**Activities to promote fine motor skills, strengthening, and self-help skills in**

**School-age children.**

Please choose activities that would best meet your child’s skill level, interests and abilities and work together to ensure safety as well as working on specific skills!

1. **Play Dough/Silly Putty:** make shapes, roll out into snakes, flatten like a pancake or use a small rolling pin, press cookie cutters in it, hide tiny items in it and dig to find them. Can also use scissors to cut pieces of play dough snakes or use plastic knife to practice cutting skills.
2. **Clothespins:** Use thumb and index finger to clip them to the edge of a container, to index cards for matching tasks, secure a cotton ball in the clothes pin to paint with.
3. **Developmental toys**: puzzles, pegboards, shape sorters, blocks, toys with push buttons (ie. Play phone) or actions songs and finger plays.
4. **Tweezers/tongs:** Pick up cotton balls, pom poms, etc. to sort or place in a container. Can also use eye droppers for water play.
5. **Tennis ball and coins:** Cut a slit in a tennis ball for a mouth and create a face, the large the slit the easier it is to squeeze open. Squeeze open the mouth and “feed” it coins or small items.
6. **Stringing activities:** Use string, shoelaces, or pipe cleaners to string large beads, noodles, cereal, pieces of straw, or small beads. Can also use lacing cards or string a pattern!
7. **Water bottle sprayers:** Use small spray bottles to spray in the bathtub, clean windows, water plants, or have fun outdoors spraying!
8. **Scissor skills:** explore different adapted scissors or use a hole punch. Cut different types of materials such as straws, narrow strips of paper, thicker construction paper or file folder type material. Cut snips along the edge, across paper, on a thick line, around shapes.
9. **Stickers/Stamps:** Peel off small stickers and place them in designated spots, use fun shape or letter stamps to decorate paper or stamp words/names.
10. **Work on a vertical surface** to improve strength and hand and wrist position for functional grasp. This could be using refrigerator magnets, taping paper to the refrigerator or sliding glass door to color on, using an easel, playing with items or shaving cream on the side of the bathtub/shower, paint the side of the house with water,
11. **Play games with small pieces:** cards, dice, connect 4, legos, building toys, pop beads, Lite Bright, Mr. Potato Head, Battleship, other games with small pieces.
12. **Sensory Play:** Dry sensory materials (sand, dry beans, rice, cotton balls), wet sensory materials (water, finger paint, pudding play, shaving cream, play doh, lotion). Outdoors play in the grass, dirt, and leaves too!

1. **Writing skills:**
2. Explore different writing tools. Short tools help promote a more functional grasp. Small broken crayons and tiny chalk are great! Use paint brushes, chalk, different styles of crayons, and markers, finger paints, bathtub crayons/paints.
3. Explore through scribbling, coloring, imitating lines and shapes, tracing, copying.
4. Fun activities: sidewalk chalk, have them trace/erase on a dry erase board using a small pom pom, magna-doodle, draw in lotion or shaving cream on a cookie sheet, stencils, stamps, or dry erase boards.
5. Work on concepts such as top/middle/bottom, up/down, left/right, same/different.
6. Work on a vertical surface. Fasten large paper to a wall, refrigerator, etc. to color or paint. An easel also works great!
7. Pre-writing activities such as simple coloring, dot to dot, mazes are good.
8. Build letters with different materials: Wikki Stix, play doh snakes, cooked spaghetti noodles, yarn, Popsicle sticks or toothpicks.
9. Technology: many apps are great to work on letter formation. Learning the keyboard may be beneficial for some older students.
10. **Self-Help Skills and Independent Living Skills:**
11. Practice self-help skills within the natural environment and encourage participation and independence as soon as possible.
12. May need to explore different types of cups (sippy cup, open cup, straws), suction bowls, smaller feeding utensils.
13. Dress up clothes, dressing vests or dressing dolls/fastener boards can make learning these skills fun!
14. Use a mirror to help give visual feedback when learning skills such as tooth brushing and hair care.
15. Help with daily tasks such around the house such as opening containers, squeezing sponge to wipe off table, sorting silverware, making the bed, picking up toys, match socks, set table.
16. As kids progress, encourage learning of independent living skills as soon as possible: Laundry skills, simple meal preparation skills such as making sandwiches and progressing to microwave, stove/oven use, simple housekeeping tasks, pet care, unloading dishwasher, outdoor chores (picking up sticks, raking), setting table, making bed, grocery shopping/putting away groceries, etc.