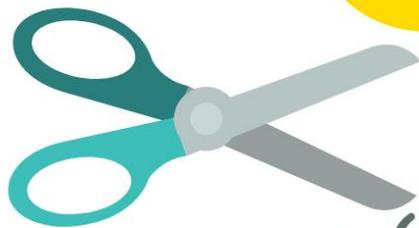




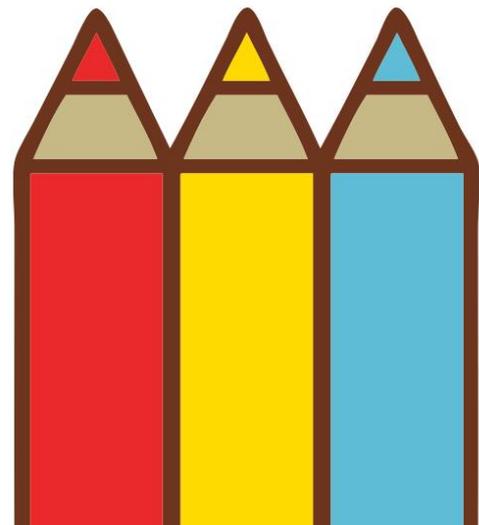
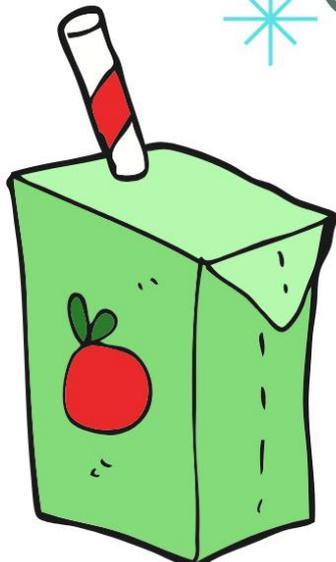
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

GET
SET

School



Information Pack
(Nursery to School)



Introduction



We would like to extend a warm welcome to your child to the “Get Set School” group. The group is designed to enhance the development of the necessary skills to help with their transition into primary school. Each session will focus on:

- Dressing – required for changing for PE
- Organisation skills –taking responsibility for their personal belongings
- Gross motor activity – balance, ball skills and core strength
- Fine motor – opening snack packs, pencil and scissor skills

Following each session children will be provided with homework and parents will have an opportunity to approach staff to discuss any questions or queries you may have.

The following pages give you some ideas of how you can use naturally arising opportunities to develop your child’s motor skills. You can be inventive and use toys/equipment already in your home and the local community in a variety of ways in order to develop different types of motor co-ordination. Well-developed motor skills will support progress with learning in school and promote independence.

Included in the pack is information, advice and tips on:

- Development through play
- Gross Motor Skills
- Ball Skills
- Fine Motor Skills
- Pre-writing skills
- Scissor skills
- Cutlery skills
- Dressing skills

Most importantly – have fun!!

Development through play



Why is play essential?

Play is an essential part of every child's life. Play allows children to use their imagination and contributes to their physical, cognitive and social development. It is through play children learn to engage and interact with the world around them.

The skills children learn through play:

- **Communication:** Play allows self-expression, young children will tend towards solitary play but can be seen and heard to babble. It introduces the opportunity to learn a new language as they grow and develop.
- **Social:** Play allows children to learn about spatial awareness and turn taking and developing attachments with others as well as developing empathy. This will help them to establish and maintain relationships with others.
- **Emotional:** Play is a great medium through which children can build their self-confidence and self-esteem through exposure to activities where they achieve success. It can also be used as a coping method for dealing with traumatic events.
- **Physical:** Play involving crawling, jumping, hopping and running all help develop a child's gross motor skills, core strength, balance and co-ordination. Intricate table-top games such as colouring, drawing and cause and effect toys help build their fine motor skills, grasps and hand eye co-ordination.
- **Cognitive/Intellectual:** Children learn to understand concepts and ideas through play. Use of puzzles and matching games allow them to develop planning and organisational skills, build problem solving skills and understand the sequence of tasks. They learn that there are consequences to one's actions through cause and effect toys. Role play also allows them to use their creative imagination and model adult life scenarios.

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.

Participation in gross motor play develops the following:

- Core strength (tummy muscles, back muscles, muscles that support our shoulders and hips)
- Fluency of movement
- Hand-eye coordination
- Motor control
- Bilateral coordination (using both sides of the body together)



Development of the above skills helps with sitting upright in a chair, dressing skills, stabilising a pencil, riding a bike, and outdoor play. Frequent engagement in the suggested activities listed below can promote the development of gross motor skills.

Games to try:

- **Musical Statue games**
- **Tiptoes:** stand on tiptoes and hold position or run around like a ballet dancer
- **Jumping:** Jump over rope laid on the floor, keeping 2 feet together. Slowly progress to jumping over rope held higher off the floor
- **Twister:** helps to learn about the left and right side of your body
- **Hop scotch:** start with jumping 2 feet together and then progress to 1-foot hop.
- **Belly crawling:** crawl along the floor using a commando style; add obstacles to crawl around
- **Wheelbarrow walk:** work in pairs, holding partner at the ankles and practice walking forward and backward. Can pretend to be walking on the moon and collecting moon rocks (sweets) from one end of the room to the other

Tips:

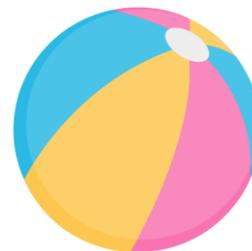
- Encourage outdoor play as much as possible giving the opportunity to play with balls, climb, balance and crawl.
- Incorporate activities into daily tasks e.g. stand on one leg when brushing teeth, do 5 star jumps while waiting for breakfast to be prepared.
- Try not to make practice too prescriptive – you may find that your child will engage in practice more readily if activity is incorporated into play time. This will help your child perceive themselves to be playing and not actually participating in functional activity.

Ball skills

Ball skills help children develop body control and strength and supports development of hand-eye coordination. To begin with use a fairly large soft ball and gradually decrease the size as the child becomes more confident and proficient.

Participation in ball skills helps with:

- Participation in gym
- Participation in games at play and lunch breaks.
- Use of two hands together in classroom activities.
- Hand eye co-ordination for classroom activities.



Try out the following skills:

- **Rolling:** Roll a ball back and forth between you and your child. Then with the child kneeling on the floor get them to roll a ball into a goal and lastly from standing roll a ball into a goal
- **Bouncing:** Bounce the ball with two hands and catch it with two hands, then bounce the ball with one hand, dominant hand first and lastly bounce a ball against a wall and try to catch it
- **Hitting:** Hit a beach ball using hands then use a bat or hands. Try keeping a balloon off the floor using alternate hands.
- **Catching:** Start with catching and popping bubbles then catch a bounced ball from kneeling, sitting and standing. Try using a variety of tools i.e. beanbags, large light balls, small tennis balls
- **Throwing:** Practice swinging arms for underarm throw then throw a beanbag into a large box, gradually decreasing size of target. Why not try throwing a ball in the air and catching it.
- **Kicking:** Kick the ball into a large goal – increase challenge by moving goal further away. Kick a ball at skittles.

Tips:

- Your child needs to be alert with their eyes on the ball and have their hands ready for catching.
- To help develop balance for ball skills, practice can start with child on the floor, then move to sitting on a chair and finally in standing. When in standing, knees need to be slightly bent to allow for movement
- Encourage playing with balls from different angles, i.e. hitting suspended balloons, catching balls from the front/left/right

Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor skills or dexterity is the co-ordination of the smaller muscles in the wrist, hand and fingers that enable the synchronisation of the hands and fingers with the eyes. They are used to perform functions such as picking up, grasping and holding objects.

Participation in fine motor play develops the following:

- Hand strength
- Grasp
- Bilateral skills
- In-hand manipulation skills



Well-developed fine motor skills are important for a variety of activities in class i.e. handwriting, using scissors, opening snack packs, manipulating small objects, turning pages and intrinsic activities of daily living such as dressing (buttons and zips).

Games to try:

- **Threading:** have your child to make a necklace by threading 10 large beads onto string.
- **You've been pegged:** Working with your child have them place a peg on a part of your clothing, i.e. at the knee, at the elbow, on the collar (this activity helps with a pincer grasp, body awareness and hand strength).
- **Putty dig:** hide small pegs or marbles in putty/playdoh, then ask your child to dig them out as fast as they can. *Record time with each trial*
- **Paper clip chain:** making a chain as fast as they can, starting with 5 paperclips (you can increase as the child improves).
- **Sorting:** Provide a plastic tub filled with assorted small items, i.e. paper clips, beads, pasta shapes, pennies, buttons and have your child sort items into different tubs (i.e. all pennies together etc.). Encourage use of a pincer and tell them not to use their body or the table to help manipulate/turn the objects

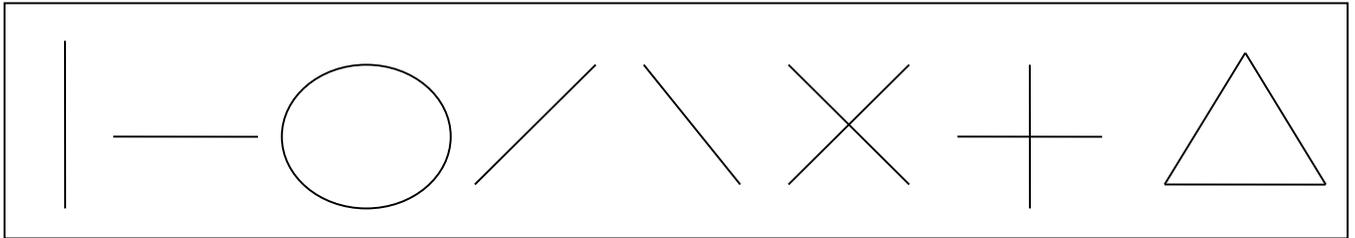
Tips:

- Encourage the use of pincer grasp (thumb and index finger) and use prompts for your child not to use their body or the table to help manipulate/turn the objects in their hands during activities.
- If your child has difficulties with fine motor activities, reduce the number of item per activity and make objects slightly larger.
- Remember, technique is more important than speed!!

Pre-Writing Skills

Children need a lot of support and encouragement to overcome writing difficulties. Writing is a **complex** motor task which involves many different skills including fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination, body posture, motor planning and visual skills.

Between the age of 4 – 5 ½ years a child should be able to copy the shapes below, starting from the left. This is an important developmental stage in the process of developing letter formation.



Some activities to try:

- Try using a variety of vertical and horizontal angles, such as writing on a blackboard, using large pieces of paper on the floor
- Use a sensory approach to develop pre-writing skills, such as writing in sand, shower gel, paint, using chalkboard
- Colouring books, which encourage pencil control by staying within the lines
- Tracing around templates such as dot to dot
- There are several iPad apps available which encourage development of pre-writing skills such as Hairy Letters and Dexteria

Tips:

- If your child has an awkward pencil grasp try using a thicker pencil
- To help with pencil grip, use coloured tape around the bottom of the pencil acts as a visual cue on where to hold a pencil
- Encourage smooth movements – encourage child to trace through mazes etc, without stopping or going backwards.
- Encourage your child to pick up a pencil/crayon as often as possible
- To control pressure – place several sheets of carbon paper and plain paper underneath writing sheet. Have the child press heavily or lightly.
- **Body posture:** ensure your child is sitting with their feet firmly on the floor, bottom back against the chair, knees and hips at 90 degrees



Developing scissor skills

Cutting is a complex task that requires a stable and controlled grasp, the use of both hands and hand strength.

Things to consider:

- Fine motor activities that use manipulation (small items), hand strength (squeezing, playdough) and both hands together (tearing paper, threading, building) assist with development of cutting skills (a lot of which are part of the fine motor activities diary).
- Ensure the child has an appropriate pair of scissors for their hand size, dominance and ability (there are special scissors for left hand use).
- There are 2 stages to developing scissor skills, and each need to be taught separately:
 - Practice opening and closing the scissors first, with just one hand. Encourage the child to look at the scissor blades and say “open and close” as their hand moves the scissors.
 - Once the child has learnt how to operate scissors then they are ready to learn how to cut paper



Some activities to try:

The following table outlines the stage development of cutting skills for a child:

Stage	Activity	Activity
Stage 1	Basic snipping	Try cutting sausages made from play dough, plasticine or blue-tac.
Stage 2	Cardboard snipping	Snipping across strips of card approximately 1cm wide. As accuracy improves, move onto larger width strips of card i.e. 2cm, 3cm, etc until the child is able to combine opening and closing the scissors with moving them forward.
Stage 3	Paper snipping	Only once the child is able to snip cardboard
Stage 4	Paper cutting	Punch a series of holes in paper or use punched edge of computer paper and ask child to cut through holes. Progress onto thick solid straight lines, which the child must cut in half.
Stage 5	Textured cutting	Try cutting various fabric and textures, cereal boxes, string, sandpaper, scraps, straw, fabric.
Stage 6	Shaped line cutting	Start with lines which are slightly curvy. Then try cutting very curved lines, zig-zags, square, triangle, circle, etc.
Stage 7	Jigsaw	Draw thick, straight lines across a picture torn from a magazine. Ask the child to cut along all the lines to make a simple jigsaw.

Using Cutlery

Things to consider:

- **Sitting position:** Is your child able to sit at the table with both feet firmly planted on the floor? Is the plate directly in front of them or is it slipping to the side? When sitting your feet should always be firmly supported.
- **Utensils:** Make sure you have the right cutlery for the items you are cutting.
- **Size of cutlery:** It can sometimes be difficult for young children to obtain a firm grasp on standard cutlery due to its size and their small hands. Starting to learn with smaller sized cutlery (If your child is still struggling there are alternative options available which you can discuss with your therapist).
- **Observe how your child holds cutlery:** Their hands should be pointing down towards the plate. Visually demonstrate how to position your index finger on top of the knife and fork in order to increase the force required when cutting.
- **Hand dominance:** If your child is right handed then they should hold the knife in their right hand. If your child is left handed allow them to choose which hand to hold their knife in and identify which feels most comfortable for them.

An activity to try:

- Practise makes perfect! Use a fun activity for example cutting through playdough, cookie dough or cake mix etc.
- Allow your child to learn one step at a time:
 - Piercing – Using the fork to stab playdough balls
 - Cutting motion – Moving the knife backwards and forwards
 - Co-ordinating the use of the knife and fork together



Tips:

- Place your hands over your child's when cutting so your child can feel the necessary force and movement required to cut food.
- Use softer foods like eggs, vegetables, fish or sausages to practise cutting as this will be easier to manage and will help increase their confidence.
- Ask your child to use both utensils to cut one item on their plate and build up the use of cutlery gradually as their confidence and skill increases.

General Tips for developing dressing skills



Independent dressing is a skill that needs to be taught and practiced. Every child learns at a different pace. You may need to do it at their pace but try not give up! Do not worry if they do not want to participate – continue to use a quiet time to practice, talking through the process and modelling what you want them to do.

Things to consider:

- **Routine:** 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.
- **Positioning:** Ideally, they should be seated on a chair or a stool where they can put their feet flat on the floor. If the child is quite small, using the bottom step on a set of stairs may be easier.

Tips:

- Introduce dressing by using dressing toys, dress up costumes and imaginative play.
- Encourage your child to choose their own clothes or pyjamas.
- It may be easier to start practicing dressing in preparation for bedtime.
- Talk through dressing, naming items and describing what you are doing.
- Place a large mirror in front of the child when dressing so they can see what they are doing.
- You could use a reward chart system to encourage participation in dressing if appropriate for your child.
- Adapt clothing to make it easier for your child at school, i.e. elastic waistbands, Velcro shoes, elastic laces, larger polo shirts or toggles on zips.

Backward chaining:

Try teaching dressing using '**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.

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**

