Occupational Therapy
Advice for Pre-School Children

Fine Motor Skills
Handwriting
Daily Living Skills

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Occupational Therapy Advice for Children

This booklet has been devised for use at both home and school for your child. Each section has been separated to allow you to work on the difficulties your child presents with.

The Progress Log is located at the back of the booklet. Please ensure this is completed as you progress through the booklet. There is a scoring scale which should be completed at Week 1, Week 6, and Week 12.

Equipment that may be useful for your child has been put in bold and underlined throughout the booklet. Some equipment can be found at high street retailers; others can be found at:

- www.amazon.co.uk
- www.nrshealthcare.co.uk

Handwriting resources:

- www.specialdirect.com
## Independence Skills

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<th>Area of Difficulty</th>
<th>Strategies to try</th>
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| **Buttons**  
Children with fine motor skill difficulties often find it difficult to do up and undo buttons. These strategies provide some ideas to help children to learn to do buttons independently. | Make a posting box with three different holes – vertical, horizontal and diagonal. Your child has to place buttons in each of the holes. Grade this activity by starting off with large slots and large counters and progress to smaller slots/counters as the child succeeds.  
Lacing activities – either using a bought lacing board or try making your own by punching holes out of stiff card and using a lace.  
‘Pinch’ theraputty or play doh between the thumb and index finger and pull slightly to strengthen pincer grip  
Putting pegs into a pegboard, prompting your child to use a pincer grip.  
Pinching large clothes pegs and standing them on the edge of a box.  
Pinching play dough or plasticine. Turning pennies or counters over in tiddly winks.  
Using tweezers and tongs to pick up small items such as raisins counters, pieces of play dough, cotton wool balls, beads, etc. | Ensure that you always begin with the bottom buttons so that it is possible to see the hands working.  
Find a large buttoned loose cardigan (adult cardigans are often ideal).  
Practice using a pincer grip by putting fingers through the buttonhole.  
Introduce the child to vertical buttonholes first and then progress to horizontal buttonholes as the child succeeds.  
Practice holding the button with a pincer grip and pulling it through the buttonhole.  
Practice pulling button through enough for it to lie flat.  
For undoing buttons talk about pinching and ‘posting’ the button back through the hole.  
Decrease the size of buttons used to practice.  
Start practicing buttons at a table before asking the child to complete buttons on themselves.  
Dressing in front of a mirror can assist a child in matching up their buttons with button holes. |
| **Zips**  
Fastening zips requires 2 hands working together in a co-ordinated way, a strong pincer grasp, strong hands and good hand eye co- | Opening Jars Screwing and unscrewing jar lids can help to develop hand strength. The amount of strength needed can be graded by how tightly the lids are put on. Try "hiding" little objects inside to make it more of a game.  
When buying a coat with an open ended zip, test the zip thoroughly as the ease of fastening can vary a lot.  
Attach a key ring or curtain ring to the zip to aid grip. |
ordination.

For practice at isolating index fingers practice squeezing the triggers of small water pistols in the bath or into the sink. Squeeze the trigger of a spray bottle.

Threading beads and completing a lacing card, are fine motor activities that have a big eye-hand coordination component. Use chunky beads and laces if your child struggles, or thread beads onto a pipe cleaner/chenille stick for extra stability.

Backward chaining: completing the entire process but leaving the last part for him/her to do. Gradually reduce how much of the task you do.

A better time to practice might be a slower-paced weekend morning or practicing buttons on pyjamas in the evening.

Cutlery
Using cutlery is a two handed activity where one hand does one job and the other hand does another job. Any activities that require your child to perform a task in this way helps to plan the movements required for skills such as using cutlery.

Using a dustpan and brush – emphasise keeping the dustpan still and moving the brush. Your child may be tempted to move both together at the same time.

Using scissors – start with making small snips in play doh or snipping straws, before moving onto easy patterns (straight lines) and progress to more complex designs.

Using play doh – practice cutting using cutlery.

Playing with clay (or other modelling material).

Ensure the child is sitting at a suitable table and chair (with feet supported on the floor or a box). Arms should be able to rest supported on the table.

Try using dycem or blue tac to hold the plate still initially.

Encourage the child to practice cutting in other situations first, and let them decide when they are ready to try at mealtimes.

Ensure the cutlery is held appropriately (this does not have to be perfect in the first instance, but it does need to be effective, e.g. knife the correct way up).

Try Kura care cutlery (adult or child size). This has a resting grip to identify where to place index fingers.

Alternatively try using chunkier cutlery if the child appears to having trouble gripping or try attaching foam tubing or plastizote to bulk it out.
Cooking / Baking – holding a bowl while mixing with a spoon or spooning the mixture out of the bowl.

Colouring – ensure the paper is held with one hand whilst the other hand does the colouring.

Opening screw top bottles and jars.

Playing with construction games – e.g. Lego, meccano, k’nex.

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<tr>
<th><strong>Dressing</strong></th>
<th>Undressing is usually easier than dressing. Dress in front of the mirror to provide visual cues and use to check all is correct before going out.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sequencing the task of dressing, struggling to perform all of the movements required for dressing.</strong></td>
<td>Undressing before bed and helping to put on pyjamas is a good time to start as you have more time at night than in the morning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follow the same technique for each garment, e.g. t-shirt is put over the head first and then the arms are put through the sleeves.</td>
<td>Ensure that your child is sitting in a stable position, e.g. on the floor or sitting on a chair or firm bed with his or her feet supported. If sitting balance is poor, try sitting against a wall.</td>
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<td>The order and technique can be written down or use pictures as a visual prompt to help your child remember.</td>
<td>Sit next to, in front of, or directly behind your child during activity and guide him or her through the task.</td>
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<td>Describe actions and parts of the body as you are helping your child to dress, e.g. 'put right foot in.' Also get your child to help with the washing and discuss which way clothes go.</td>
<td>Backward chaining - This is where the adult begins a task and the child completes the last step. As the child gets better the adult then does less of the task. E.g. child may initially just pull t-shirt down at front once parent has placed this over their head.</td>
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<td>Encourage your child to look (maybe in a mirror) and feel if all is correct. Then encourage them to identify and sort out what needs to be done.</td>
<td>Forward chaining - This is where the child starts the task (e.g. putting t-shirt over child’s head) and the adult helps with the later stages.</td>
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<td>Always demonstrate the correct dressing technique first and talk through what you are doing when you are helping a child.</td>
<td>Try not to watch all the time; your child may do more when left alone.</td>
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done, e.g. T-shirt needs pulling down; shoes ‘feel wrong’ because they are on the opposite feet.

Use clothes with wide neck and arm holes to make it easier to locate these. Initially it may be easier to practise with clothing a size too big.

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<tr>
<th>Putting on socks</th>
<th>Play games where your child has to reach outside of his/her base of support without falling over.</th>
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<tr>
<td>To be able to put on their socks independently, your child needs good core strength, strong hands/pincer grasp and a good awareness of their body. These activities help to develop the underlying skills for this task.</td>
<td>Squatting activities while your child is holding an object. Put a hula hoop on the floor. Can they squat down, pick up the hula hoop and reach it overhead? Put it back on the floor in front of them and repeat. Can you get across the whole room only stepping in the hula hoop? Roll a large ball to the child. Your child can squat down, pick it up with two hands and push it back.</td>
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<td>Body awareness game such as Simon Says adding in directions such as “Simon says touch your both hands to your left foot” or “Simon says squat down and touch the floor”. If Simon Says is difficult for your child, play a game of Match Me. Move your body a certain way ie reach your right arm behind your back and they try to match your actions exactly.</td>
<td>Place socks partly over your child’s foot, then encourage them to perform the last part.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Play catch or kick a ball to each other. Simple games of catching, throwing and kicking include many of the underlying skills necessary for learning how to get dressed.</td>
<td>Sport tubular socks are easier than those with a heel. Socks with coloured heels and toes make it easier to work out the correct way around. Alternatively mark the back of the sock with thread on the inside top edge.</td>
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<td>For example, when kicking a ball, a child has to momentarily stand on one foot while the other side of the body is moving (skill needed for getting pants on and off in standing).</td>
<td>Make sure the elastic is not too tight, avoid tight fitting socks. Prompt your child to use their thumbs to help pull the socks on. e.g. ask the child to make ‘thumbs up’ sign with both hands then get them to place thumbs inside the socks to help pull them up.</td>
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<td>Set up obstacles courses that require the child to plan the movements for different activities.</td>
<td>Roll down the top of the sock to make it easier to get the foot in. Use a loop on the back of the sock for the child to hold and pull up.</td>
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Many children with co-ordination problems have difficulty with bottom wiping and the process of going to the toilet. The following strategies can be used to learn bottom wiping and assist with toileting.

**Play games that encourage your child’s awareness of where their bottom is and how to reach it (‘Simon says’)**

- Try encouraging your child to reach for toys or bean bags and put these in the small of their back. You could do this as part of an obstacle course (e.g., commando crawl across a room with a bean bag on your back).

**Play games where you pass toys or bean bags through your legs from the back to the front**

**Target Game for bottom wiping**

Laminate a target and put some chocolate spread in the middle of the target.

- Count and tear off 4 pieces of toilet roll.
- Fold the tissue in half, then again (so they are 1 sheet big).
- Pinch at the chocolate spread so that you remove it without smearing. Try and score 10.

Then try on the wall behind you not looking.

**Struggling to get (un) dressed might be an issue (see dressing/buttons/zips sections)**

- In Bath/when drying - Using a flannel/towel to clean/dry body parts and name them as you do so.

Encouraging your child to get into a routine of going to the toilet so they don’t feel rushed.

- Encouraging your child to go after breakfast may reduce the anxiety of needing to go at school.

If your child’s feet don’t touch the floor they would benefit from a step under their feet to help them maintain their posture.

- Wet wipes are good to use when learning bottom wiping as they wipe more easily and cover a larger surface area.

If your child struggles with toileting it may be helpful to have a discussion with school about this in order that they can be aware and possibly make arrangements such as keeping your child’s wet wipes in the toilet for them to use.
## Prewriting and Fine Motor Skills

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<td><strong>Prewriting</strong>&lt;br&gt;Before being able to form letters and write effectively, children need to be able to form pre-writing shapes. The following activity ideas will help children to develop their pre-writing skills in lots of different ways.</td>
<td>Play-doh, plasticine and therputty activities, try hiding small objects in clay and asking your child to find them.&lt;br&gt;Provide an easel and chalkboard to allow your child to stand whilst writing.&lt;br&gt;Play with tongs, pincers or tweezers to pick up small items such as cotton wool balls or sweeties.&lt;br&gt;Practice drawing the following shapes with your index finger in sand, shaving foam, angel delight, custard, jelly, baked beans. Practice pre-writing shapes&lt;br&gt;Pre-writing shapes include _ _ O / \ X ∆&lt;br&gt;Children need to be able to produce these shapes before progressing onto the writing stage.</td>
<td>Mark making on vertical surface helps build core strength and shoulder stability.&lt;br&gt;Use a vertical chalkboard or a wall to chalk, paint or spray with a water bottle.&lt;br&gt;To build shoulder strength try ‘cave drawing’.&lt;br&gt;Tape a piece of paper to the underneath of a low table, the child can lie on their back and create ‘cave pictures’ by reaching up and drawing.&lt;br&gt;Pre nursery children benefit from lots of opportunities to mark make so let them create their own shapes and marks in a variety of ways.&lt;br&gt;Break up your chalk/crayons into small pieces as this encourages a tripod grasp and builds hand strength. Try writing with pebbles on a vertical wall outside or use <strong>crayon rocks</strong> (see below)</td>
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<td><strong>Fine motor skills</strong>&lt;br&gt;Getting dressed, opening packets, eating, playing and writing. Fine motor skills involve co-ordinated and precise movements of the hands. The following activities will allow your child to develop their fine motor skills.</td>
<td>Threading - macaroni, cut-up straws, beads, bobbins, etc.&lt;br&gt;Threading Cheerios onto a piece of spaghetti – how many can you do?</td>
<td>These activities are usually best achieved when your child is in a stable seated position with elbows leaning on a table or on armrests.&lt;br&gt;Your child can also carry out activities that put weight through their arms in order to strengthen and stabilise them, e.g. lying on their tummy and resting on their elbows for playing, drawing or watching TV.&lt;br&gt;Place child's hand in required position if child is unable to copy.</td>
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<td>Craft - activities that require colouring, cutting &amp; assembling e.g. Collages, puzzles, paper tearing. Finger Puppets - puppets on each finger</td>
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<td>Clothes Pegs - around a box, on a piece of card, hanging clothes on a line, hanging dolls clothes on a line of string using mini pegs.</td>
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<td>Bubbles - have your child blow them, pop by poking at them with different fingers, grasping them and hitting them with various body parts.</td>
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- Talk about the positions of fingers and hands as you are using them.
- Use heavy and solid pieces to provide weight for improved control, avoiding light toys initially.
- Work at a level within the child’s frustration limit so the child will stay at the activity.
- Encourage activities requiring hand manipulation.
- Help stabilise an object while the child completes the task.
## Handwriting Strategies

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<td>Poor Handwriting Posture</td>
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|  | • Make sure children are facing the board directly so that they do not have to adopt a twisting posture which is bad for the spine. This may mean moving chairs out and around for board work. | • Posture pack (sit on wedge and angled board/writing slope)  
• If feet are dangling: try a lower chair, try a foot rest/step.  
• Adjustable tables may be helpful if several children are too small for the desks.  
• Any child with a visual difficulty should use an angled board/writing slope for all reading and writing activities to bring their work closer to their visual field and reduce their need to slouch right over.  
• Consider ‘Start Write, Stay Right’ handwriting programme to consider environmental, postural and physical elements required for effective and automatic handwriting. |
|  | • Children should be working on regular core strengthening and shoulder strengthening activities. |  |
| Left Handers | • Try not to sit a left hander on the right of a right hander as they will bump arms and distract each other.  
• Place paper to left of midline and tilt clockwise to avoid the child's hand obscuring the view of the line. It may be useful to place a tape on the table to outline where it should be positioned until the child gets used to it. | • A lot of pencil grips are able to be used by left and right handers.  
• Some handwriting pens are designed specifically for left handers.  
• This pen helps to reduce the child’s hand obscuring the view (suitable for left and right handers) Yoropen |
| Pencil Grip | • The most effective grip is a tripod grasp as shown. It allows the fingers to move without using the wrist, or whole arm. This means that less effort is used and writing can be more fluent. The forearm should be resting on the desk for stability. | • Place a pencil grip on the pencil/pen to encourage a dynamic tripod grasp. Introduce use slowly.  
• The most effective tend to be:  
  • Ultra Grip |
• Encourage the child to hold the pencil between the thumb pad and index finger pad (like a bird beak). The pencil then rests on the middle finger.

• Often children who lack hand strength or have joint laxity in their fingers and thumbs will find it difficult to hold the pencil in tripod grasp. Therefore working on hand strengthening exercises like Theraputty can help.

• This also means that children who start using a new pencil grip which puts their fingers in a tripod grasp, may experience discomfort at first as the new muscles that it uses are fatiguing quickly but building strength. The pain should pass if the child perseveres as the muscles strength will improve.

• **Handwriting programmes** often work on building the hand muscles for handwriting such as: Write from the Start and Speed up!

• **Ultra Grip with crossguard**

• **The writing claw**

• For children who don't pull away their ring and little finger and whose pencil/ pen does not sit in the web space handiwriters are great:

• For older children specialist pens can also be helpful, particularly:

  - Pen Again
  - Stabilo EASY original pen

• If the child really can't maintain a tripod grasp, or is functional and has nice, effective handwriting without, the key is often comfort:
### Pressure too hard
- Practice on carbon paper to be light enough to not get through sheets.
- Play dough writing: flatten it on desk or table and use a pencil to write in it. For those that press too hard, the letters and lines come out all torn up so they get immediate feedback to lighten their pressure.
- Writing on tin foil backed with cardboard – encourage the child not to rip the foil when they write.
- Try using harder pencils e.g. 2H, 4H, 6H.
- Think about increasing comfort of the pen by increasing diameter of pen/pencil with comfort pencil grips or pens which are comfortable to reduce fatigue.
- Propelling pencils with lead length long. Too much pressure will snap the pencils and help practice reducing pressure so as not to snap.

### Pressure too light
- Practice on carbon paper to put on enough pressure to get through sheets.
- Writing on tin foil backed with cardboard – encourage the child to rip the foil when they write.
- Use crayon rubbings - If too little pressure is used, the image does not come through clearly onto paper. After achieving the 'perfect' pressure when watching, ask the child to maintain the same pressure with eyes closed.
- **Light up pen** to signal when not putting enough pressure on (light will be off) – light should go on/off when applying correct amount of pressure.
- Try pencil grips to encourage tripod pencil grasp.
- Provide an angled board/writing slope. The angle should be approximately 25°. This will ensure that the wrists are positioned on the writing surface.
- Try using softer pencils e.g. 2B, 4B, 6B

### Spacing Words
- Try writing on squared paper and leaving out 1 square between each word.
- Use a lolly stick/ emery board between each word – the child could decorate and individualise the stick.
- After completing work, ask pupil to highlight the over/under spaced words and letters.
- Get the child to try and read a sentence where there are no spaces left between the words so show why spaces are needed.
- Ask child to imagine a letter e.g. an ‘o’ between each word.
- Use the **‘Write from the Start Perceptuo-Motor Handwriting Programme’**, especially section 2B
- Introduce joined writing very early in the child’s education, this is guaranteed to improve spatial organisation; a good programme to work towards joined up handwriting is ‘SpeedUp! Handwriting Programme’
- Consider **‘Start Write, Stay Right’** handwriting programme to consider environmental, postural and physical elements required for effective and automatic handwriting.
- **Finger Spacers** can be helpful.
### Control and Fluency
- Practise with activities such as:
  - Dot to Dots Mazes
  - Matching one object to another
  - Drawing along roads (start with wide lines)
- Fluency can also be developed through practising letter patterns (it is easier to start large and then get smaller) e.g.
  - ![Sample letter patterns](image)
- The Teodorescu Perceptuo-Motor Programme (Write from the Start) is a resource book that develops perceptual and fine motor control with the aim of developing fluency and accuracy.
- **Speed up!** Also works on the fluency of handwriting working on a lot of handwriting patterns but using a kinaesthetic approach.
- ‘Start Write, Stay Right’ handwriting programme to consider environmental, postural and physical elements required for effective and automatic handwriting.

### Alignment on page
- Always use lined paper rather than a line guide which easily moves.
- Mark a margin at the left hand side in a bold colour or place starting points at the left margin to reiterate where each line of writing should start.
- Stop and go margins help the child work out where to start and stop on the page.
- Provide ‘Right line’ or ‘hint-print’ paper which incorporates lines which are slightly raised giving a tactile reference when writing each letter. Another way of doing this is to draw lines onto a page with pva glue and let them set.

### Ascending and descending letters
- Use visual and verbal cues e.g. coloured lines to encourage the child to place the letter in the correct place (see attached example):
  - ![Sample ascending and descending letters](image)
  - Blue line symbolizes sky, green for grass, and brown for earth. E.g. for a ‘p’ start at the grass, go down to the earth and back up to the grass
  - This should give the idea of spacing and size of letters.
- See Sky, grass, soil paper attached.
- The paper is graded in difficulty so start with the biggest blocked out lines and gradually decrease the size and then move to the coloured lines with the white background.
- A lot of children would benefit from regular practice on this paper to train their brains for orientation and placement of letters.

### Letter Formation
- Write letters in the air using whole arm movements with eyes closed to reinforce kinaesthetic appreciation of letter orientation.
- Create shapes using dough or clay encouraging the child to mould and knead the material into a clear shape (this reinforces tactile
- Develop an appreciation of form using sections from the **Write from the Start Perceptuo-Motor Handwriting Programme** especially sections 1A–2A.
- Consider ‘Start Write, Stay Right’ handwriting programme to consider environmental,
- Create letter forms out of Play-Doh and see if the child can detect what the shape or letter form is with their eyes closed (this reinforces proprioception and tactile sensation).
- Using an index finger, create letters and shapes in trays of sand, shaving foam or silly soap.
- Write letters on rough sandpaper using a variety of medium, ie, soft leaded pencil or wax crayons (the fine vibrations reinforce kinaesthetic sense).

### Letter Reversals

- Provide a starting arrow to show which way a letter should be produced, ie, the letter ‘c’ is orientated in an anticlockwise direction and the letter ‘b’ requires a clockwise orientation.
- Use odd one out games to help the child to determine discrepancies in orientation.
- Reversals are normal when seen in children under 7 years.
- Consider ‘Start Write, Stay Right’ handwriting programme to consider environmental, postural and physical elements required for effective and automatic handwriting.

### Joint laxity in Hands

- Children may complain of fatigue, because they are working very hard to maintain a pencil grip position—give them rest breaks and allow extra time for writing tasks.
- If a child has joint laxity elsewhere where their posture may be affected – see ‘poor handwriting posture,’ for advice.
- Allow the child to decide whether they find it easier to write in print or joined up – some students with joint laxity prefer print as they get a break between each letter, others prefer joined up as they get a break between each word.
- Gentle hand strengthening exercises and movement throughout the day will help.
- Increase the diameter of pens and pencils with comfort grips, chunky pens and pencils and consider Abiligrip or plastazote. This will reduce stress on the joints.

- ‘Bendy Fingers’

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When is it time to use ICT?

- When a child’s handwriting skills are limiting their ability to record their knowledge effectively following handwriting intervention, increased ICT access should be considered.

- It is still important to continue work on pencil skills as writing notes is an important skill. When the focus of the lesson is presentation and writing, students should be encouraged to write. When the focus is on demonstrating knowledge, they should be encouraged to use IT.

- Test the speed of handwriting versus the speed of typing by timing some copied sentences. Repeat these tests at regular intervals to review how IT is affecting educational performance.

- Any adaptations to recording of knowledge for examinations should be implemented for at least 2 terms within their normal way of working to demonstrate a history of need, with a view to school applying for access arrangements for exams.

- Encourage the use of apps and software to develop touch typing skills.

- If a child has known physical difficulties which will impact upon handwriting, ICT should be introduced early to give opportunities to develop their handwriting skills.

- Specialist software and access to ICT for students with special educational needs and disabilities can often be required – schools can contact John Devlin for further details.
## Pre Scissor and Scissor Skills

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<th>Scissor Difficulty</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Equipment to try</th>
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| Poor posture at desk for scissor tasks | • Children should be working on regular core strengthening and shoulder strengthening activities such as animal walks, superman position, bridging.  
• Children should have feet firmly on the floor. | • Wedged cushion – **Move’n'sit cushion** or **wedged cushion**.  
• If feet are dangling: try a lower chair, try a foot rest/step.  
• Adjustable tables may be helpful if several children are too small for the desks. |
| Holding shoulder out due to poor shoulder stability | • Put a paper folder under the cutting arm and encourage the child to hold the folder there without dropping it to teach correct positioning for cutting.  
• Give verbal prompts to keep shoulder in. | |
| Unable to hold scissors correctly | **How to Hold Scissors**  
• Thumbs on top of the scissors and in the hand supporting the cutting.  
• Encourage thumb through small loop, index finger outside of loops and middle finger in second loop.  
• Practice lots of finger isolation activities; play with finger puppets, sing nursery rhymes such as ‘Incey Wincey Spider’ and move fingers, play with | • There are various types of adapted scissors which can be used to assist with scissor difficulties.  

**Easi-Grip® Scissors**  
[www.peta-uk.com](http://www.peta-uk.com)  
- Lightweight and easy to use.  
- Automatically reopens the scissors when pressure is released. |
water pistols or spray bottles, play with clay or playdough and try pinching, pulling, or making treasure pots, pick up small beads with ‘pinchy’ fingers, finger painting and popping bubbles with index finger.

- Put different coloured spot stickers on index finger, thumb and middle finger. Put the same coloured spot stickers on the scissors where the student should place their finger e.g. a red sticker on the thumb and red sticker on thumb loop of scissors.

- Give hand over hand assistance until the child requires less physical prompting.

- Operated by squeezing gently using thumb and fingers, or fingers and palm of the hand.

- Options include round-ended or pointed blade and left and right-handed scissors.

**Mini-Easi-Grip® Scissors**

[www.peta-uk.com](http://www.peta-uk.com)

As above for smaller hands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unable to use ‘helping hand’ to support paper</th>
<th>Lots of 2 handed activities: practice opening jars, stirring, reading books using dominant hand and supporting with non-dominant hand, practice threading, drawing around stencils, holding the stencil still with non-dominant hand, sharpening pencils.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Put a coloured sticker on each hand e.g. red on dominant hand and blue on non-dominant hand; give verbal prompts such as; ‘use your blue hand to hold the paper.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Give hand over hand assistance until the child requires less physical prompting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Unable to make snipping motion (open and close) | Practice separation of the hand activities; squeeze the trigger of a spray bottle with index and middle finger, tear paper whilst keeping ring and little fingers tucked into palms (you could use this to make a collage), open clothes pegs with the thumb and first finger e.g. pegging out paintings to dry, whilst doing pincer grasp activities place a small object (e.g. marble, Blu - Tack) in the child’s palm to be held in place by the third, fourth and little finger, practice opposition with thumb to index finger thumb to middle finger thumb to ring finger and thumb to little finger.  
- Use large tweezers for tweezer games like sorting pom poms into colours.  
- Punch holes with a hand-held hole punch. Holes can be pasted on paper and made into ladybugs.  
- Try stapling with a hand held stapler.  
- Start with snipping different materials: Begin by snipping a variety of easy to cut textured items e.g. straws, pieces of string, corrugated cardboard strips, aluminium foil, fabric, cardboard or firm paper etc. Gradually increase the width of the strips paper/card e.g. from 1cm to 2cm to 4cm  
- Give hand under hand assistance until the child requires less physical prompting. | Self-Opening Scissors  
www.peta-uk.com  
- Look like conventional style scissors, but have been fitted with a spring so that the scissor automatically reopens after pressure is released.  
- Options include round-ended, left and right-handed  
Easi-Grip® Scissors  
www.peta-uk.com |
| Unable to cut straight lines | Start by cutting strips off a small piece of card and progress to bigger pieces and then from card onto paper.  
- Cut within straight parallel lines of varying widths. Start wide and make the widths smaller as the child improves.  
- Use straight line cutting activities e.g. cut from the man to his house. |
| Unable to change direction of cutting | • Once a student has mastered cutting straight lines: progress to rotating the paper with the helper hand.  
• Punch several holes at the top and bottom of a sheet of material in a square shape and draw line between each hole. Cut from one hole to the other turning the paper with the other hand to change direction while cutting.  
• Start cutting corners on firmer card and once this is mastered progress to cutting corners on paper.  
• Use corner cutting activities e.g. draw a right angle between a man and his dog- ask the child to get from the man to his dog. |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Unable to cut out shapes             | • Once a student has mastered cutting around corners: progress to cutting shapes.  
• Start cutting shapes on firmer card and once this is mastered progress to cutting shapes on paper.  
• Use shape cutting activities.      |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tires quickly and accuracy decreases</th>
<th>Practice hand strengthening activities to build stamina:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Tearing: Tear up paper only using the tips of your fingers. Make it more difficult by using more than one piece of paper at once. Make collages or paper Mache with the torn paper.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Squeezing: Practice squeezing sponges. Transfer liquid from one container to another by filling and squeezing a sponge. Do some sponge painting with runny paint and squeeze out the sponge before putting it onto the paper. Try squeezing an old washing up liquid bottle and make patterns on the pavement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Practice wringing out flannels.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Open jars</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Use a hole punch</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Use an eye dropper to squeeze watery paint onto a piece of kitchen towel and make a picture.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Self-Opening Scissors**

[www.peta-uk.com](http://www.peta-uk.com)

**Easi-Grip® Scissors**

[www.peta-uk.com](http://www.peta-uk.com)

**Long Loop Scissors**

[www.peta-uk.com](http://www.peta-uk.com)

- Long loop handle allows the strength of middle, ring finger to be used whilst the index finger is placed outside the loop and used for guidance.
- Improved control of cutting action
- Available in left handed or right handed and self-opening option.
Once you have completed the pack…

This pack includes advice and activities on Fine Motor Skills, Handwriting and Daily Living Skills to complete with your child for a minimum of 12 weeks. A Progress Log was also enclosed to record your child’s progress in relation to the strategies.

For many children this pack will cover the issues relating to their difficulties and they will not require any further intervention.

If you feel that progress has not been made following the 12 week trial period you are welcome to contact the department to request an appointment. At this point your child will be allocated an appointment for an assessment. Please ensure that you bring your completed progress log to this appointment.

The request for the appointment MUST come directly from the person with parental responsibility.

If your child has made no progress with their fine motor skills, handwriting and daily living skills please contact the Occupational Therapy Department on 01670 564050.

If your child has made no progress with their gross motor skills i.e. balance, coordination etc please contact the Physiotherapy Department on 01670 564173.
BIKE SKILLS SESSIONS

Did you know…..It takes lots of effort to learn to ride a bike!!

They need to be able to:

- Maintaining an upright posture
- Planning how to move your body (pedalling, turning handle bars, stepping back to brake)
- Pedalling (leg strength to turn pedals, taking feet off pedals when stopping bike, pedalling fast enough, getting 2 feet on pedals and getting started)
- Balance (this can be an issue due to decreased core strength)
- Looking ahead!!
- Then you need to put all of these steps together and remember them (sequencing and working memory)

For children with co-ordination difficulties, putting all of these skills together is a challenge and many may avoid riding their bikes.

The aim of the Bike Skills Sessions at Northburn Community Centre, Cramlington is to teach children at their own pace whilst working on all of the underlying skills they need to ride their bikes and…..it’s FUN!!

To book your child’s place please contact: afoggett@activenorthumberland.org.uk

(Your child will need their own bikes with removable stabilisers- stabilisers will need to be removed for the first session)
Progress Log

Please use the progress table below to log work completed from the Occupational Therapy Booklet detailing comments and observations. If your child requires intervention following working through the booklet for 12 weeks then please ensure you bring this along to the appointment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
<th>SCORING</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ie. Scissor skills, dressing</td>
<td>ie. Hand position, posture at table, using both hands, isolating finger movements</td>
<td>WEEK 1 1=Unable 10=Able</td>
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<td>WEEK 6 1=Unable 10=Able</td>
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<td>WEEK 12 1=Unable 10=Able</td>
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