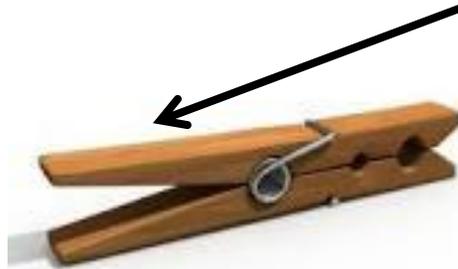
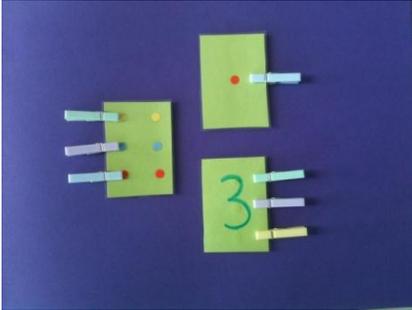


Fine Motor Skill Development & Educational Activities

So many children are hands on learners. Not to mention, sometimes the addition of a little extra something can make all the difference in terms of a child's motivation. Below are some of my favorite ways to integrate hands on manipulatives – all which work on fine motor skills development, such as hand strengthening, finger isolation, thumb opposition, dexterity and fine motor coordination. Each tool is cheap, accessible and easily integrated into your centers. Enjoy!

Clothespin Activities



Use a marker to write your letter, number or word here.

Clothespins are excellent tools for developing hand strength and mature precision patterns. Use a marker to print letters, numbers OR words on “pinch” part of the clothespin. Here are different ways you can integrate clothespin activities into a center:

- Match lower case to corresponding capital letters
- Match letters to his/her name
- Match letters to a sight word
- Match letters to a sound (i.e. match “b” to a picture of a ball)
- Make letters to a picture to spell a word (i.e. match “c a t” to a picture of a cat)
- Match numbers to pictures (i.e. match “3” to a picture of 3 dogs)
- Match numbers to corresponding word (i.e. “match “2” to “two”)
- Match numbers to math equations (i.e. match “3” to “1+2=”)
- Match words to definitions (i.e. match “noun” to “a person, place or thing”)

**Mrs. Atkinson's suggestion: LAMINATE a pack of index cards. Use a dry erase marker to write whatever you want on the cards. The ink can easily be erased, and the activity can be changed depending on what the student is working on, without having a million packs of index cards!*

Tweezer Activities



Tweezers are another great tool to work on hand strengthening, precision patterns and dexterity. They are very versatile and can be easily integrated into an activity that requires handling manipulatives. Here are some ways tweezers can be integrated into your centers:

- Write whatever math equation you want on the bottom of a cupcake cup. Use tweezers to pick up small items (such as cotton balls, buttons, beans, beads, pom poms, paper clips, etc.) and place the solution into the cupcake cups (i.e. have the student count out/place “3” beans into a cupcake cup that reads “1x3=”)
- Have student use tweezers to sort small items (such as buttons, foam shapes, etc.) by size, shape or color
- Draw pictures onto paper or a cupcake cup. Have student use tweezers to pick up magnetic letters. Match magnetic letters for sounds (i.e. “sh” to a picture of a “shoe”), words (i.e. “d o g” to a picture of a “dog”)

Mrs. Atkinson’s suggestion: Know a high school student? Have them ask their science department if they have dissection tweezers that they want to get rid of or would be willing to donate. You can get a WHOLE box of tweezers, for the entire class, FOR FREE!

Push Pin Activities

Push pins work on tiny finger muscles and precision patterns. They can be used with older and younger kids with modifications. Here are some ways you can integrate push pins into your centers.

Younger Children:

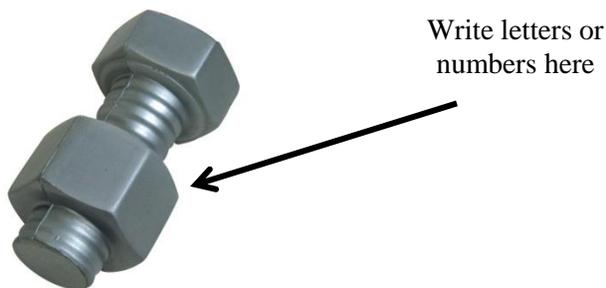


- Use a corkboard to stabilize two rows of push pins (see above). Next to each push pin, place a piece of paper with what you are working on next to each push pin. Use rubber bands to “draw lines” between the push pins, matching one pin to its corresponding pin on the opposite side. For example:
 - Match letters to a sound (i.e. match “b” to a picture of a ball)
 - Match numbers to pictures (i.e. match “3” to a picture of 3 dogs)
 - Match numbers to corresponding word (i.e. “match “2” to “two”)
 - Match numbers to math equations (i.e. match “3” to “1+2=”)
 - Match words to definitions (i.e. match “noun” to “a person, place or thing”)

Older Children

- Write letters on the “top” of the push pins. Have the child spell words by inserting push pins into a corkboard.
- Use push pins to “poke” out math equations into construction paper to “work problems out” (i.e. $2 + 4 = ?$: poke 2 holes, then 4 holes, then count total holes)

Nuts & Bolt Activities



You know you have a whole “junk” canister of these at home. They are perfect for working on finger coordination, bilateral coordination and precision patterns.. Here are some ways you can integrate nuts and bolts in your centers:

- Word Family Bolts: place nuts onto the bolt that spell out the ending of a word family (i.e. “o-p”). Write various letters onto bolts, then have the child screw the beginning sound to create words. (i.e. “t” for “top”; c for “cop” etc.)

- Math Equation Bolts: write numbers and math functions on nuts. Have child create their own math equation using by screwing the nuts in the correct order onto the bolt.

**Mrs. Atkinson's suggestion: For younger kids, use the plastic kind that come in the tool sets. Older kids can use the real deal. Or if you don't do tools, plastic Easter eggs do the trick as well (see above)*

Bubble Wrap



Who doesn't love popping bubble wrap. It's perfect for sensory seeking kids – noisy, requires a lot of heavy work, and gives great feedback. Pick up a roll at Wal-Mart for \$5 and make a day out of it! Here are some ways you can integrate Bubble Wrap into your centers.

- Write sight words on each bubble. The child that can read the designated sight word gets to pop the bubble.
- Write letters on each bubble. Have the child pop the bubbles that spell designated words.
- Write words on each bubble. Have the child pop the bubbles that correspond to definitions.
- Write numbers on each bubble. Have child pop bubbles that correspond to math equations.
- Write numbers on index cards. Have child pop total number of bubbles that correspond to the numbers.
- Write math equations on index cards. Have child pop total number of bubbles that correspond to math equation.

**Mrs. Atkinson's suggestion: Although popping bubble wrap is a great fine motor activity, don't limit it to your hands. Kids love stomping, jumping or sitting on bubble wrap.*

Lego Activities



Legos are so versatile. And kids love them. They can easily be made into an educational activity by printing letters, words or numbers onto their surface. Cheap and easy! Here are some ways to integrate Legos into your centers:

- Write letters on Legos. Connect Legos to spell out sight words.

- Write numbers and math functions on Legos. Connect to create equations.
- Write words on Legos. Connect to build sentences.

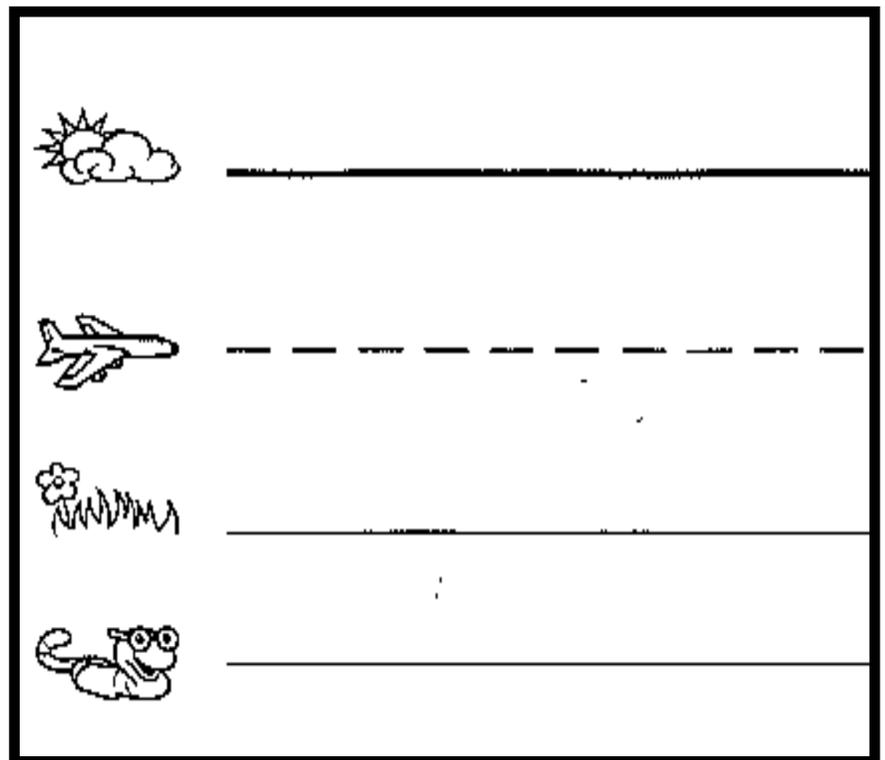
*Mrs. Atkinson's suggestion: Use larger Legos for smaller children, teeny tiny Legos for older children

Theraputty (Silly Putty)



Theraputty is my favorite tool to utilize in the classroom. Kids LOVE it. They are motivated to engage in educational activities, just because it's a part of it. It's great for tactile input, proprioceptive input, and a wonderful hand strengthening/finger isolation tool. Best of all, it's \$1 at the Dollar Store. There are SO many ways to integrate Putty of Playdoh into your centers, but here are some of my favorite activities:

- Finding "hidden" objects
 - Hide coins in the putty. Once the student finds the coins, have them match it to an index card with its monetary value (i.e. matching a penny to "1 cent")
 - Hide magnetic letters in putty. Once the child finds the letter, have them match it to an index card with the corresponding lower case letter, sound, etc.
 - Have one child hide objects based on a math problem (i.e. 1 paperclip + 2 paperclips = ?) Have the child's partner solve the problem, then double check their work by locating all the hidden items.
- Construction tasks
 - Make shapes, letters and/or numbers out of playdoh or putty.



Mrs. Atkinson's suggestion: Use my HWT Playdoh Letter Model when using playdoh or putty to form letters to develop correct size, placement and alignment