

# TCES Occupational Therapy Department



## Fine Motor Skills Home Based Activities

### Fine Motor Skills:

Fine motor skills are involved in smaller movements that occur in the wrists, hands, fingers, feet and toes. They involve smaller actions such as picking up objects between the thumb and finger, writing carefully, and even blinking.

Fine motor skills are the ability to make coordinated hand and finger movements to grasp and manipulate objects. This includes manual dexterity, muscular, skeletal, and neurological functions to produce small, precise movements. Development of these skills occurs over time, primarily during childhood.

The frontal lobe (located at the front part of the brain hemisphere) is responsible for controlling movements while the cerebellum (located behind the brain stem) is responsible for fine tuning movements. This area of the brain is responsible for fine motor movements, balance, and the brain's ability to determine limb position.

Name of Pupil:
Days: Monday/Wednesday/Friday: (3 days a week/ to be incorporated as part of the daily routine/timetable for home.
Time: Anytime between 8am – 12pm.
Location: Child/ young person's Home – Ideally sitting at a dining table or appropriate table and chairs for student.
Duration: 30 Mins

## Activity Plan:

5 Mins –Parent to catch up with student and present x2 options of fine motor skill activities that the child or young person may want to do. Ideally play calming music in the background to reduce anxiety and create a relaxing environment.
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20 Mins – Start Fine Motor Activity – (Options to be selected from activity 1-8).
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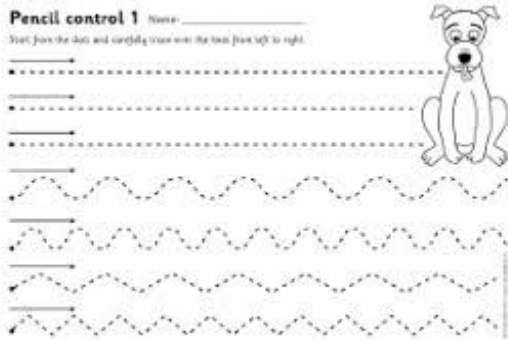
5 Mins – Warm down stretches and tidy up equipment or resources.
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## Equipment and Environment:

- Music Stereo/ calming music
- Puzzles
- Spaghetti, marshmallows or blue tac.
- Beads, chicken wire, string or wool.
- A3/A4 Paper, colouring pencils, felt tip, paint, plastic scissors, cello tape.
- Table/chairs, pencil grips.
- Therapy Putty
- Handwriting sheets.

## Activity 1: HANDWRITING TASKS:

Students should have strength and dexterity in their hands and fingers before they can be expected to master handwriting. In order to handwrite students are required to be able to hold a pencil or pen appropriately using a tripod grip. If the student struggles to write, apply appropriate pressure onto their fingers, they may benefit from using pencil grips, writing slope or a bigger pencil designed to support efficient handwriting further. Students should be encouraged to write a short story daily while at home and keep a dairy of events. If a student's fine motor skills are re- fined it is likely that their handwriting will improve drastically. Students who struggle significantly should be encouraged to trace words.



### Activity 2: Button Tasks:

Buttons are small items that work great in developing fine motor skills. Buttoning up your clothes, shirts and tops works those small muscles which involves finger strength, manipulation and hand eye coordination. Attempt to do up your buttons and time this activity or alternatively go through the clothes in your cupboard and button up any items of clothing that are unbuttoned. Buttoning up clothes can be a daily activity if you often wear buttoned up clothing if not make time to do so at least x3 a week in order to fine tune your fine motor skills.

### Activity 3: Beading/threading:

Threading beads can help to strengthen the small muscles in the student's hands as they grasp different sized beads. They will use various hand movements, depending on the size of the beads. For example, smaller beads will be picked up with a pincer grip (thumb and finger) while larger beads will use a clenched hand action. The benefit of developing fine motor skills through threading beads is that it uses similar hand movements to gripping a large pencil which supports better controlled hand writing skills. Threading beads also increases concentration and visual perception skills as well as enhances the student's creative flare. One of the simplest ways to thread beads is to get chicken wire, string or wool and thread them through creating a necklace, bracelet or pattern of your choice. The process of threading beads is very therapeutic and aims to reduce anxiety.



#### Activity 4: Lacing/tie up tasks:

Tying shoe laces is a very complex skill that can be very difficult to learn. In order to tie shoe laces not only is fine motor skills required, but good visual perception, motor abilities, bimanual hand use, and hand strength is required to achieve this task. Student should at least attempt to tie shoe laces or any other type of tying at least x3 a week. Usually children that are 5 years old and above should have developed some or most of their fine motor and coordination skills to be able to tie laces. Students that can tie shoe laces should continue to do so and time themselves when completing these tasks to encourage precision and confidence. However students that do not know how to tie shoe laces should be shown by their parents, carers or siblings.

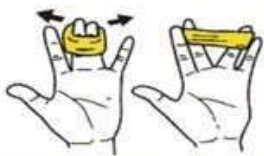


#### Activity 5: Hand exercises:

Doing hand exercises helps develop and strengthen fine motor skills, enhance hand dexterity, grasp and most functions that the hands are needed for. Hand exercises can be done at least x3 a week, using therapy putty which provides a little resistance when doing these exercises. Students should wash their hands regularly and this is also another form of hand exercise and maintain good hygiene. As part of the warm-up process before doing your hand exercises,

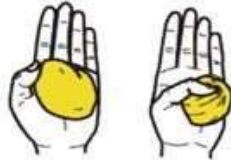
wash your hands singing happy birthday twice, this will increase the blood circulation in your hands as well as get you ready to do your hand exercises. Students/. Parents please see below for hand exercises that can be carried out at home.

Scissor Spread



Wrap the Thinking Putty around two fingers and try to spread them apart.

Thumb Press



Put Thinking Putty in the palm of your hand. Push it with your thumb towards your small finger.

Thumb Extension



Bend your thumb and loop Thinking Putty around it. Try to straighten your thumb.

Thumb Pinch Strengthening



Squeeze the Thinking Putty between your thumb and the side of your index finger.

Thumb Adduction



Keep your fingers and thumb straight as you press Thinking Putty between your thumb and index finger.

Three Jaw Chuck Pinch



Using your thumb, index and middle finger, pull Thinking Putty upwards.

Finger Hook



Create a hook as you press your fingers into the Thinking Putty.

Full Grip



Make a fist while squeezing your fingers into the Thinking Putty.

Finger Pinch



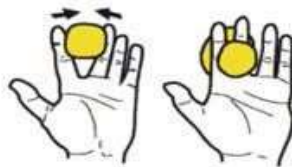
Pinch the Thinking Putty between each finger and your thumb.

Finger Extension



Bend your finger and loop Thinking Putty around it. Try to straighten your finger.

Finger Scissor



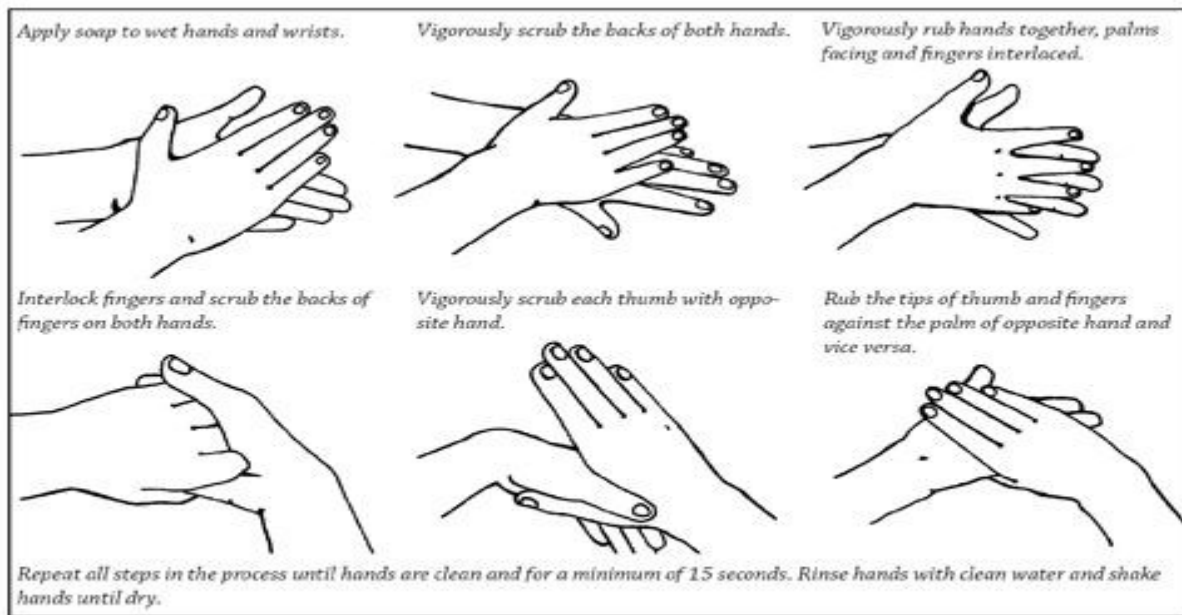
Take a one inch diameter ball of Thinking Putty and place it between your fingers. Squeeze it.

Finger Spread



Spread a pancake of Thinking Putty over your fingers. Try to spread your fingers apart.

Warm up hand activity – Washing hands (increases blood circulation)



Hand Washing Diagram

### Activity 6: Spaghetti tower building:

The spaghetti tower building activity can be done in groups or pairs. When students are at home it will be a great opportunity to do it your their parents or siblings as this encourages bonding and further conversation. The spaghetti tower building activity is great for enhancing fine motor skills because all of the smaller movements the muscles are required to do when building as well as improves concentration. It is a simple activity that requires the use of spaghetti sticks, marshmallows or spaghetti and blue tac. The marshmallows or blue tac provide a link for the structure to remain standing and connected. The aim of this activity is for it to be fun and enjoyable. Students should try to build the tallest tower and time themselves or race against their parents or siblings.



### Activity 7: Lego Therapy:

Lego promotes fine motor skills and enhances the practise of hand/finger dexterity as they connect Lego pieces of different sizes and shapes together. This activity requires different amounts of pressure to assemble and becomes a wonderful exercise for little fingers which supports the students in being able to control the pressure they apply when writing. Engaging in a Lego activity provides a fun way to develop concentration, express your creativity as well as build towers jointly with parents or siblings when at home.



### Activity 8: Puzzles:

Similar to the way hand-eye coordination is achieved, puzzles provide the opportunity for children to develop or fine tune their motor skills. Doing puzzles require small, specialized movements that enhances precision and memory. When students are at home engaging in puzzle activities alone or with parents and siblings are productive activities that further support fine motor skill development. To make the activity more fun use a timer and try and finish a puzzle activity with 5 mins.

