

Grosse Pointe Public School System  
Fine Motor Strengthening and Coordination  
Activities & Strategies  
Suggestions

These suggestions are given to help improve students' fine motor and writing skills. Please feel free to contact the Occupational Therapy Department with any questions.

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Occupational Therapist

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Phone number

Vertical surfaces

- Easels
- Color Forms/Felt boards
- Slant board on desk during writing tasks
- Pegboards placed vertically
- Lite Brite
- Magna Doodle placed vertically
- Chalkboards
- Making pictures with stickers
- Ink stamping
- Magnet letters or shapes

Manipulation skills

- Spray bottles
- String beads
- Clothespins (make sure to use thumb and one or two fingers – pinch, not grab)
- Small pieces of chalk or crayon that can only be held with three fingers
- Finger puppets
- Rotate 2 balls in palm
- Dice games – cup hands around dice to throw
- Tissue paper pictures – crumple small pieces of tissue paper into ball with just fingertips and paste onto design
- Play Dough – roll into big ball, roll into small balls using fingertips only, cut play dough, flatten play dough and draw in with toothpicks

Pinching

- Finger foods (hold in your fingertips to facilitate pinch)
- Different sized tweezers to pick up small objects such as beads, balls, blocks
- Place objects in muffin tins to sort, take out – student is forced to use pinch and not mass grasp
- Mancala game
- Eye droppers
- Putting sprinkles on cookies using fingertips
- Popping bubble wrap

Efficient pencil grasp

- Small pieces of broken crayon/chalk to develop tripod grasp
- Primary-sized markers – encourage putting fingers at the base
- Have child lay on stomach, propped on elbows to encourage using fingers to write, as opposed to whole arm
- Pinch tug of war with string

## Two handed tasks

- Stencils
- Rulers
- Stringing beads
- Cutting activities
- Sewing and lacing cards
- Wind-up toys
- Push/pull tubes
- Provide a box of large bolts and nuts and have the child screw the nuts onto the bolts.
- Provide a box of assorted jars and jar lids of various sizes and have students match them up and screw the lids on the jars.
- Provide the students with about 15-20 flat objects such a poker chips. Instruct the students to stack them with their eyes closed.

## Hand strengthening

- Provide a container of hand toys which can be squeezed; include foam balls, flour or rice filled balloons (stress balls), anything "squishy".
- Provide several paper punches and a variety of thicknesses and types of colored paper.
- Cutting different thicknesses of paper

## Increasing awareness of hands

- Drawing in various substances – whipped cream, sand, pudding, mashed potatoes, finger paint, play dough
- Sensory tubs filled with sand, rice, beans, pasta and small objects – coins, figurines
- Pull wagon or sled across resistive surface
- Placement and removal of stickers on the skin and onto other surfaces
- Use of weighted objects for play, e.g. heavy balls, water balloons
- Use of small wrist weights during fine motor activities
- Pouring heavy materials, e.g. water, beans, sand
- Vigorous stimulation of the skin with a brush, loofah, terrycloth washcloth, etc.

## **HANDWRITING WARM-UP ACTIVITIES**

Try to do at least three of the following activities before any activity where writing is required.

- Standing, extend arms and make ten circles forward and ten circles backward.
- Standing, extend arms straight up and make a "windshield wiper" movement, crossing one arm in front of the other. Do ten "swipes", then switch the front arm to the back, and the back arm to the front and do ten more.
- Standing, place palms together at chest level and do a "chest press" pressing palms together as hard as possible, for a count of twenty.
- Standing, bring hands together at chest level and point one thumb up and one thumb down. Curl fingers and hook fingers from left hand into fingers of right and pull, for a count of twenty.
- Do desk "push-ups" by placing hands flat on desk, elbows straight, and press down on desk as hard as possible. Some students may be able to lift themselves slightly off of floor. Do ten.
- Standing or seated, touch pad of thumb to pad of index, middle, ring, and little fingers in succession, do five repetitions. Try this activity with hands next to ears.
- Seated, do ten chair push-ups, placing hands on seat of chair next to thighs and straighten elbow to lift bottom slightly off of chair seat.