

From: Occupational Therapy. Please take into consideration your child's needs based on their IEP goals.

Activities for: Upper Extremity Strengthening & Stability/Hand Strengthening/Fine Motor Skills/Motor Control/Motor Planning/Visual Perceptual Skills:

It is important to engage children in a lot of physical activities to help them build *overall* strength and coordination (sports such as baseball or basketball, playing catch, swimming, playing on the playground, etc). The following is a list of additional play time/free time activities that can help children build the strength and control needed for fine motor skills such as handwriting.

Strengthening:

- Strengthen hand and arm muscles by having children write on an elevated easel or vertical surface such as a chalkboard or a paper taped to a refrigerator, etc. By having to hold crayons or paint brushes up, the children use more muscles. In addition, allow the children to color while on their stomachs. Again, more muscles are being used because the children have to support themselves.
- Use small pencils, such as the ones used at golf courses. These pencils require students to use a tighter grip.
- Activities with play dough, silly putty, theraputty:
 - Molding and rolling play dough into balls - using the palms of the hands facing each other and with fingers curled slightly towards the palm.
 - Rolling play dough into tiny balls (peas) using only the finger tips.
 - Using pegs or toothpicks to make designs in play dough.
 - Cutting play dough with a plastic knife or with a pizza wheel.
 - A FAVORITE – hide small items (pennies, beads) in dough or putty and have child dig them out.

Fine Motor/Visual Perceptual/Visual Motor Integration:

- Other ideas that require students to use fine motor skills include asking students to button and unbutton cloth, cut various types of textures (paper, felt, cloth, thick poster board, etc.), screw lids on jars, and manipulate small blocks or puzzle pieces
- Puzzles
- Mazes
- Word searches
- Hidden Pictures
- Find the Differences

- Connect-the-dots - make sure the child's strokes connect dots from left to right, and from top to bottom, unless numbered/lettered.
- Trace around stencils - the non-dominant hand should hold the stencil flat and stable against the paper, while the dominant hand pushes the pencil firmly against the edge of the stencil. The stencil must be held firmly.
- Picking up objects using large or small tweezers such as those found in the "Bedbugs" game. This can be adapted by picking up Cheerios, small cubes, small marshmallows, pennies, etc., in counting games. Games such as 'Operation' are great. Activities with chopsticks, ice tongs, and other such objects can help develop motor coordination and control, as well as develop hand muscles.
- Lacing and sewing activities such as stringing beads, Cheerios, macaroni, etc.
- Using eye droppers to "pick up" colored water for color mixing or to make artistic designs on paper.
- Turning over cards, coins, checkers, or buttons, without bringing them to the edge of the table.

Apps- The following apps can be used to help reinforce basic handwriting skills. These may be limited free versions. You are under no obligation to buy these apps.

Letter school.com

Writing Wizard Handwriting

ABC Kids tracing and phonetics