

OT Corner



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Many parents wonder, “What can I do at home to improve my child’s handwriting?” There are many readily available materials that can be used to improve fine motor and visual motor skills. Incorporating fun activities into your child’s routine is an easy way to improve hand strength and dexterity, which in turn will help to improve handwriting.

Putty is fun to use. Most children love the texture and resistance of putty. Using enough putty to fill the child’s hands, try these exercises:

- ☞ Rip pieces of putty from the larger piece and roll into small balls, pinch with thumb and index finger to flatten
- ☞ Roll a large “snowball” with both hands, arch hands around putty to shape
- ☞ Roll putty into a snake, push pennies/pegs into putty using the thumb and index finger
- ☞ Hide pennies/pegs in putty, close eyes and pull items out using your fingers only to find them
- ☞ Roll the putty into a snake, quickly pinch and pull to rip pieces off (pieces should rip away quickly without making long strands)
- ☞ Practice making letters and spelling words out of putty

Clothespins are another easy to find item. Clothespins require a strong pinch. They can be used in a variety of different ways, such as:

- ☞ Place clothespins around a large container (coffee can, bowl, etc.). Use the thumb and index to open (the middle finger can help, but keep the ring and index fingers flexed against the palm)
- ☞ Label clothespins with the alphabet. Spell weekly words or sight words on flash cards or a “clothesline”
- ☞ Play a favorite card game. Use clothespins to secure your hand to the inside of a shoebox (so your opponent cannot see)
- ☞ Use a clothespin to pinch and pick up a small item (cotton ball, pompom, small toy). Use the clothespin to release the item into a bin.

Most children love completing mazes and dot to dot puzzles. These activities help to improve pencil control. Try a new twist on these old favorites:

- ☞ Use Wikki Sticks to complete puzzles
- ☞ Complete the puzzle backwards
- ☞ Tape the puzzle to the wall and complete

Handwriting takes practice! Remember to start the letters at the top, form letters in the correct sequence, and place the letters correctly on the line. Try these activities to improve letter formation:

- ☞ Place flour or rice on a baking tray, practice forming the letters on the tray
- ☞ Draw on a chalkboard, use a paint brush and water to write/erase letters
- ☞ Practice letters in shaving cream
- ☞ Use Wikki Sticks to form letters
- ☞ Draw mystery letters on a friend's back with your finger, take turns drawing and guessing
- ☞ Practice addressing envelopes
- ☞ Keep a journal about your day
- ☞ Write each other notes and hide them around the house to find
- ☞ Play scavenger hunt, have your child write clues for you to follow

Writing is a skill that improves with practice. Children take pride in their work. These activities are functional ways to improve hand skills and writing. Have a fun filled time with these activities!