

September 11, 2014

My Kindergarten Teacher Friends,

Attached is my scoring/notes for the students that participated in the motor component of the kindergarten screen. Please note that the attached form DOES NOT include scoring from Hearing/Vision; Speech/Language or Cognition. I have highlighted the students that **FAILED** (scored less than a 5/9) the fine motor component in PINK. The students that obtained a **BORDERLINE SCORE** (5/9) are highlighted in YELLOW.

No immediate action in terms of an OT referral should be taken at this time. This is just a “red flag” of sorts to identify the students that need to work on specific skills. Please give the students to at least the beginning of November to “close the gap” as many issues are related to development, exposure and opportunity to practice these skills. If a student is still struggling significantly come November, touch base with me, and we can develop a plan from there.

Behind the score sheets, you will find a list of activities/modifications that you can utilize in your classroom in order to usher these skills along. The areas that I feel are the most important in kindergarten (in order of importance) are:

1. *Shoulder Girdle Control*
2. *Hand Strength*
3. *Grasp Patterns*
4. *Scissor Skills*
5. *Printing Skills*

Please feel free to contact me at any time. I am always willing to come into your classroom to do a lesson on cutting, coloring, pencil grasp, etc.

Have a great week.

*Amanda*

## **KINDERGARTEN SCREEN: FINE MOTOR FOLLOW UP**

### **1. DEVELOP SHOULDER GIRDLE STABILITY**

- Improve shoulder girdle strength
  - Utilize crab walking, bear walking, wheelbarrow walking during transitions from carpet to tables in the classroom
  - Integrate “shoulder exercises” as part of your movement breaks (like chair push ups, regular push ups, wall push ups, lifting books, carrying books, etc.)
  - Integrate “shoulder exercises” as part of your classroom chores (i.e. washing desktops, sweeping, placing chairs on tabletops, etc.)
- Utilize an inclined surface
  - Place a rotated 5-inch binder under the child’s worksheet to create an “easel”
  - Tape worksheet to a vertical surface like the wall
  - Have the child work/draw on the smartboard
- Force the child to stabilize his shoulder
  - Encourage the child to lay on their belly and prop themselves up on their arms during read to self or carpet time
- Do a structured play activity on the playground
  - Challenge your class to climb the ladders as fast as possible, go as far as they can on the monkey bars and get across the rock wall as quickly as they can
    - *Children with weak muscles will avoid these tasks on the playground – MAKE them attempt them by having some structured play. We have awesome playground equipment for core strengthening.*

### **2. IMPROVE HAND STRENGTH**

- Utilize playdoh/putty/clay at centers
  - Practice forming shapes, letters & numbers out of playdoh
  - Practice rolling playdoh into small balls for counting tasks
  - Use playdoh tools (scissors, garlic presses, rolling pins, etc)
- Utilize fine motor tools at centers
  - Tweezers (i.e. picking up pompom balls/buttons/paper clops or other small items for sorting by color/size or numbers)
  - Clothespins (i.e. drawing colors/letters or numbers on clothespins and squeezing them to place them on color/number/picture wheel)
  - Screw/Nuts/Bolts (real or pretend) (i.e. write letters or numbers on each “flat” area of the nut and have the child “screw” the nut onto the bolt to create words – great tasks for working on word families [i.e. write “p, d, b” on flat area of nut, have “i” and “g” placed on screw, and have child rotate screw to form words “pig, dig, big”])
  - Spray bottles (i.e. use as part of classroom jobs to wash desktops or white boards)
  - Lacing activities (i.e. lace cheerios, beads, macaroni, etc. to work on patterns or counting skills; draw letters on beads or macaroni for the child to “lace” letters to build their name or other words)
  - Bubble wrap (i.e. draw on bubbles and use for popping specific colors, letters or numbers)
  - Hole punchers (i.e. punch out holes to work on numbers, punch out along lines to form shapes, letters or numbers)

- Have games that support fine motor development available for “recess” or “choice time”. Great, readily available games include:
  - Connect4
  - Operation
  - Ants in the Pants
  - LiteBrite
  - HiHo CherryOh
- Color, color, COLOR
  - Coloring is a great way to work on hand strength. Children with weak hand muscles will need some adaptations:
    - Highlight boundary areas
    - Model coloring in the lines
    - Use a “tactile” cue for boundary lines, like tracing boundary line in Elmers glue and waiting for it to dry, or covering the boundary line with WikkiSticks
    - Place a resistance medium under coloring worksheets, like sandpaper
- Use scissors frequently – see below for scissor activities

### **3. DEVELOP MATURE GRASP PATTERNS**

- Make sure hand muscles are strong enough to support functional grasp patterns by performing the activities listed above.
- Model appropriate grasp patterns.
  - Teach children to “pinch” their pencils
  - Hang attached “pencil grip” picture near writing center and refer to it often
- Force pinkie & ring finger stabilization
  - Have child hold a penny or other small item against their palm using their pinkie & ring finger while coloring/drawing/writing to facilitate a tripod grasp pattern
- Utilize SMALL pencils (4 inches or less) – golf pencils are great – and broken crayons
  - This prevents the child from wrapping all of their fingers around pencil.
- When all else fails, remember, *if it's not broke, don't fix it*
  - If the child holds their pencil funny, but can still produce age appropriate work in the expected time frame – just leave it be.

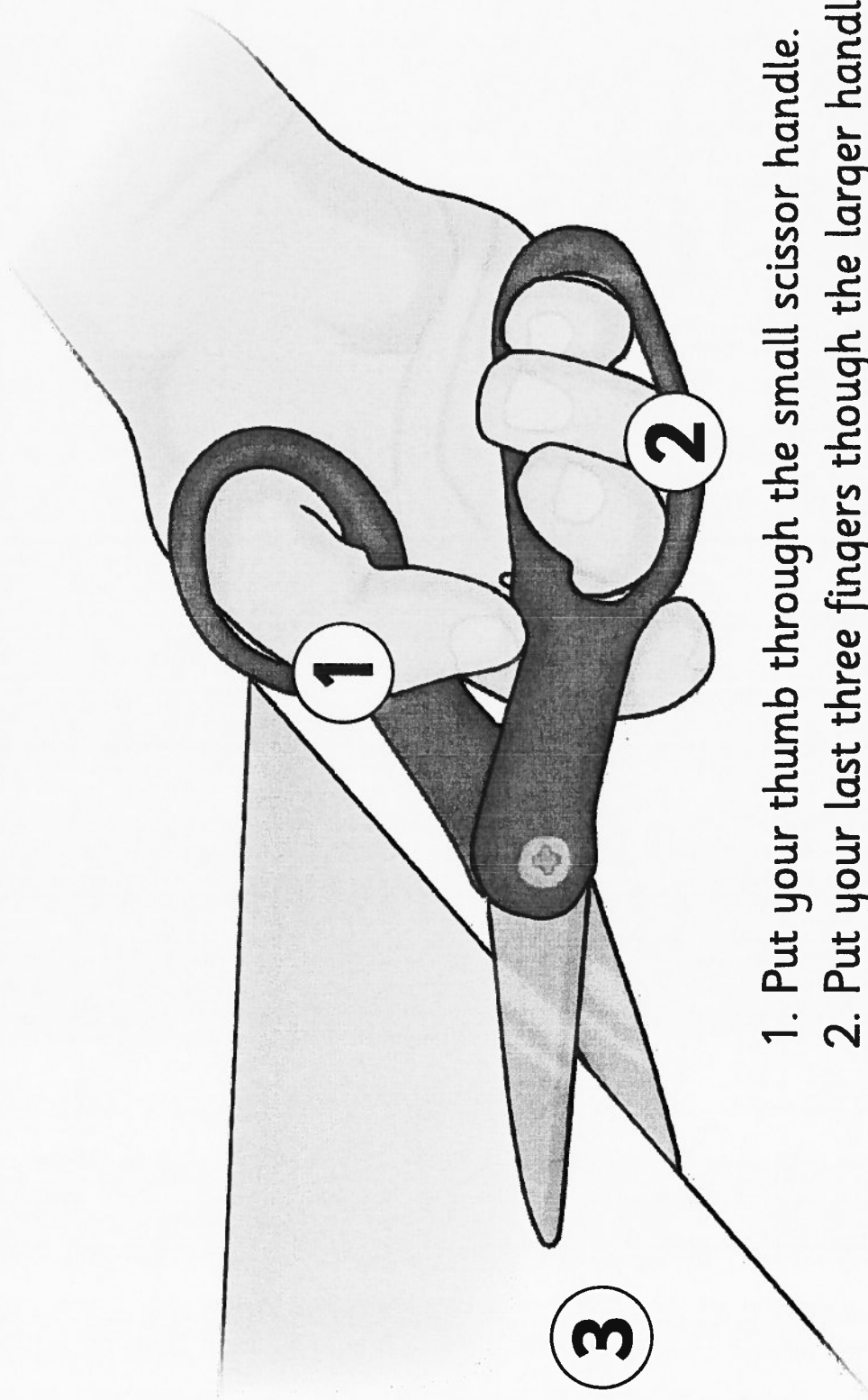
### **4. IMPROVE SCISSORS SKILLS**

- Make sure hand muscles are strong enough to support using scissors
- Use good quality scissors (NO plastic, Fiskar are great)
- Model appropriate way to hold scissors
  - Teach “thumb in little hole, index outside hole (“the driver”) and other fingers in big hole
  - Hang attached “scissor grasp” picture near cutting stations
  - Teach “no chicken wings” (raising cutting arm upward)
  - Teach that the “helper hand” holds and turns the paper
- Cutting does not have to be structured
  - Just have a cutting station. Cut newspapers, coupons, strips of paper, anything.
- Work on cutting in DEVELOPMENT SEQUENCE
  - 1<sup>st</sup>: Straight Lines
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>: Angles and Corner
  - 3<sup>rd</sup>: Curves
- Use thickened paper to strength hands
  - Cardstock, oaktag, cereal boxes, cardboard, etc.
- Integrate cutting into daily activities
  - Utilize worksheets that have small, simple cutting components

## **5. IMPROVE PRINTING SKILLS**

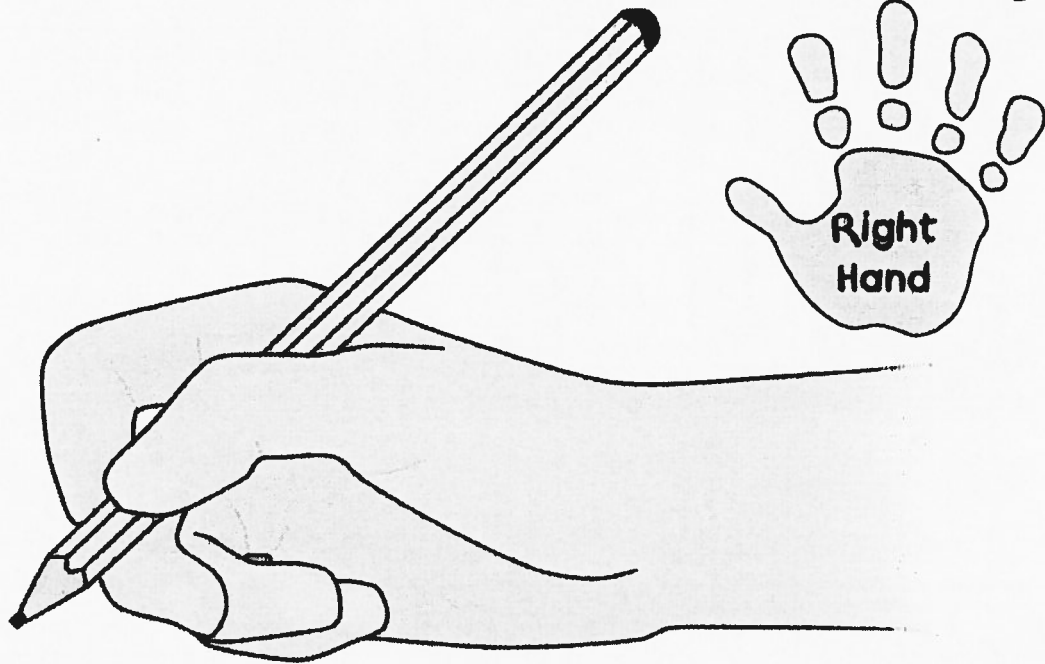
- Accept that printing skills develops in the below sequence. If the child has not mastered the previous step in the sequence, they will have sloppy, messy or inaccurate handwriting. Period.
  1. Drawing vertical lines → horizontal lines → curves → diagonal lines
  2. Drawing shapes: circle → square → cross (+) → square → triangle →
  3. Copying letters from a model
  4. Independent printing
- Understand that in order to print, the child must UNDERSTAND the concept of letters
  - They must be able to recognize/name letters
  - They must be able to understand how the letter is broken down into lines/curves
- Teach letter FORMATION (how lines connect to form letters) using consistent language (i.e. Big Line, Little Line, Big Curve, Little Curve, Vertical Line, Diagonal Line, etc.)
- If your goal is for a child to utilize a writing line correctly, make sure YOU are USING IT when you are modeling ALL writing tasks!

# How to Hold a Pair of Scissors



1. Put your thumb through the small scissor handle.
2. Put your last three fingers through the larger handle.
3. Hold the paper you are cutting in your other hand.

**Hold your pencil correctly!**



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**Hold your pencil correctly!**

