

## **School-Age Fine Motor Fun Activities**

### **Stability and Strengthening Activities:**

\*These are activities that promote strong shoulder and arm muscles that are necessary for handwriting strength and endurance as your child gets older and is required to complete longer written assignments.

\*Wheelbarrow walking, crab walks, hanging/swinging on playground equipment, bear walking and push-ups from floor level or wall push-ups.

\*Coloring and/or prewriting tasks on vertical surfaces such as a blackboard or easel; if you do not have access to a blackboard or easel, tape newsprint or construction paper to a wall or door and allow your child to draw on that.

\*Bowling—play with used 2-liter pop bottles and a large ball.

\*Beanbag toss—into a bucket or can, make it into a game with friends and family.

\*Pouring from a pitcher or watering can.

\*Playing basketball or volleyball.

\*Jump rope or turning the rope while another jumps.

### **Finger and Hand Strengthening Activities:**

\*Use of spray bottles—fill a spray bottle with water and water the plants, flowers and lawn.

\*Playing with squirt guns.

\*Tweezers, chopsticks or kitchen tongs—use the tweezers to pick up cheerios, grains of rice, beans, small pom poms, and small beads. Use the kitchen tongs to pick up larger pom poms, beads, small plastic balls, blocks, etc.

\*Old medicine droppers—use these at a sink to draw up the water and then squeeze it back out.

\*Punch holes in paper with a hand held punch or 3-hole punch.

\*Squeezing clothespins with the thumb and index finger, then the thumb and middle finger for 20 repetitions.

\*Squeezing silly putty (available in the party aisle at Wal-mart) for 20 repetitions.

\*Tearing old newspapers into strips—crumple them into balls, hit them back and forth or play catch with them.

\*Thread beads, macaroni, or steel bolts onto a string.

\*Lacing boards—as your child gets faster at this task, make it into a race with the parent.

\*Penny pick up—pick up pennies as fast as the child can between the thumb and index finger and place them in a plastic cup. This task becomes extra fun as a race with a sibling or parent.

\*Tearing tape off the tape dispenser and stapling papers together.

### **Handwriting and Letter Formation:**

\*If letter formation is difficult, have your child start by writing on a vertical surface (chalkboard, easel, write on/wipe off memo board) or use a thick three-ring notebook to simulate a slant board.

\*Use a variety of small writing tools, which promotes the appropriate functional grasp of the pencil. This would include use of broken crayons, small golf-type pencils, pipsqueak markers (available at Wal-mart), a piece of chalk, and a colored pencil, which has been sharpened to only a few inches.

\*Coloring pages are a great way to promote increased fine motor skills while also having fun!

Encourage your child to work on short strokes with the crayon or marker as this simulates the hand motions necessary for writing tasks.

\*Tracing worksheets are a great way to start learning letter formation. Having your child trace your letters written with a highlighter marker is also a great way to promote success and make it fun.

\*Letters should be formed from top to bottom for print letters.

\*Form letters from French fries, putty, play-doh, cookie doh, pipe cleaners, in sand or with shaving cream.

\*Have your child write out a list of fun activities to do as a family, write a grocery list or write a letter to a friend or family member.

\*Play tic tac toe, hangman, draw pictures and make up written captions for each picture, write a song or a poem.

### **Scissor Skills:**

\*The first step in good cutting skills is to make sure your child is holding the scissors correctly.

Children seem to respond well to the cue “thumb up” as a guide for making sure they are holding their thumb up at all times while cutting.

\*Make using scissors a fun task by cutting through play-doh, putty, licorice, fruit roll-ups, and string cheese.

\*Cut out pictures in magazines and make a collage.

\*Scissor skills should progress from cutting on thick straight marker lines to cutting on curvy irregular thin lines. Ensuring success initially assists in keeping your child interested in the task.