

Just some information from your occupational therapist.....

Fun Ideas for Extra Practice at Home

You can do several fun activities at home to encourage handwriting practice. A few are listed below:

- * While your child is in the bathtub, have he or she draw letters on the wall of the tub in shaving cream or soap paint. The ceramic tiles orient your child in the same way as the smiley mat, slate, and gray blocks.
- * Trace a letter on your child's back and have them guess which letter it is, then write that letter on a piece of paper. Take turns and have them trace a letter on your back.
- * Finger paint letters.
- * Write letters on the sidewalk with chalk.
- * Trace letters in the snow or sand.
- * Form letters out of Play dough or clay.
- * Make cookie letters. Have your child form the letters by rolling the dough and putting the pieces together.
- * Form letters out of French fries.
- * Make letters with pipe cleaners.
- * Draw letters with your finger on the carpet.
- * Decorate a letter collage using glitter, puffy paint, and markers.
- * Use different types of pencils for writing practice (gel pens, colored pencils, scented markers, crayons).
- * Have your children write your shopping lists.

- * Use a flashlight and make letters on the wall. You or your child guesses the letter that was made. You can also cut out letter templates to place in front of the flashlight.
- * Put letters on a die and have your child roll the it; then have the child write a word that starts with that letter.
- * Fish for words. Place cut out fish in a shoebox. Write words or letters on the fish. Attach paper clips to the fish and adapt a small pole with a magnet. Whichever fish the child gets, they have to come up with a word or sentence using what is on the fish.
- * Have children write with icing tubes.

Fine Motor Skills Activities

Hand skills are crucial to successful handwriting. Small movements of the hand are referred to as fine motor skills. If you feel your child is in need of extra activities to strengthen his or her hands or fine motor skills, here are a few suggestions:

- * Have your child cut pictures out of newspapers or magazines. You can take a large black marker and draw a line around the picture to give a guideline.
- * Have your child put together small beads, Legos, Tinker Toys, Lincoln Logs, and the like.
- * Knead Play dough or clay. Build objects with them.
- * Hide small objects in the Play dough and have your child find them.
- * Play pegboard games.
- * Gather small objects from around the house (small buttons, beads), place them in a container, and have your child pick them up off the floor with a pair of tweezers and place them back in the container.

- * Play with any toys that contain manipulation of small pieces.
- * Let your children squirt water bottle outdoors on the sidewalk. Colored water looks great on the snow.
- * Use a meat baster and have a cotton ball race across the table with your child.
- * Finger paint with Jell-O or Cocoa on a paper plate.
- * Use small marshmallows and toothpicks to form letters.
- * String popcorn, buttons, or beads to make necklaces.
- * Using a hole-punch, let your child create a design on a piece of paper.
- * Have your children clip clothespins to a container.
- * Play tug-of-war with a (coffee stirrer) swizzle stick, holding it with the thumb and index finger only.

Sensory Integration Activities

Incorporate handwriting into multisensory tactile experiences (writing on the mirror with foam soap, drawing in the sand, and the like).

Perceptual Activities

Hide all the wooden pieces in a bag and throw in some other objects. The child is directed to pull out the one requested. Do a word find where the children have to write the words as they find them. Do a visual memory game on the board where you give children a few letters, let them look, and then erase them. They have to remember the letters on the board and write them neatly.