

Occupational Therapy Service for Children and Young People

Fine Motor Skills; 5 Week Activity Plan

The following 5 Week Plan is set out to help your child work on their pincer grip, in-hand manipulation and bilateral integration skills (see below for the definitions of these terms). It is recommended that where possible, you complete each week's activity, twice per week. These are short, fun activities which you and your child can do together to help develop their fine motor skills.

Week 1

Purpose

To improve fine motor control in areas of in-hand manipulation, bilateral integration and pincer grip strength.

Warm-up

Five minute warm-up exercise to stimulate hand movement; pretend play your morning routine of getting washed and dry. Imitate moving soap in hand and washing hands and face. Then use pretend towel to dry hands and face. This will encourage movement in hands and provide hand awareness.

Activity

Making objects with play dough /similar material.

Materials

Play dough / similar material.

Tasks

1. Form dough into a large ball and roll out using both hands into a long sausage.
2. Using finger and thumb of both hands at either end of sausage pinch along top to make spiky scales.
3. Divide sausage into six pieces by pulling apart with two hands.
4. Roll dough back into large ball. Repeat three times.
5. Separate dough into two halves.
6. Using rolling pin, roll one half of dough into flat, circular shape.
7. Use other half of dough to make facial features e.g., eyes, eyebrows, nose, ears etc. Repeat activity to make different face.

Week 2

Purpose

To increase strength in pincer grip and promote in-hand manipulation

Warm-up

Five minute warm up of finger play. Rhymes with actions e.g. incy wincy spider, clapping games, finger wrestling.

Materials

Water play area, floating toys, empty squeeze bottle.

Tasks

1. Pick up toys (two at a time) using preferred hand. Place the toys onto water one at a time.
2. Take top off squeeze bottle and submerge in water until half full.
3. Place top back on bottle.
4. Aim bottle at toys and using both hands squeeze water to make toys move to the opposite end of bowl.
5. Repeat until all toys are at opposite end of bowl.
6. Remove toys from water using preferred hand (two at a time) and place on table one at a time.

Week 3

Purpose

To promote bilateral integration, in-hand manipulation and hand strength.

Warm-up

Five minute warm up exercise,; ask the child to crumple pieces of paper into balls using both hands. Position a waste paper basket within achievable aim and ask the child to throw paper balls into the basket. Repeat activity ten times with each hand.

Materials

Twenty pegs, beads or counters approximate size 2-3cms with a mixture of three different colours.

Three average sized containers.

Task

1. Place the containers within reach in front of child and empty beads in front of them.
2. Place one bead of each colour into each container.
3. Pick up two beads of the same colour with preferred hand and drop into correct container one at a time.
4. Repeat until all beads are in the correct containers.
5. Empty beads out of containers and repeat the task, this time picking up three beads of the same colour and placing them into the pots one at a time.

Week 4

Purpose

To promote bilateral integration, in-hand manipulation and pincer grip.

Warm-up

Five minute warm up exercise; pack of playing cards required to play a game of snap. Ask child to deal the cards ensuring cards are held in non-preferred hand and dealt with preferred hand one at a time. Play the game of snap ensuring that the cards are held in hands at all times.

Materials

A4 size picture e.g. from a magazine advertisement, A4 size piece of firm paper, large thick marker pen, pair of scissors, glue.

Task

1. Place picture on table reverse side up and apply glue.
2. Stick picture onto firm paper and wait couple of minutes to dry.
3. Using marker pen, divide picture into ten segments of different shape and size.
4. Using scissors cut out ten segments of picture and mix pieces up.
5. Put pieces back together like a jigsaw to form correct picture.

Week 5

Purpose

To promote bilateral integration, in-hand manipulation and pincer grip.

Warm-up

Five minute warm up game of Simon Says concentrating on hand movement e.g. Simon says open your hands, Simon says close your hands like a fist, Simon says wiggle your fingers.

Materials

Magazines, newspapers, glue, scissors, pieces of firm card.

Task

1. Choose a theme e.g. cars, football, famous people and go through magazines tearing out pages with useful pictures to make collage.
2. Using scissors cut out pictures holding large sheet of paper in one hand and cutting with scissors in the other. Ask the child to try to cut around the shape of the picture within 1-2cm accuracy.
3. When enough pictures are collected glue them onto a piece of firm card in any order to create the collage.

Definitions of Terms

Bilateral Integration - Refers to the ability to use the two hands together simultaneously, to complete an activity. This skill develops throughout childhood. When a child is very young they will present with uncoordinated movement patterns of the two arms. They will then move on to more controlled manipulation of objects, with each hand performing a different movement at the same time.

In-Hand Manipulation – is the ability to hold and move an object within one hand. It is an essential component of the development of fine motor control. Good fine motor control enables you to carry out such tasks as holding pencils, fastening small buttons, using cutlery and being able to tie your shoelaces.

Pincer Grip - The pincer grasp is the coordination of the index finger and thumb to hold an item. Each time you hold a pen or button your shirt, you're using the pincer grasp.