses all different muscles.

Check out previous newsletters for other resources.

<https://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/parent-resources/parent-newsletter-2020>

## Important Links

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education](#)
- [N.C. Department of Health & Human Services](#)
  - [Strong Schools NC Public Health Toolkit \(K-12\)](#)
- [N.C. Department of Public Instruction](#)
  - [Lighting Our Way Forward \(Summary\)](#)
- [No Kid Hungry](#)
- [NCDPI-COVID-19 Responses & Resources](#)

## A Message from DHHS

With school now underway, many working parents are facing the added stress of finding a safe place for their children during the day that can also support their remote learning. The good news is that there is ample licensed childcare available across the state, and we are making it as easy as possible for families to find it. In partnership with Child Care Resources and Referral, the NC Department of Health and Human Services created a free hotline to connect families to licensed care for their school-age children. Families can call the hotline at 1-888-600-1685.

Help families know that they have options by:

- Sharing our Child Care Hotline flyer ([English](#), [Spanish](#)) with your networks and employees
- Sharing our [Parent Toolkit on What To Know When Looking for School-Age Child Care](#)
- Posting on social media using our [toolkit](#)
- Including information in your newsletters, presentations, and other communication vehicles

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