

5/11 OT letter

Hi families,

I hope everyone had a nice weekend, especially all those Moms, Grandmas, caregivers, ect.

This week I am going to give some more ideas of how to build on hand strength and visual motor skills with stuff around the house! First I want to give some background on why so many kids have delayed or weak hands for writing. There are a number of reasons, but one is that because of SIDS, babies are no longer placed on their bellies to sleep. When babies are in the prone position or belly down, they build the muscles in their neck, trunk, and arms as they begin to raise their heads and push themselves up. Tummy time is very important to provide babies when they are awake.

Another reason children can have weak hands, is the decrease of play time that is active. Activities like playing with cars, building blocks, playing with action figures and dolls tend to be activities that are played on the floor and most movement is done on one's knees and hands, which builds up trunk, shoulder and hand strength. One last reason that I want to talk about is the decreased time spent in the early years coloring, painting, playing with clay and other play activities that build up tripod grips in school. Many children are exposed to writing with a pencil before their hands are fully developed. This can lead to incorrect grips that are very hard to break down the line.

Here are some activities you can do to build up hands with items around your home or items that are easy to obtain for minimal dollars at the grocery store:

- Cotton ball races- Have your children set up to race on the floor. From the starting line they will blow cotton balls across the floor as they crawl forward. The winner gets their cotton ball over the line first or into a cup first.
- Button pictures- Make a simple picture on a piece of paper, like a happy face or a heart and have them place buttons on the outline to make a picture.

- Collages- Use old magazines and greeting cards to cut up and glue on a large piece of paper or poster board. Kids like to personalize their collages with their interest.
- Card houses- Show your child how to build a card house. See how high they can build it. If they are on the floor, the rug can be helpful to keep cards steady and they are moving about on their hands and knees.
- Coloring- Coloring with crayons builds up hands. If your child is holding the crayon is an immature grip, break them down, so they are forced to only use their thumb and first two fingers.
- Colander with pipe cleaners- Turn your colander upside down. Your child will push one end of a colorful pipe cleaner into a hole and the other end in a different hole to make a hill. They can make designs or letters if they want.

On to handwriting for the week:

First and second graders will work on the HWT letter Z. Third and fourth graders are going to work on HWT Strange Sleepers. Make sure that you capitalize and all your fall letters hang correctly on the line. You must check over your writing. Remember, you are not done till you check.

I hope to see many of you this week in our OT group or during the parade.
I miss you guys!
Ms. Faherty OT