



# Home Activity Ideas

## March, 2020

Brought to you by the  
Arlington Public Schools OT/PT Department



# Activities to Practice Fine Motor Skills

- Playdough/Theraputty (forming letters/shapes, hiding pennies/beads, cutting with scissors)
- Stringing beads/pasta on a string or pipe cleaner, making bracelets/necklaces
- Clothespin activity (place clothes pins using “pinchy fingers” on a string or piece of cardboard) or use clothespins as a challenge to pick up pom poms or other objects
- Lacing cards
- Stringing beads
- Crafts - Painting, Coloring, Cutting (curved lines, shapes), Tracing
- Draw with washable markers and squirt your picture with a spray bottle - watch the colors melt:)
- Cooking/Baking with adult support - pouring, stirring, measuring, kneading
- Play in Sensory Bins (e.g. uncooked beans, uncooked rice, uncooked pasta, sand) - find hidden objects
- Write or draw in shaving cream or finger paint
- Collect leaves and do leaf rubbings
- Blow and catch bubbles; make wands with pipe cleaners
- Shoelace tying, buttoning, zippering



# Activities to Support Visual Motor Skills

- Puzzles
- Mazes
- Dot to Dot
- Word Search
- Building with legos/blocks using a visual model
- Games (Connect Four, Battleship, Spot it, Twister, Blokus, SET)
- Color/Paint by number
- Play I Spy of items around the house
- Where's Waldo?
- Treasure Hunts
- Hidden Pictures
- Multi-step crafts (color, cut, glue)
- Draw with chalk on the sidewalk, or with a stick in the sand or dirt

# Handwriting Practice

1. Remember handwriting rules:
  - Form letters top to bottom and left to right
  - Leave thin 'spaghetti' spaces between letters and larger 'meatball' spaces between words.
  - Keep "tall" letters tall, "small" letters small, and diver letters fall below the line (j,g,p,q, y).
2. Handwriting Helpers:
  - Graph paper
  - Post it notes/wiki sticks on the bottom line so you know where to stop
  - Place popsicle stick, finger, or pipe cleaner to keep space between words
  - Write on every other line to avoid overcrowding
  - Highlight the writing line/space
  - Remember your handwriting goal: size, spacing, should the letter be uppercase or lowercase?, follow the margin
3. Check your work... What do you like? What could be better?

# Handwriting Activities

1. Practice forming letters in play doh, shaving cream or sand
2. Write with chalk outside
3. Keep a daily journal
  - List three activities to do today
  - Record the weather
  - Read a book about an animal and write three funny things you learned
  - Write one sentence each night about what was good today.
4. Copy and illustrate a poem
5. Write a letter to a friend or family member
6. Check your work... What do you like? What could be better? Let your first copy be a draft. Redo another copy of your favorite activity changing what you noticed could be better.

# Organization & Planning

Talking to your child about a project or activity will support organization and focus.

Questions or statements could include:

- **Purpose:** Why?
- **Materials:** What do we need?
- **Steps:** How do we do it?
- **Reflect:**
  - Did we do what we planned?
  - Did anything change about what we planned ?
    - Did we need extra materials?
    - Did we change how we did it?
    - If we did it again what would we do differently?
- **Younger students retell and older students write about the activity**

# Gross Motor Activity Ideas

- Jump on a trampoline or from spot to spot on the floor
- Roll across the floor
- Play catch with bean bags or large ball
- Play Simon Says
- Keep the balloon off the floor
- Build an obstacle course
- Walk like an animal
- Try some yoga
- Try popping bubbles with hand or foot

\*Provide supervision or assistance as needed &  
remember social distancing!



# Functional Activity Ideas

- Complete household chores
  - Put in or take out laundry from the dryer
  - Sweep the floor
  - Vacuum
  - Squat to pick up toys to put away
  - Push in chairs
- Find a path around a crowded room filled with obstacles (toys, clothes, etc)
- Go up and down stairs
- Carry a tray while walking in your home
- Wash the dishes; set the table

\*Provide supervision or assistance as needed



# Sensory Break Ideas for Older Students

- Setting up a daily workspace for school work (move table/chairs, carry books and materials)
- Provide water bottle/chewy snacks during school work times.
- While the routine of a desk/table/chair is good for school work, do allow some alternative seating options (couch, beanbag etc) for times when it is appropriate.
- Desk/chair/wall push ups
- Music for focus
- Stress ball/fidgets
- Brief deep input massage to shoulders, jaw, hands etc can help to extend work tolerance times.
- Visual cues, timers, etc to provide a natural stopping or break point
- Yoga/Stretching (many resources available online)
- Gardening/yard work
- Heavy input tasks (carrying laundry, groceries, trips up and down stairs).
- Arts and crafts, clay, putty, "slime"
- Twister \*mindful of social distancing

# Relaxation, Self-regulation, Mindfulness

Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth - Count as you breathe in (1, 2, 3) and breathe out to a longer count (1,2,3,4,5)

Make a glitter jar - use a plastic bottle,  $\frac{1}{3}$  full of corn syrup or hair gel, the rest with water - add glitter, food color, etc.) - shake the jar, as you watch the glitter fall breathe and relax your mind

Read, listen to music or books on tape

Practice growth mindset affirmations - Today is going to be a great day. I have people who love and respect me. Today I choose to think positive. Every day is a fresh start. My challenges help me grow. I surround myself with positive people.



Mindful moments: Pause and take a few moments to notice - 5 sounds ... 4 colors ... 3 textures ... 2 smells ... take 1 deep breath

Set up a “breathing corner” in your home - family members each place something soothing (stuffed animal, photograph, stone, scarf, etc) into a basket. Choose to give yourself a break there. Find calmness. Notice. Then move on.

# Relaxation, Self-Regulation, Mindfulness

## Moments of Family Mindfulness

- Take a walk listen to the sounds work up from five minutes of silence to twenty.
- Talk about the taste of what you are eating and drinking
- Listen to silence in your home
- Try a sitting meditation - students will be familiar with a chime start.
- Mindful activities
  - <https://mindful.stanford.edu/category/mindful-coloring/>
  - <https://mindful.stanford.edu/category/kindness/>
- Consider the the Stop, Breathe & Think Kids app, sign in with personal email not spyponders email  
<https://www.stopbreathethink.com/kids/>

# Keyboarding Lessons

- **Students in 3rd-5th grades:**

- Go to <https://clever.com/in/ArlingtonMA>
- Sign in as student (top right)
- Login with google
- Sign in with spyponders email and password
- Find the **Keyboarding Without Tears** tile



Keyboarding  
Without Tears

- **Some students prefer APS approved:**

- <https://www.typingclub.com/>

- **Other free websites**

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zf2f9j6/articles/z3c6tfr>
- <https://www.typing.com/student/lessons>

# Keyboarding Games

<https://www.nitrotype.com/>

<https://www.typing.com/student/games>

<https://www.education.com/games/typing/>

<https://www.freetypinggame.net/play.asp>

# Other links to check out

## **Movement/ Brain Breaks:**

<https://www.gonoodle.com>

<https://www.cosmickids.com/>

## **Relaxation/ Mindfulness:**

<https://www.calm.com>

<https://www.headspace.com>