

Occupational Therapy...?

OT is a treatment that works to improve or assist with the following skills

- ▶ Fine Motor Skills
- ▶ Hand Strengthening
- ▶ Bilateral Coordination
- ▶ Visual Motor and Perception
- ▶ Handwriting
- ▶ Self Care Skills
- ▶ Sensory Regulation and Sensory Processing
- ▶ Attention and Focus

The following slides will provide activities for the aforementioned areas

Fine Motor Skills

- ▶ String beads/pasta/buttons
- ▶ Pulling caps off markers and pens and replacing them
- ▶ Stretching rubber bands
- ▶ Using squeeze and spray bottles
- ▶ Tearing paper
- ▶ Use various size tweezers to pick up small items
- ▶ Buttoning
- ▶ Twisting twist ties or pipe cleaner
- ▶ Playing with small blocks or Lego's
- ▶ Placing coins through a slot
- ▶ Open close zip lock bags
- ▶ Play with play dough, (find hidden toys inside)

Hand Strengthening

- ▶ Weight bearing activities, such as wheelbarrow walks, crab walks, push-ups, and crawling
- ▶ Lego and Playdoh play: roll into balls, make a snake, press with stamps, hide and find pegs or beads, etc
- ▶ Pinch clothespins, paint with eyedroppers, & pick up items with tweezers
- ▶ Crafts, such as beading, lacing, ripping paper to make a collage, and hole punch activities (pasta works great for beading and junk mail is always fun to tear up!)
- ▶ Use a spray bottle to play in the bath, help with cleaning, watering plants, etc
- ▶ For in-hand manipulation, place coins in a piggy bank or make your own with a coffee can with a slot in the top

Bilateral Coordination

- ▶ Throwing and catching a big bouncy ball or beach ball using both hands
- ▶ Tearing paper (newspaper/junk mail), construction paper, etc.)
- ▶ String beads or macaroni/pasta
- ▶ Practicing buttons, zippers, snaps, lacing cards, and tying
- ▶ Snipping/Cutting (tips):
 - ▶ Bold the outline with a highlighter or marker.
 - ▶ Hold scissors AND paper with “thumbs UP.” (You can place a sticker on your child’s thumb nail as a reminder)
 - ▶ Begin first with cutting straight lines, then basic shapes, then complex shapes.
 - ▶ Use hand-over-hand assistance as needed.

Visual Motor and Perception

- ▶ Color, cut, and put back together handmade puzzles
- ▶ Make letters and numbers out of pipe cleaners, wiki sticks, or play dough
- ▶ Write letters or draw shapes in the air (you can also turn off lights and use a flash light to draw shapes or letters)
- ▶ Trace, imitate or copy pre-writing strokes: horizontal line, vertical line, circle, cross, diagonal lines, square, X and triangle
- ▶ Hammering with plastic hammer and nails
- ▶ Lacing board activities
- ▶ Throw bean bags or tennis balls at a target, hoop or basket
- ▶ Practice imitating block designs
- ▶ Draw pre-writing shapes and letters on table top, using shaving cream, pudding or in a tub of sand
- ▶ Color inside large, progressing to small shapes, staying inside the lines

Handwriting

- ▶ Pencil Grasp Tips
 - ▶ Have child write on a vertical surface. Writing on vertical surface can cause wrist flexion, which is impossible for writing.
 - ▶ Use broken crayons and short pencils to encourage an efficient grasp
 - ▶ Have your child hold a small coin or cotton ball with their pinky and ring fingers leaving only their ring finger, middle finger and thumb available to hold the pencil.
- ▶ Trace, imitate or copy pre-writing strokes: horizontal line, vertical line, circle, cross, diagonal lines, square, X and triangle
- ▶ Draw pre-writing shapes and letters on table top, using shaving cream, pudding or in a tub of sand
- ▶ Write letters or simple words using a highlighter for your child to trace while emphasizing moving from left to right and using a top down approach
- ▶ Have your child communicate in writing-journals, notes, reminders, shopping lists, schedules, etc.

Self Care

- ▶ Practice dressing skills through pretend play with dress-up clothes or dolls
- ▶ Help your child up until the very last step to allow him/her to successfully complete the dressing task. Do less and less as your child can do more and more. For example:
 - ▶ Assist with fastening the zipper but allow the child to pull it up.
 - ▶ Help your child put each leg into his/her pants but have your child pull his/her pants up independently.
 - ▶ Insert a button halfway into the hole, but let your child pull it fully through.
- ▶ Teach your child to locate the tag first to identify the front when putting on shirts or jackets.

Sensory Regulation and Sensory Processing

- ▶ Self-regulation is the ability to control one's thoughts, emotional responses, actions and level of alertness/attention.
- ▶ It can be influenced by several different factors including sensory processing.
 - ▶ Sensory processing is how we process information from the world around us as well as what is going on inside of us to produce an appropriate behavioral response.
- ▶ If you have concerns or questions in this area; please contact me directly.

Attention and Focus

- ▶ Choose a location in the home with minimal distractions when completing structured activities such as homework or studying
- ▶ Break down instructions into simple 1-2 step directions
- ▶ Have your child repeat directions to reinforce understanding
- ▶ Use a visual timer (sand timer, phone) to gradually increase attention to a non-preferred activity
- ▶ Allow your child to take short, intermittent movement breaks
- ▶ Use a reward chart with stickers or checkmarks to reinforce positive behaviors