

HOME ACTIVITIES

WHAT ARE MOTOR SKILLS?

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS involve the “big muscles” of your body – like your stomach, back, legs & shoulders. You must first develop strong “big” muscles before you develop fine motor skills.

FINE MOTOR SKILLS are any finger & hand movement used to perform a task. They involve strength & coordination of small muscles in the fingers, hands & wrists.

As we get older, our brain becomes more involved in planning out our movements. We use our vision to determine how to move. Your **VISUAL PERCEPTUAL SKILLS** help you understand things like direction, size & space. Using fine motor skills with visual skills is known as **VISUAL MOTOR SKILLS** or “eye hand coordination”. Your visual skills also work with your brain to help you understand what you see.

All of these skills are needed to do everyday tasks – sitting tall at your desk, printing on paper, cutting on a line, understanding a graph, reaching in your desk to find materials, etc. Here are some activities to help improved these skills:

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

Gross motor skills are the skills needed for you to use your body to perform tasks that require balance, coordination & strength.

- ☆ Hop Scotch
- ☆ Playing Kick Ball & Catch
- ☆ Riding a bike or scooter
- ☆ Balancing
- ☆ Jump Roping
- ☆ Hula Hooping
- ☆ Climbing
- ☆ Playing on Playground Equipment (slide, monkey bars, etc)
- ☆ Swinging on a swing
- ☆ Dancing or Stepping
- ☆ Basketball, Baseball or any other sport
- ☆ Hobbies like Karate or Gymnastics

SHOULDER GIRDLE STRENGTHENING ACTIVITIES

Shoulder girdle strength is important to provide stability for your hand when you are doing fine motor tasks.

- ☆ Weight bearing activities
 - Working on stomach while propping self on elbows
 - Supporting self with arms to wheelbarrow walk
 - “Animal walks”: crab walking, bear walking, commando crawling, etc.
 - Riding on a scooter board on belly using arms to navigate
- ☆ Working on an incline
 - Taping worksheets on a wall or blackboard
 - Using a 5-inch binder as “incline board” at desktop
 - Writing on a blackboard
 - Painting on a easel
- ☆ Resistive activities using arms
 - Erasing/washing a blackboard
 - Washing a table
 - Vacuuming or sweeping
 - Chair, wall or floor push ups
 - Pushing, pulling or carrying
 - Tug of war
- ☆ Playground Activities
 - Monkey bars
 - Climbing

FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Fine motor skills are the skills needed for you to use your fingers & hands for smooth, quick, accurate movements. Strength, Stereognosis, Grasp & Precision are all a part of good fine motor skills.

☆ Strengthening

- PlayDoh activities (hiding small objects in PlayDoh then finding them)
- Cutting through thick paper, like Oak Tag or Cardboard
- Using a manual pencil sharpener
- Making cookies/pizza out of dough
- Chinese “stress” balls

☆ Stereognosis (the ability to recognize what an object is JUST by feeling it)

- “Mystery” Box/Bags : Place various small items (coins, toy cars, blocks, keys, paperclips, cotton ball, etc) into a box or bag. Have the child reach inside & feel the object with their hands. Have the child try to guess what the mystery object is without looking at it.
- “Hidden” Objects: Place various small items (coins, toy cars, blocks, keys, paperclips, cotton ball, etc) into a container of rice, sand and/or beans. Have the child dig through the container to find hidden objects with their hands. Have the child try to guess what the hidden object is without looking at it.

☆ Grasp (the ability to handle medium to large objects) Skills

- Stacking blocks
- Legos & Tinker Toys
- Using PlayDoh & SandBox tools (i.e. shovels, rakes, “pasta” makers, rolling pins)
- Water Toys
- Dominoes
- Using rubber & sponge stamps

☆ Precision (the ability to handle small objects) Skills

- Opening & closing markers, twist containers (i.e. Bubble bottles or soda bottles)
- Using tweezers or an eye dropper
- Manipulating clothespins
- Playing with toy/real tool sets (screws, bolts, washers, etc)
- Playing with marbles
- Using push pins to make “designs” in paper (place flashlight behind paper & turn off lights to create “star designs”)
- Using “Cheerios”, macaroni, small beads or sequins for making necklaces.
- Creating candy sculptures with toothpicks
- Popping “Bubble Wrap” (packaging wrap)
- Placing coins into a piggy bank
- Mosaic Tile crafts & Parquetry designs
- Games that focus on finger movement
 - “Connect 4”
 - “LiteBrite”
 - “Checkers”
 - “Chinese Checkers”
 - “Hungry Hippos”
 - “Ants in the Pants”
 - “Don’t Break the Ice”
 - “Pick Up Sticks”
 - “Trouble”
 - “Sorry”
 - “Jenga”
 - “Operation”
 - “Bed Bugs”
 - “HiHo CherryO”

BILATERAL COORDINATION SKILLS

Bilateral coordination skills are the skills needed for you to use the two sides of your body together, especially your two arms & hands, to perform tasks.

☆ Stringing beads or macaroni to make “jewelry”

☆ Lacing Crafts

☆ Playing cards

☆ Folding tasks (laundry, paper, etc)

☆ Hand-over-hand tasks (such as tug of war, climbing a rope, pulling a rope while on a scooter, etc.)

☆ Lacing & tying shoes

☆ Sport activity – catching & throwing

☆ Cutting out shapes, pictures, coupons or “snowflakes”

VISUAL PERCEPTUAL SKILLS

Visual perceptual skills are the skills needed for you to understand what you see in terms of its size, shape, direction & distance from other objects. Visual perceptual skills can be broken down into many “sub-types” of skills, each important to using visual information to understand your environment.

- ☆ Form Consistency (the ability to accurately recognize & understand that an object remains the same despite changes in its size, direction, orientation, color, texture or context – i.e. recognizing a number in a different fonts)
- ☆ Figure Ground (the ability to filter out unimportant visual material in order to concentrate on the important stuff)
- ☆ Visual Discrimination (the ability to identify differences & similarities between shapes, symbols, objects & patterns – i.e. matching & sorting skills)
- ☆ Spatial Relationships (the ability to understand the position of two or more objects in relation to oneself & in relation to each other - i.e. “behind”; “between”, “in front”, etc.).
- ☆ Position in Space (the ability to understand an object's position in space in relation to oneself or to understand which direction an object is turned – i.e. understanding the difference between b's, d's, p's & q's)
- ☆ Visual Memory (the ability to remember what is seen for immediate recall)
- ☆ Visual Sequential Memory (the ability to remember & recall a sequence of visual images such as letters, shapes, numbers, symbols & objects in the correct order)
- ☆ Visual Closure (the ability to identify a form or object from an incomplete presentation) This involves visualizing & mentally "filling in" the visual information that is missing. *When we're reading, Visual Closure perception helps us recognize sight words. It is a foundation skill for fluency & speed in reading & spelling. Efficient reading relies on this skill because with each fixation of the eye only part of the letters of a word or phrase is actually perceived.*
- ☆ Visual Analysis (the ability to see that certain parts make a whole)

Visual perceptual activities:

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| ☆ Card games (Solitaire, Go Fish, Rummy, Crazy 8's, Uno, etc.) | ☆ Finish the picture worksheets |
| ☆ Memory | ☆ Pattern activities |
| ☆ Puzzles | ☆ Construction activities from model |
| ☆ Word searches | ☆ Simon or Bop It |
| ☆ Where's Waldo & other “find the hidden picture” worksheets | ☆ Checkers & Chinese Checkers |
| | ☆ Crossword Puzzles |
| | ☆ Playing “I Spy” |

VISUAL MOTOR SKILLS

Visual motor skills are the skills needed for you to use your eyes & hands together to complete tasks.

- ☆ Copying or forming shapes, letters & numbers:
 - On Lined paper
 - In Shaving Cream
 - With finger paints
 - In Sand
 - On paper with sandpaper behind it
 - On MagnaDoodle
 - On Blackboard
 - With spaghetti noodles
 - With PlayDoh
 - Out of small balls of crumbled tissue paper.
- ☆ Cutting Tasks
 - Coupons
 - Paper dolls
 - Snowflakes
 - Cutting PlayDoh
 - On straight/curved lines
- ☆ Eye Hand Coordination Tasks
 - Block Designs
 - Peg Designs
 - Mazes
 - Finish the Picture
 - Find the Hidden Picture
 - Connect the Dots
 - Puzzles

GRAPHOMOTOR (HANDWRITING) SKILLS

Graphomotor (handwriting) skills are the skills needed for you to produce legible work with correct capitalization, punctuation, size & spacing. Handwriting is a very advanced skill. In order to have good handwriting, all the above skills must be in place.

- ☆ Writing stories or poems
- ☆ Writing notes & cards to friends & relatives.
- ☆ Practicing making letters out of
 - Playdoh
 - Shaving Cream
 - Sand
 - Pipe Cleaners
 - Noodles/Macaroni
 - Paint/Markers or Crayons

ATTENTION

Attention is the most important part of the school setting. It involves all of the skills needed for you to listen, understand & use information to complete tasks, without becoming distracted or distracting others.

- ☆ “Red Light, Green Light”
- ☆ “Mother May I?”
- ☆ “Simon Says”
- ☆ Taking turns with Board Games
- ☆ Organizing & Sorting Toys
- ☆ Playing “Snap”
- ☆ Following a pattern for making “jewelry”, Legos, or construction tasks

HERE ARE SOME FUN GAMES THAT THE WHOLE FAMILY CAN PLAY

- ☆ Operation
- ☆ Bed Bugs
- ☆ Connect 4
- ☆ Bingo
- ☆ Ants in the Pants
- ☆ Don’t Break the Ice
- ☆ Topple
- ☆ Twister
- ☆ Concentration
- ☆ Battle Ship
- ☆ Hi-Ho CherryO
- ☆ Chutes & Ladders
- ☆ Elefun
- ☆ Pick Up Sticks
- ☆ Pictionary
- ☆ Taboo
- ☆ Scrabble
- ☆ Jenga

CHECK OUT MY WEBSITE

- ☆ For weekly information, activities and resources on fine motor, visual motor, visual perceptual, graphomotor and sensory processing skills, check out my personal website at: www.AnOTMom.weebly.com

HERE ARE SOME AWESOME WEBSITES

- ☆ www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com
- ☆ www.mamaot.com
- ☆ www.dltk-kids.com
- ☆ <http://www.puzzlemaniakids.com/>
- ☆ <http://eyecanlearn.com/>
- ☆ Uptoten.com
- ☆ OTplan.com
- ☆ http://www.abcteach.com/abctools_home.php
- ☆ www.handwritingworksheets.com
- ☆ <http://www.first-school.ws/preschool/printable-activities/index.htm>
- ☆ <http://www.hwtears.com/aplus/player>
- ☆ <http://www.atozteacherstuff.com/>
- ☆ www.Enchantedlearning.com
- ☆ <http://donnayoung.org/penmanship/>

HAVE AN ITOUCH, IPAD OR IPHONE? HERE ARE SOME GREAT APPS

App Name	Purpose
DoodleBuddy Drawing Kids	<i>Works on isolated finger movements through “doodling” & painting using your fingertips</i>
Write Now	<i>Works on visual motor, pre-writing & graphomotor skills by acting like a “white board” that you can draw & print on</i>
ABC Tracing Drawing Kids ABC Tracer Alphabet Tracing	<i>Works on graphomotor skills by teaching you how to form letters, numbers & simple words by tracing with your finger</i>
Handwriting Zaner-Bloser	<i>Works on graphomotor skills by teaching the “Zaner-Bloser” method of handwriting</i>
Letters in My Soup Spell Blocks	<i>Works on graphomotor & visual perceptual skills by having you build words out of mixed up letters</i>
Toddler Teaser	<i>Works on graphomotor skills by teaching sound/letter relationships</i>
Color Me Coloring Book Dora Coloring	<i>Works on fine motor & visual motor skills by having you use your finger to color in various pictures</i>
PaperCutKids	<i>Provides visual demonstrations for various cutting craft activities</i>
Dot to Dot Number Whiz Kid’z Maze Action Maze	<i>Works on visual motor & visual perceptual skills by having you use your finger to connect the dots to create pictures/trace through a maze</i>
CookieDoodle Cake Doodle Pizza Maker	<i>Works on fine motor skills by having you use guided isolated finger movements to create pictures</i>
Gobble Gator Whac-A-Mole Fruit Ninja	<i>Works on eye hand coordination skills by having you follow/catch various characters</i>
Eye Exercises Eye Training Speedtest	<i>Works on ocular motor & visual motor skills by instructing you through a variety of eye exercises</i>
DigiTap Line Art	<i>Works on fine motor control & coordination skills by guiding you through a variety of finger movements</i>
TypingTest Typing Tutor	<i>Works on fine motor control & coordination by teaching/testing your typing skills</i>
Stickman Says Simon Says Jump 101 Yoga Poses Yoga Relax Yoga Stretch	<i>Works on sensory motor & gross motor skills by instructing you through a variety of movement games</i>
Highlights Hidden Picture Monkey Match Memory Block Shape Puzzle for Kids Easy Match Fun Match Kids ISpy Word Search Pure Hidden	<i>Works on a variety of visual perceptual skills including: visual memory, figure ground discrimination and visual closure</i>
iSignLite	<i>Visual reference for sign language</i>
Autism Express	<i>Assists with communication skills (emotions) for non-verbal children</i>