

ONE, TWO, I CAN DO.....



MEALTIMES



DRESSING



PLAY

DEVELOPMENTAL ADVICE

**3-4
YEARS**

Occupational Therapy Children and Young People

Development Activity Pack Contents Page

- Play and hand skills
- Gross motor skills
- Mealtimes
- Dressing
- Toileting

This pack has been provided to support your child's development in areas identified as a concern by you or your health visitor.

It is recommended that you use a selection of the listed activities on a daily/regular basis to support your child's development. These activity lists are not exhaustive and we would encourage you to use your own play activities.



Play and Hand Skills

We use our hands on a daily basis for a variety of activities. Development of fine motor skills can improve the way a child manipulates things in daily life.

At this stage your child is developing their play and hand skills through a variety of daily experiences. Providing your child with varied daily play opportunity will support their development. Frequent practice and opportunity is beneficial, and don't be afraid to get messy.

Below you will find a variety of activities to develop play and hand skills.

Using two hands together:

- Threading: beads to make jewellery, lacing toys
- Construction games (Lego, Duplo, K'Nex, Magnetics)
- Making chains with paperclips
- Playdough games (various cookie cutters and tools available in shops)
- Practice using children's scissors to snip/cut playdough or card



Pincer grasp:

- Closing zip lock bags
- Peeling stickers
- Making patterns with pegboard and pegs
- Pegging clothes pegs on a washing line (this also helps with hand strength)

Pencil skills:

- Write on a blackboard or large pieces of paper on the floor
- Write in sand, shower gel, paint with finger
- Try using a thicker pencil, chunky chalks or crayons
- Use colouring and tracing books

Hand strength:

- Squeezing water bottles
- Rolling out playdough
- Using tweezers to move small items from one bowl to another
- Popping bubble wrap with thumb and index finger

Be creative and have fun!!!



Gross Motor Skills

Gross motor skills are those which require whole body movement and which involve the large muscles of the body to perform everyday functions, such as standing, walking, running, and sitting upright.

Core and balance

- Play games on the floor or in high kneeling at a small table
- Play musical statues
- Run around like a ballet dancer on tiptoes
- Jump like a bunny or kangaroo to practice jumping forward keeping 2 feet together
- Walk like an animal, i.e. a crab, an elephant, a bear
- Wheelbarrow races
- Riding a trike/balance bike/bike
- Outdoor and in-door play areas, where the child has the opportunity to climb, balance and crawl

Ball skills

- Practice swinging arms for underarm throw
- Catching and popping bubbles
- Roll a ball back and forth between you and your child
- Bounce the ball with two hands and catch it with two hands
- Use a variety of sized balls i.e. a beach ball, a balloon, plastic balls, tennis balls for catching
- Throw a large ball in the air and catch
- Play skittles
- Throw a beanbag into a large box, gradually decreasing size of target
- Practice kicking balls into goals, starting large and decreasing target size
- Play Swing-ball



Tips for stairs (independence on the stairs starts at about 3 years)

- Practice stepping onto and off of a small step stool. Have your child go up with one foot leading and then step off the other side with the opposite foot first
- Encourage your child to hold on to the banister with one hand when going up and down, developing reciprocal stepping
- Try introducing a visual aid: Use two different kinds of stickers, placing them on each step where your child's foot should go, alternating stickers. For example, if you use heart and smiley face stickers, put a heart toward the right side of one step and on the next step, put a smiley face toward the left side — try to place them right where your child would step. Try using only 3-4 steps at first until they get the hang of it

Be creative and have fun!!!



Mealtimes

Mealtimes are an important part of family life. Children develop their feeding skills by copying their family. A child at 3-4 years old should have mastered a spoon and should be refining their skills with a fork. As with any skill, the best way to teach your child is to break each task into small steps. Slowly build the task back up as they refine each step.

Practical hints and tips:

- Ensure your child is well positioned, either at the dining table in a booster seat or at a small table and chair, with feet supported (use a footrest if necessary), and back against the chair
- Try to encourage your children to sit when eating instead of wandering around with food
- It may help to use the same routine and layout at each mealtime making it easier for your child to identify familiar items i.e. spoon, cup, bowl, plate
- Limit distractions –reduce background noise by turning the TV off and removing iPads/tablets/phones
- Use a non-slip mat underneath the plate/bowl will help steady utensils from moving
- Eat with your children so that you can show them how to use cutlery and they can copy your behaviour at mealtimes
- Use play opportunities out with mealtime to practice developing their skills, i.e. helping with baking, decorating cookies, playing with playdough
- Encourage a good cutlery grasp right from the start; your child's index finger should point down the back of the fork towards the prongs
- You may wish to introduce a blunt knife to cut through playdough sausages, with index finger placed on the back of the knife towards the blade
- When you are confident your child can use a blunt knife, you can consider introducing the knife and fork together

Remember time, patience and practice are key to encourage your child!!!



Dressing

It is a huge accomplishment when children learn how to dress. Independent dressing is a skill that needs to be taught and practiced and can be done through play. Development of fine motor skills and body awareness supports the development of dressing.

Parents need to consider if their children are ready to dress themselves. They may need a little extra time. Find a routine that suits you and your child. If weekday mornings are busy, it may be easier to practice at bedtimes or at the weekends.

IMPORTANT: At age 3-4 year you should be encouraging your child to complete dressing independently as much as possible.

Handy hints to develop independent dressing:

- Use dressing up toys
- Allow your child to choose their own clothes, and lay them out the night before
- Undressing is easier and your child may manage this easier than putting clothes on
- Your child may find it easier to be seated when dressing
- Talk through dressing, naming items and describing what you are doing
- Start small and move up, i.e. socks, pulling up trousers, pulling t-shirts down
- Use larger items of clothing to make it easier, i.e. a size bigger
- Use a mirror so they can see what they are doing
- Use a reward chart system

Backward Chaining

- Backward chaining means that a task of dressing is broken into steps.
- An adult provides assistance throughout several steps until the child can complete the last steps independently.
- For example – socks:
 - The adult places the sock over the child's toes (step1), then over their heel (step 2) and encourages them to pull the sock up their leg (step 3)
 - Once they are able to pull the sock up on their own, encourage them to pull the sock over their heel and up
 - Finally, they will pull the sock over their foot and heel and up their leg.



Toileting

When children learn how to use the toilet by themselves it is a huge accomplishment. Independent toileting is a skill that needs to be taught and practiced and requires a lot of patience. Be prepared to invest time and energy.

Parents need to consider if their children are ready to use the toilet. They may need a little extra time. Find a routine that suits you and your child. If you feel they are ready you may prefer to use a time where you are not bound by nursery times etc.

There is no set age at which potty training or toilet training should begin. The right time depends on your child's development but a guide would be between 2 ½ and 3 ½ years. At this age if they are progressing with other skills, such as play, motor skills, communication and social skills then your child should be encouraged to develop this area.

Your child should have developed the following skills in readiness for toilet training:

- The ability to pull their pants and trousers up/down
- Knows where the toilet is and can get there themselves
- Can get on/off the toilet using a step if required

Ensure you praise your child's efforts as much as possible and do not draw attention to accidents. You may also want to try a reward chart system for encouragement.

For further detailed toilet training information please go to:

<https://www.nhs.uk/health/a-z/a-z-toilet-training>



Further information on the topics covered in this pack and a range of other useful resources can be found on the KIDS Scotland web page. The website is a specifically designed NHS website for Children and Young People hosted by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

<http://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/>

In addition we regularly post activity ideas and general information on our Facebook page and Twitter account.

Please follow our Social media Pages:

 **NHS Lanarkshire Children and Young People, Occupational Therapy**
 **@OccupationalTh4**

If you have any queries or concerns please contact Lanarkshire Occupational Therapy - Children and Young People, at your locality:

South Lanarkshire – Douglas Street Community Health Clinic on 01698 368 714
North Lanarkshire – Glenorchy, Coathill Hospital on 01236 707778

