

## Fine Motor Skills

The following activities are designed to develop your child's fine motor skills, as recommended by your Occupational Therapist. The activities you choose should be practised on a regular basis. The best way to encourage practice is by **making it fun!** Turn these activities into games using your child's individual interests.

### Activity Ideas

#### 1. Finger Tapping

- Rest your elbow on the table, with the back of your hand in line with your wrist.
- Touch your thumb pad to each finger pad in turn from index finger down to little finger.
- Try going backwards – little finger to index finger.
- Touch each finger x1, x2, x3
- Go as fast as you can!
- Place the heel of your hands together, fingers curled together to try and touch the corresponding finger tips quickly one at a time.
- Imagine playing the piano quickly on the table top.

#### 2. Finger Wrestling

- Touch your thumb pad and index fingers pads together to make a circle. Ask a partner to interlink their finger circle with yours.
- You both pull as hard as you can to break the other person's grip!

#### 3. Putty/Play Doh

- Roll the putty into a sausage using one or both hands. Push the pad of each fingertip and thumb into the sausage. Rest the heel of the hand on the table and isolate each finger in turn.
- Roll the putty into a sausage using one or both hands. Pinch up spines from the sausage using thumb and each finger in turn i.e. thumb and index finger, thumb and middle finger, and so on.
- Roll the putty in to a ball and flatten it slightly. Pinch a piece between thumb and index finger and pull it to make a long string. 'Stick' it to the table and then do another piece etc.
- Pull off a small piece of putty and flatten it between thumb and index finger. Now roll it between thumb and index finger and try to make it into a ball.
- Roll the putty in to a short sausage using one or both hands. Bend the sausage round to make a 'doughnut'. Rest elbow on the table and oppose all fingers to thumb. Place doughnut over fingers and then open fingers and thumb out to stretch the doughnut. Try to open your fingers enough to stretch the putty so it stretches to fall over your wrist like a bangle.
- Roll the putty into a ball. Put the ball into palm of the hand and squeeze!
- Roll the putty into a ball and then flatten into a pancake. Place hand over the putty making sure the fingers and thumb are not overlapping the edge of the putty.

Keeping the arm still, bend the fingers and thumb in a 'raking' motion through the putty.

#### **4. Bandage**

Place the bandage across the table.

- Trap the bandage end with the wrist of your writing hand and the edge of the table. Using only your fingers, try to gather up the bandage under your hand.

Place the bandage along the edge of the table.

- Trap the bandage end on the edge of the table with your wrist. Using only your thumb, gather the bandage under your hand.

#### **5. Ruler**

- Hold ruler horizontal with both hands.
- Bend wrists down and up as far as you can (x10 times).
- Move hands from one end to the other by crossing over each other.
- Turning it around in a circle, crossing hands over.
- Hold vertically and move hands up and down, crossing over each other.

#### **6. Beads**

- Thread 10 beads, timing how fast you can go. See if you can beat this time on the next go.
- Try to pick the beads up with a pincer grip – thumb and index finger pads opposing – and use one hand to pick the beads up and the other to thread.

#### **7. Pegboard**

- Pick up one small peg at a time from a container and place in a horizontal row until you have done all 10 pegs. Time each hand to see how quickly you can go, and try to beat that score next time.
- Time how quickly you can take out all 10 beads from a horizontal row, placing them back in the container.
- Time how quickly you can move a row of pegs down to the next row.
- Make your own patterns.
- Try to turn the peg around in your hand rather than against your chest/tummy or the table top.

#### **8. Coins**

Put 10 coins into a small container and place another container approx. 30cms apart:

- Pick one coin up at a time, with a pincer grip, and place in the other container. Time how long it takes to move all 10 coins.
- Do as above but this time turn your wrist over when you have picked the coin up, so you drop it into the other container with the palm of your hand facing upwards

Put the coins in a horizontal row between the containers:

- Use both hands, starting at opposite ends of the row. Simultaneously pick up a coin in each hand and put into the nearest container, as quickly as you can.
- Time how quickly you can pick the coins up one at a time from the horizontal row and placing into a container, using only one hand.

#### **9. Clothes Pegs**

- Try opening and closing various types and strengths of pegs.
- Make a washing line and time how quickly you can put the pegs on. Try pegging on dolls clothes, card shapes, letters, numbers (to combine learning activities at the same time) etc.

- Try putting 10 pegs onto a ruler (held horizontally or vertically) as fast as you can.

### 10. Paper

- Scrunch a piece of paper into a ball with both hands.
- Try scrunching the paper with only one hand – without holding it against the table top or your chest/tummy to help!
- Flick the paper ball(s) with thumb and index finger into a goal or at a target.

### 11. Card

- Hold a piece of card between your thumb and index finger, while a partner holds the card in the same way on the opposite side. Try to pull it out of each other's grip.
- Try tearing pieces of card/paper, using thumb and index finger – work your way down the sheet, making small rips, rather than one big tear! Thicker card will make it more difficult.

### 12. Lego

- Build a tower – trying not to let it fall over.
- Build shapes.
- Pull pieces apart between thumb and index finger.
- Try putting 10 pieces together as quickly as you can.

### 13. Junior Meccano

- Use your fingers to construct shapes.
- Use tools to construct shapes, holding them downwards and upwards.
- Try timing how quickly you can thread/unthread a nut or nuts onto a bolt to build/undo a set shape.

### 14. Other games

- Card games (e.g. Top Trumps)
- Cooking
- Craft (e.g. weaving with pipe cleaners)
- Water play

## Make your own fine motor activity box

You could include:

- Shoe box
- 10 Threading beads – various sizes, with plastic, metal tipped and string laces.
- Pegboard
- Putty/Play Doh
- 10 Clothes pegs
- 10 Coins/buttons/counters
- Lego bricks
- Junior Meccano pieces
- Squares of card
- Piece of paper
- Piece of string
- Bandage
- Long ruler
- Any other fine motor activities your child may wish to do e.g. Hama beads, Solitaire, travel games, counter games, Origami, lacing cards, K'Nex

## WITH ALL ACTIVITIES ENCOURAGE:

1. Sitting in a good upright position with feet flat on floor and bottom back in chair.
2. Daily practice of activities for approximately 10 minutes.
3. Vary the activities in each session.
4. Encourage choice of activities.
5. Use speed and timing as your child gains confidence to maintain motivation – try using a record card or sheet. Do not compare to peers if doing in a group setting.
6. Use the special interest of your child to influence the types of games included.

## Contact details

### Children's Therapy Services

Telephone number: 0300 019 2936

For further general health-related information, please ask the relevant department for an information prescription or contact:

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**If you wish to make any comments or to ask about any research evidence used to write this leaflet, please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0300 019 8499, write to the Patient Experience Team (address above) or email [patientexperienceteam@uhd.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperienceteam@uhd.nhs.uk)**

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