

Home-Friendly Therapy Tools

Activities to practice with children
using items from around the house.



Jessica Grindell, MOTS
LEND Trainee, 2021-2022

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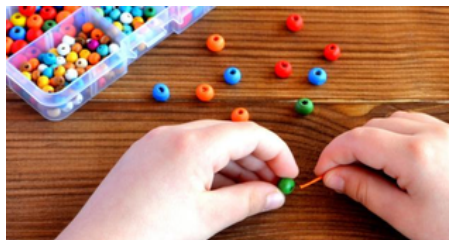


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How this booklet can help you

It can be so difficult to help your child practice skills they learn in the clinic at home, especially when you do not have the same materials or resources to recreate those activities. This goal of this booklet is to provide you with some home-friendly activities to do at home, all of which have therapeutic benefits. This booklet can help with the following skills:

- **Gross motor:** These skills often involve big, whole-body movements, using the big muscles in the arms, legs, and torso.
- **Fine Motor:** These skills often include small, controlled movements in our fingers, hands, and wrists. Developing these skills helps improve handwriting, self-care, and school tasks.
- **Sensory:** These skills involve being able to use all your senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, proprioception, vestibular, and interoception). Proprioception is the sense of movement in your muscles and joints, vestibular is the sense of movement in your inner ear that helps you keep your balance. Interoception is your sense of touch within your body, including feelings of pain, discomfort, or needs for bodily functions (such as hunger, using the bathroom). It is important for your child to be able to use their senses together to be able to participate in their everyday activities.
- **Self-Care:** These include any tasks your child needs to do independently to get themselves ready for other activities, such as dressing, bathing, using the bathroom, washing their hands, or eating.



In addition to providing activities for all of these skills, this booklet provides resources for learning more through online blogs, social media, and podcasts, to help you access more information in the ways that work best for you.

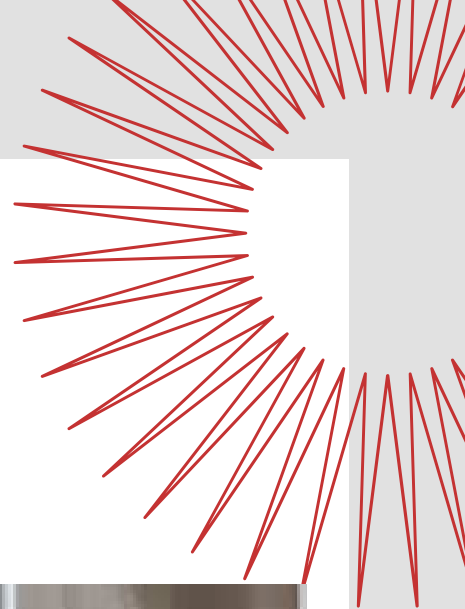
Gross Motor: Obstacle Course



In a Clinic: An obstacle course can be made out of various pieces of therapeutic equipment. These pieces can include a crash pad (a giant pillow made out of foam), bolsters (long, thick pillows or foam), colored rings, mats, sensory swings, and therapy balls. While these can all provide a great deal of sensory input and challenge to an obstacle course, they are not necessarily accessible to families at home or in other places in the community.

At Home: An obstacle course can be made out of furniture, pillows, paper, toys, and other household objects. In this picture, a child can weave in and out of dining room chairs, hop or jump across pillows, placed on the ground, crawl under a broom sitting on two more chairs, throw stuffed animals into a laundry basket, and animal walk back to the beginning.



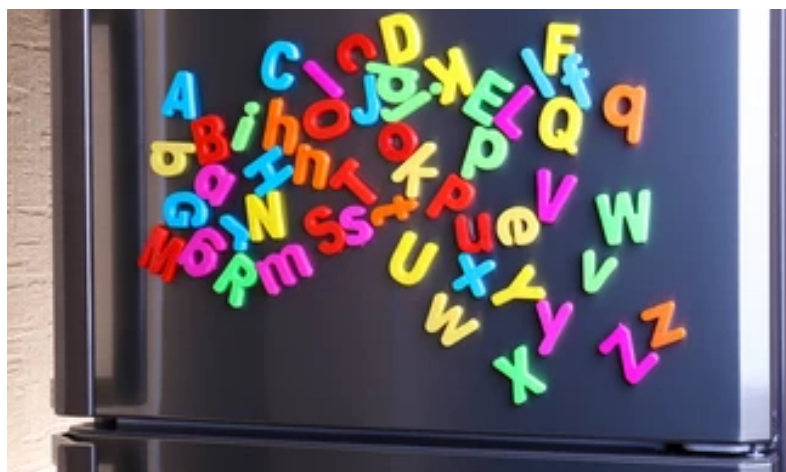


Gross Motor: Balance and Coordination

In the Clinic: Working on your child's balance and coordination can look like having them stand on a wiggle cushion (pictured below on the left) to challenge their control, while having them pull toys like Squigz (pictured right) off a hard surface. However, neither the wiggle cushion nor the Squigz are easily accessible or cost-effective.



At Home: You can use a couch pillow (or two!) to challenge your child's balance, while tasking them with pulling magnets off a refrigerator. If you do not have magnets, you can also have your child pull pieces of tape off any surface.



Fine Motor: Sorting Fruit



In the Clinic: Therapists often work with children on strengthening their hand muscles by using tools (like tweezers or toys tongs) to pick up small objects (like pom-poms). You may not be able to do this activity at home with the same

materials, but you can replicate it by using your own kitchen utensils and food (such as the example here).



At Home: You can create a sorting activity using your own kitchen tongs or tweezers and pieces of fruit. You can do this by having your child transfer pieces of fruit from one bowl to another using the tongs (such as the example here), or by having them sort

different fruits (such as strawberries, grapes, and blueberries) into different bowls. Using different sizes of fruit will provide greater challenges to your child as well, which gives them more opportunity to practice! You can also easily incorporate an activity like this into your family routines for meal preparation for school lunches, desserts, or other meals.

Fine Motor: Cooking Dinner



In the Clinic: Fine motor practice can take many forms, but is often done with games and toys that help the child use skills that help them work on different ways to pinch and grasp objects, use their fingers, and move small objects purposefully.

At Home: You do not necessarily need to invest in specific toys to provide opportunities for your child to develop these skills. Everyday activities like cooking provide opportunities for fine motor practice, as well as opportunities for play and emotional connection with your child. Pictured here is an example of a homemade meal with fine motor opportunities through decorating mini pizzas. Not only will your child be able to practice using their hands and fingers to decorate, they will be able to have fun and make silly faces and designs! This will be highly motivating and accessible at home.



Sensory: Homemade Play Dough



In the Clinic: Many sensory skills are worked on with tactile exposure through activities with gak or slime (often made with materials like glue, Borax, and baking soda). Children are tasked with retrieving objects from

the gak or slime, increasing their exposure to different textures and working to decrease anxiety. However, materials to make these activities are not always readily available at home.



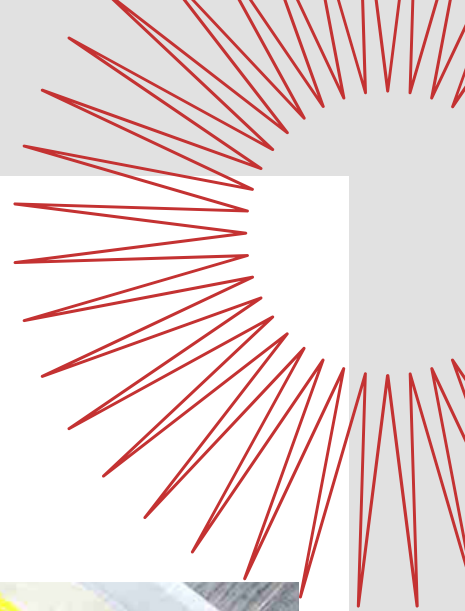
At Home: Materials to make other sensory activities may be more available, such as using cookies/baking supplies to make home-made play dough. You can do this with your child as a multisensory activity, where they also get to practice following directions, focusing on a task,

and shared enjoyment. You can use this play dough for weeks following, and use it for multiple activities (such as finding and removing objects).

To make, combine:

- 1/2 cup of salt
- 1/2 cup of water
- 1 cup of flour (mixing in the dough) plus 1/2 cup more (sprinkling/kneading)
- Food coloring (optional)

Sensory: DIY Sensory Bins



In the Clinic: Therapists can use all kinds of materials (like sand, rice, beans, slime, gak, etc) to make sensory bins for their clients to play and experiment with. They can also use a variety of toys or other materials to place in the bins for the children they



work with to find and remove from the bin. You may not have access to as many materials, but you can still make these bins from items and materials you already have around the house.

At Home: You can use storage bins to contain your sensory bins, and you can use rice, beans, or even water. You can also put everyday items



such as kitchen utensils, recycles/reused bottle caps, magnets, or small toys in them to make it more interesting and fun for your child to experiment with. No matter what you use, you can make something creative and fun for your child.

Self-Care: Washing Hands



In the Clinic: A child may participate in many activities to simulate washing hands and make it more motivating and fun. These activities can make the process of learning about germs and proper

handwashing easier to understand. Materials here can include using pipettes to clean exam gloves filled with air and covered in paint, or decorating hand crafts with "germs".



At Home: You can make learning to wash hands more fun by demonstrating how germs stick to your hands with lotion and glitter (or some kind of spice you already have in the kitchen, like thyme, pepper, or oregano). Mix lotion and glitter/spice in a bowl, then join your child in rubbing some of the mixture on your hands. Talk about how germs, though invisible, can stick to your hands in the same way as the glitter or spice. You can then practice washing your hands together, until all the visible signs of glitter have been washed off your hands. You can also

make this process more fun by incorporating songs while washing, making bubbles with soap, and playfully competing to see who gets all the "germs" off their hands.

Wrap-Up

As a parent or caregiver, it can be so difficult to help your child practice the skills they learn in the clinic at home, especially if you do not have access to the same materials or time to create and fit these activities into your routines. This booklet aims to provide some ideas and resources to make the process of helping your child easier, using materials and routines you already have. You are able to your child practice and be involved in the skills they're working on, even if you do not have access to the same fancy materials and toys used in clinic.



No matter how you do it, your child will benefit from any kind of play or practice you do with them to help them build their skills. You do not need to buy all the things or stress over having the right materials--all you need is the to engage and practice with your child.

More Resources

Blogs and Websites




www.yourkidsot.com



theotbutterfly.com





www.theottoolbox.com



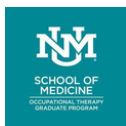
therapyshoppe.com/parents-place

thesimpleparent.com

www.yourtherapysource.com

Social Media



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UNM Center for Development and Disability 




Parents Reaching Out   



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ExplorAbilities Therapy Services 




Kidpower Therapy Associates 




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