



Your Therapy Source News

**Digital magazine for pediatric
occupational and physical therapists.**

www.YourTherapySource.com



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DIY Handwriting Stencil

Are you working with a student who is having trouble with letter sizing and staying on the lines? Try making this [handwriting](#) stencil using a plastic, gallon, milk container. The great things about the milk container are it is free, opaque and somewhat easy to cut. The opaque part is essential so you can trace the lines to see where to cut it out and so that the student can see around the lines while

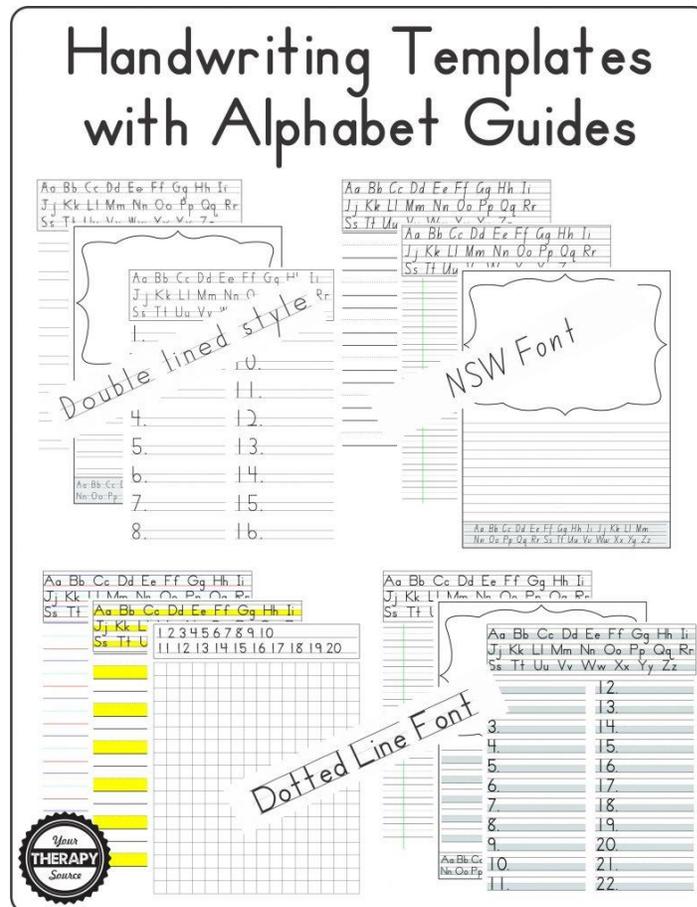


he/she is writing. It is easy to make quite a few of them so you can send them home with your students. Cut out a rectangle from the flat side of the recycled milk container. Using one of the pages from the [Handwriting Templates with Alphabet Guides](#), I placed the opaque rectangle over the highlighted lines and traced where I wanted to cut out the window for [handwriting](#). Using an exacto knife and scissors, I cut out the rectangle boxes to make the stencils. That is all you need to do!

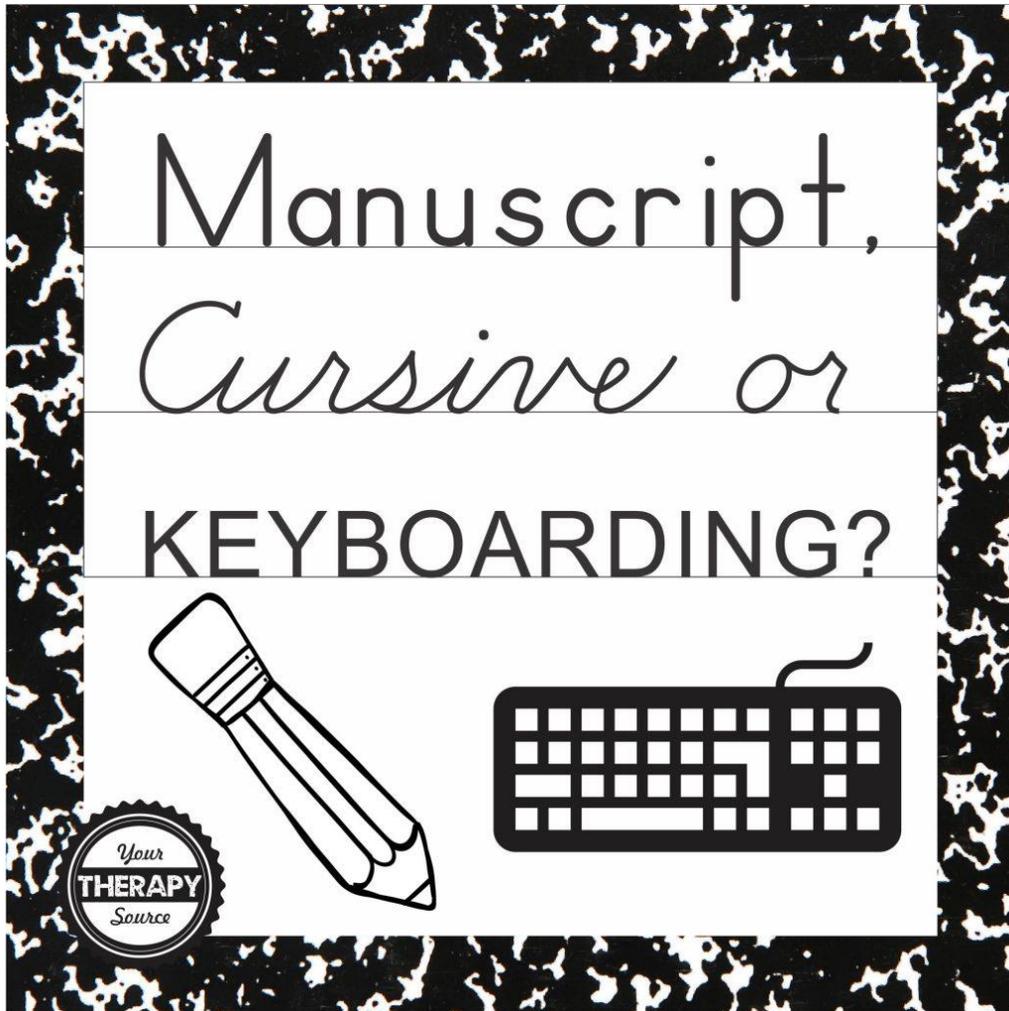
Now place the handwriting stencil over the lines and the student will have a tactile guide to help him/her with proper letter sizing. Just move the stencil along as you write. If you need to write below the line (ie letter g in dog) just slide the stencil down so that the top of the rectangle window is at the dotted line. This will now provide a tactile cue at the bottom of the line for letters that fall below the line.

If the student needs more a visual and tactile cue, color the plastic stencil with sharpies to make it more visible as they are writing. You could also create a stencil with rectangle boxes for making individual capital letters.

Read more ideas about [inexpensive tactile cues on paper](#) to help with [handwriting](#) skills.



[Handwriting Templates with Alphabet Guides](#) download includes various templates to encourage proper handwriting. The three types of font/layout includes: 1. Dotted line Zaner-Bloser® type font, 2. Double line Handwriting Without Tears® type font and 3. New South Wales (NSW) Foundation Manuscript. The templates include alphabet with arrow cues for letter formation, regular alphabets, go and stop lines on left and right side of paper, 3 different sized lines (large, medium and small), draw and write with alphabet, spelling lists with alphabet, highlighted papers and numbers with three different sizes of graph paper. Find out more information at <http://ift.tt/1XbHzYd>



The *Journal of Writing Research* published a study on developing writers in grades 4-7 to compare manuscript, cursive and keyboard letter formation. One study instructed the children to write the alphabet from memory as quickly as they could without sacrificing legibility since previous research indicated that the number of legible manuscript letters in correct order during the first 15 seconds is an index of automatic letter access, retrieval, and production. Each of the 113 neurotypical participants were instructed to form the letters of the alphabet from memory for 15 seconds as manuscript letters, cursive letters and keyboarded letters. In addition, two spelling measures and one composition measure were administered in order to establish their relationship with handwriting.

For the study one the following results were found:

1. only the cursive mode uniquely, positively, and consistently predicted both spelling and composing in each grade.
2. for composing, in grade 4 manuscript mode was positively predictive.
3. for composing in grades 5-7 keyboard selection was positively predictive.

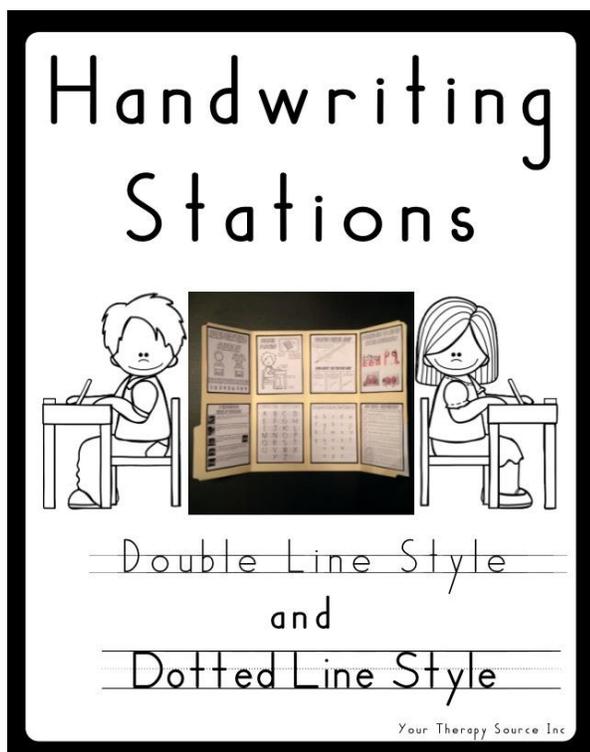
A second study was performed comparing 88 students: 27 with dysgraphia (impaired handwriting), 40 with dyslexia (impaired word spelling), or 11 with oral and written language learning disability (OWL LD) or 10 controls without specific writing disabilities in grades 4 to 9 on the same alphabet 15 modes, manner of copying, spelling, and sentence composing. The results from this study indicated:

1. all letter production modes correlated with each other and the participant's best and fast sentence copying, spelling, and timed sentence composing.
2. groups with specific writing disabilities differed from the control group on alphabet 15 manuscript mode, copy fast, and timed sentence composing.
3. the dysgraphia group scored lower than the dyslexia group on copying sentences in your best handwriting.

The researchers concluded **that students need continuing [handwriting instruction](#)** as well as explicit keyboard instruction (touch typing) beyond fourth grade. They recommend that the continuing handwriting and keyboard instruction is provided once or twice a week with students doing warm-ups such as (a) writing the alphabet from memory, (b) copying interesting target sentences containing all the letters of the alphabet, (c) writing letters that come before and after other named letters, or (d) exchanging papers and circling letters that are illegible and discussing how to make them legible to others for purposes of written communication. These warm up/reviews should be followed by more cognitively engaging writing tasks.

With respect to study two, the authors recommend that students with specific learning disabilities that impair writing skills (handwriting, spelling, and/or composing) may need need accommodations (e.g., allowing more time to complete written work or using a laptop) and continuing explicit handwriting [instruction](#) in alphabet letter access, retrieval, and production and copying words in sentence context and using multiple modes of letter production in spelling and composition instruction.

Reference: Alstad, Z. et al (2015). Modes of alphabet letter production during middle childhood and adolescence: Inter-relationships with each other and other writing skills. Journal of Writing Research,



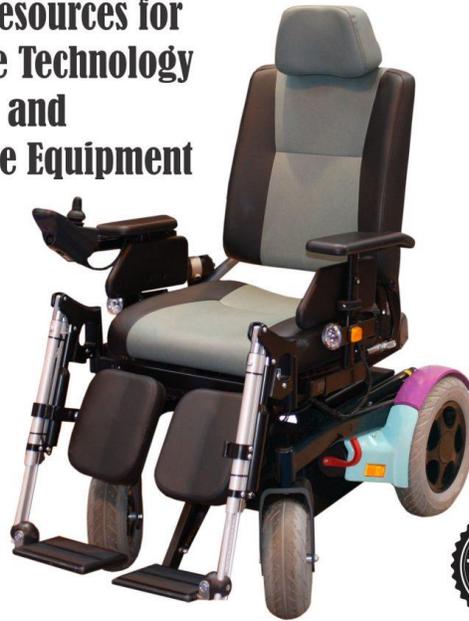
[Handwriting Stations](#) includes the materials to create a handwriting station on a tri-fold or in a folder. The station includes proper letter formation for capital and lower case letters, correct posture, pencil grip, warm up exercises, letter reversals tips and self check sheet. In addition, there are 27 worksheets for the alphabet and number practice (Handwriting without Tears® style and Zaner-Bloser® style). This download is great for classroom use, therapy sessions or to send home with a student.

Handwriting Stations encourages:

1. handwriting practice
2. visual motor skills
3. visual reminders for proper letter formation.

FIND OUT MORE AT <http://ift.tt/28QvSRO>

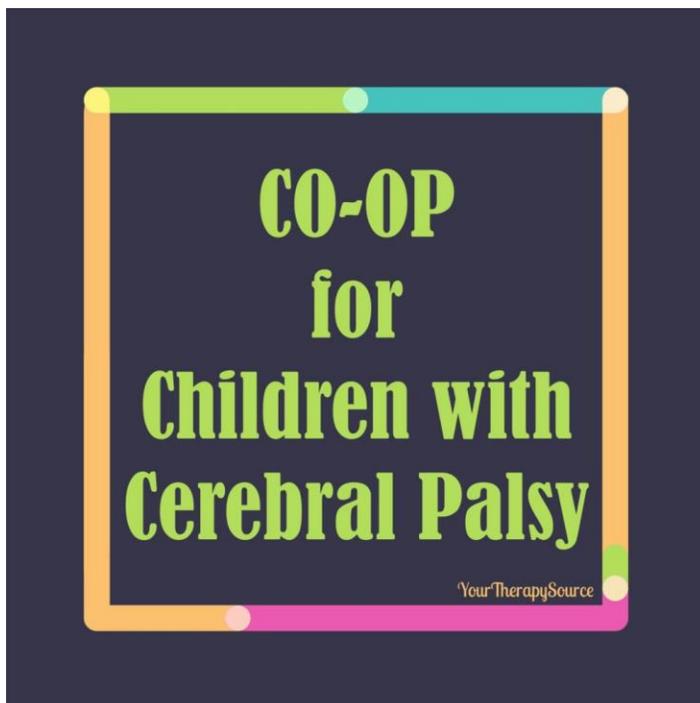
**HUGE Collection of
FREE Resources for
Assistive Technology
and
Adaptive Equipment**



If you are a new or seasoned pediatric occupational and physical therapist, the world of assistive technology and adaptive equipment is constantly changing. Here are some resources that can help guide you to select the most appropriate technology.

1. Access to Independence Website – Michelle Lange is one of the top OTs in the field of assistive technology. Her website is LOADED with free resources. You can check them all out at her [resources page](#). There you will find positioning documents, mobility training guidelines and adaptive toys.
2. RESNA – Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America. Need updates on pediatric powered mobility, use of tilt in space wheelchairs, evacuation chairs and more? This is the place. Check out all of the position papers on these topics and more at [RESNA](#).
3. CAST has many free UDL resources and white papers. You can find them [here](#).

4. Call Scotland website – my favorite resources here are in the download section. The [posters, leaflets and quick guides](#) are awesome!
5. WATI- this website has a HUGE amount of information to [assess a student's need for assistive technology](#).
6. QIAT – website has a [large resource bank for assistive technology](#) and an active email listserv.



Cognitive Orientation to daily Occupational Performance (CO-OP) is defined by Polatajko and Mandich as a “a client-centered, performance based, problem solving approach that enables skill acquisition through a process of strategy use and guided discovery”. *Physical and Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics* published a small single case study series on 18 children between the ages of 7-12 years old. Nine participants were in a CO-OP group and the other nine

participants were in Current Usual Practice Approach group. All participants received ten 1 hour sessions of intervention about one time per week at home. For assessment the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure and the Performance Quality Rating Scale were used.

The results indicated that:

1. the children in the CO-OP group were able to learn the strategies and achieve their chosen goals.

2. both interventions equally promoted skill acquisition and skill maintenance at follow-up.
3. effect sizes suggested that CO-OP may show some advantage for transfer and maintenance.

The researchers concluded that more research is needed to further support the benefits of CO-OP for children with cerebral palsy.

Read more about [Cognitive Orientation to daily Occupational Performance \(CO-OP\)](#).

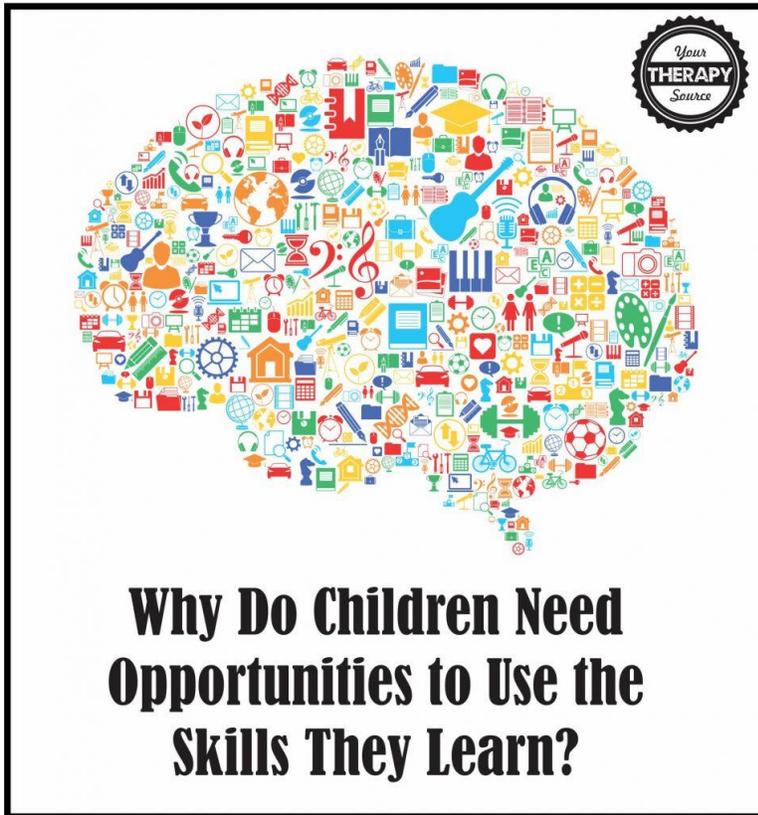
References:

Cameron, D. et al. Cognitive Orientation to daily Occupational Performance (CO-OP): A New Approach for Children with Cerebral Palsy. *Phys Occup Ther Pediatr*. 2016 Jun 9:1-16. [Epub ahead of print]. DOI:10.1080/01942638.2016.1185500

Polatajko & Mandich (2010). Cognitive Orientation to daily Occupational Performance

(CO-OP). Retrieved from the web on 11/18/15 from <http://ift.tt/1UVIClz>.





Why Do Children Need Opportunities to Use the Skills They Learn?

During therapy sessions, we frequently break down activities into smaller parts or chunks to make it easier for children to learn new motor or [life skills](#). As the child progresses with those individual parts of the skill, the child then practices the entire activity as a whole. Sometimes this is done in an isolated environment (ie therapy room) and sometimes in the real environment (ie classroom).

Keep in mind, in order for the child to learn and retain the skill, the child must apply that skill in meaningful and functional activities. This helps to lay the neural networks to achieve and retain the skill.

After the child completes the skill provide [formal and informal feedback](#) to help them improve. Use [self-assessment techniques](#) allowing the child to determine what needs improvements. This will again help lay the groundwork for strong neural networks for the skill.

So why do children need meaningful opportunities to practice new motor or life skills? It creates strong neural networks in order to transfer the skill in different situations or to learn additional new skills.



Leisure Activities, Modifying the Environment and Children with Disabilities

It can be a challenge at times to encourage children with physical disabilities to participate in leisure activities. The *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy* published a small study to determine the effectiveness of environment-based interventions on participation of 6 adolescents with physical disabilities. A 12-week intervention occurred with a focus on removing environmental barriers and coaching parents. The Canadian Occupational Performance Measure was used to establish performance on 17 goals that were set. Occupational therapists delivered the intervention which included the following: (a) Review baseline participation goals; (b) evaluate environment-based barriers/ facilitators to participation, including the setting in which these activities take place; (c) work together with the adolescent and parents to explore and implement strategies to modify environmental barriers and/or activity demands and (d) provide knowledge about useful strategies to search for information and advocate for the child's inclusion.

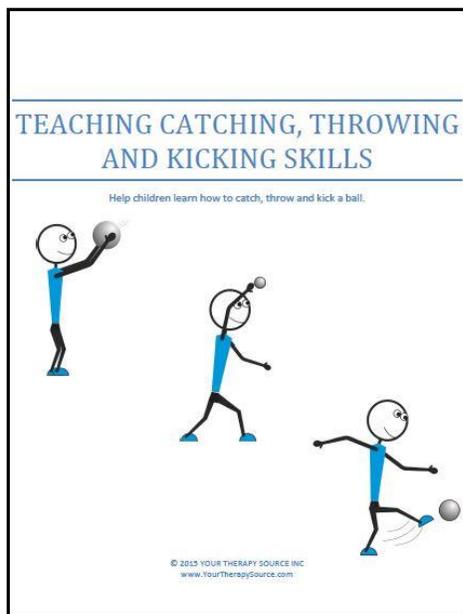
Some strategies that were used included: adapted bicycles, educating instructors, pre-teaching, assisting with acquiring transportation and more.

The results indicated:

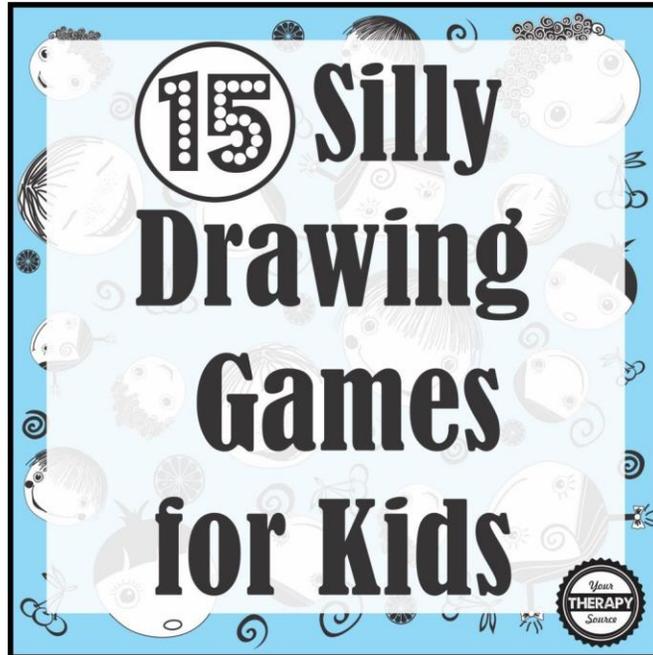
1. clinically significant improvement in performance scores was observed across all 17 goals.
2. statistically significant treatment effect was replicated in 13 goals (76%).

The researchers concluded that environment-based interventions are effective in promoting youth participation, but larger studies are required.

Reference: Dana R. Anaby, Mary C. Law, Annette Majnemer, and Debbie Feldman Opening doors to participation of youth with physical disabilities: An intervention study: Favoriser la participation des adolescents ayant des handicaps physiques : Étude d'intervention. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy* April 2016 83: 83-90, first published on October 21, 2015 doi:10.1177/0008417415608653



Need to pre-teach ball skills? Check out [Teaching Catching, Throwing and Kicking Skills](#). Help children learn how to catch, throw and kick with this packet full of information of age progression of skills, visual picture cards, tips, letter to parents and more!



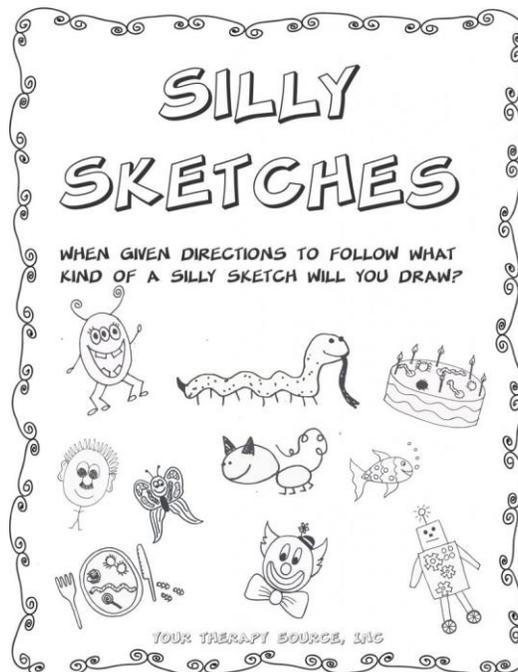
Here are some super simple and silly pencil and paper games to play. You can play with one person or a large group. Everyone grab a pencil and paper. Start by drawing one object with your dominant hand. Now it is time to switch it up and try drawing a different way.

Try drawing:

1. using your non-dominant hand
2. with the pencil in your mouth
3. with the pencil in your toes
4. with your head upside down
5. with your eyes closed
6. with your dominant hand after you spin around in a circle 10x
7. using a super tiny pencil (use a golf pencil or smaller)
8. using a huge pencil (duct tape the pencil to a whiffle ball bat)
9. with your paper taped to the underside of a desk (Michelangelo style)
10. a round of [Silly Sketches](#)
11. with both hands at the same time
12. using a white paper plate on your head and try to draw a picture on it
13. the silliest face you can think of
14. a round of [draw a doggy hangman](#)
15. some themed Squiggle Drawing: Draw a squiggle on a piece of paper. Write a theme on the top of the paper (i.e. – farm animal). Pass the paper to someone

else and they have to create a farm animal from the squiggle on the paper. Download some free sample pages from [Doodle Diaries](#) to get started.

What crazy and silly drawing games can you create?



[Silly Sketches](#) includes 10 drawings to create by following 6 simple directions. There are 10 drawing starters for each silly sketch to make the activity easier if necessary. This is suitable for one child to complete or for a group of children. This electronic book is in black and white.

This download encourages: drawing skills, ability to follow step by step directions, creativity, visual motor skills and visual perceptual skills.

Find out more information

at <http://www.yourtherapysource.com/sillysketches.html>



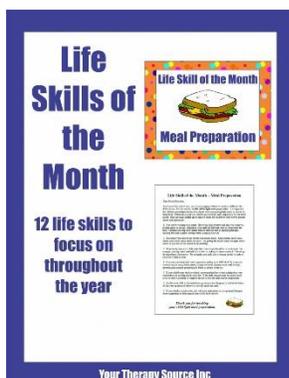
If you work on cooking skills with children, it can be very helpful to use simple, step by step, recipes with picture images. There are several websites that offer free step by step picture recipes.

One of the best, in my opinion, is [Your Special Chef](#). This website was created by a girl scout gold award project who was inspired by her brother who has Down syndrome. It was updated in 2014 and it is really awesome. There are so many free step by step recipes and you can download everyone as a PDF document. If you don't see exactly what you are looking for there is even a [recipe creator](#) with picture images that you can use.

[Make Learning Fun](#) also has a few picture recipes using illustrations. They have a small but useful collection.

[Speaking of Speech](#) has a nice collection of Boardmaker picture recipes.

What are your favorite step by step picture recipes?



[Life Skills of the Month](#) – includes 12 life skill hand outs for parents and 12 posters for the classroom or therapy room. Review a life skill in the classroom or therapy session with the student(s). Follow up with the corresponding hand out to send home to parents. Use this packet, to help with carryover of important life skills for ALL children. Also, includes a reward chart for students to take home to earn prizes. FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION

AT <http://www.yourtherapysource.com/lifeskills.html>

Graded Motor Skill Interventions in Children with Coordination Disorders



Delays in motor skill development may affect academics, activities of daily living, concentration, emotional and social skills. The *Journal of Early Childhood Research* reported on a study of children (ages 3-6) with coordination disorders who participated in motor skill interventions over the course of two years. The Early Years Movement Skills (EYMSC) checklist and the Movement ABC were used for assessment purposes. The motor skill interventions were established for each individual child using the assessment profiles and priorities of each child. Teachers were provided with guidelines to carry out the motor skill interventions. The 54 children were divided into 3 groups (2 groups of children who had coordination difficulties and one group of children without coordination difficulties) receiving periods of intervention for 10 weeks on and 10 weeks off. During the periods of intervention, the children participated in 3 to 4 sessions per week at 20 minutes each.

The three graded parts of the motor skill intervention were:

1. exposure – age appropriate activities that supplement classroom work giving the child exposure to a wide range of tasks.

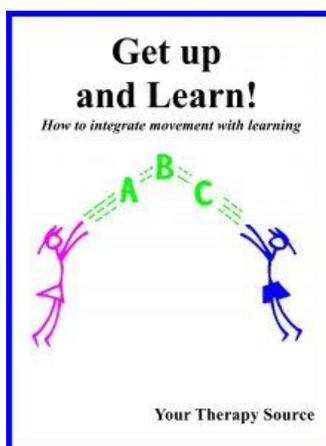
2. experience – if no improvement is seen with exposure the child actually experiences the fundamental motor skills that are necessary.
3. targeted practice – specific methods such as task analysis, the use of context for motivation, paired learning and modified equipment are used to teach the child skills.

The results indicated:

1. the EYMSC was able to differentiate between children with and without coordination difficulties.
2. all the children improved their coordination skills following intervention and this was reflected in their EYMSC scores.
3. there was no significant difference in EYMSC scores between all three groups following the interventions indicating that the 2 groups of children with coordination difficulties had improved their skills.
4. the use of graded intervention was effective for improving the coordination skills of young children with the majority of the children improving during the period of intervention.

The researchers concluded that graded interventions in 3-6 year old children may help to prevent more severe coordination difficulties later.

Reference: Mary E Chambers and David A Sugden. Intervention for young children displaying coordination disorders. *Journal of Early Childhood Research* June 2016 14: 115-131, first published on October 1, 2014
doi:10.1177/1476718X14548780



[Get Up and Learn](http://www.yourtherapysource.com/getuplearn.html) – activities to integrate movement with learning. This is an electronic book of 48 pages with over 35 activities that incorporate movement and learning. The activities allow work on acquiring motor skills while promoting language arts, math, science and social studies. Find out more at <http://www.yourtherapysource.com/getuplearn.html>



Our series continues today taking a closer look at small businesses that are owned and operated by Pediatric Occupational and Physical Therapists. Today, the focus is on Weavable Toys, created by Barbara Smith, OTR (whom many of you know as the “Recycling OT”).

Q: First just tell a little bit about yourself – job experience, years on the job, etc. and about your product.

A: I began my career working with developmentally disabled adults shortly after earning a B.A. in English. This was back in the 1970s when people were being moved out of institutions and introduced to community living. I worked in a group home and sheltered workshop before meeting my first occupational therapist and subsequently earning a M.S. at Tufts University’s Boston School of Occupational Therapy.

Over the past 30 years I have worked with children and adults with fine-motor delays in a variety of settings including schools, institutions, early intervention and even hippotherapy farms. I have learned the importance of adapting activities to provide a just-right challenge and to meet the client’s sensory needs.



Q: What made you come up with your product?

A: When my son was little I noticed that many toys were made of plastic similar to what was used to make colorful and sturdy detergent bottles. I also noticed that the bottle handles were designed to be comfortable, very strong and came in a variety of sizes.

I began to design and fabricate my own therapy materials out of the plastic products that we normally recycled and this was great because the activities could then be individualized, made cheaply, available quickly and easily replaced when lost or broken. I cut plastic containers with leather shears to make many manipulation activities including lacing boards (with extra large holes) and flat donut shapes used in stringing activities. Many of my clients who did not have the motor control to string beads were able to successfully use these materials.

Weaving is a wonderful fine-motor activity that develops finger dexterity, strength, sequencing skills and spatial concepts such as under and over. These are important skills that help children to manipulate buttons, buckles and tie a knot. I made a variety of weaving activities out of plastic containers (see them on my website-RecyclingOT.com) and they were so effective and fun to use with my clients that I decided to ask a designer friend to make a prototype. The product he created is made of plastic that gives just the right amount of resistance to weave. They can be used in a variety of ways, allowing for open ended creativity and best

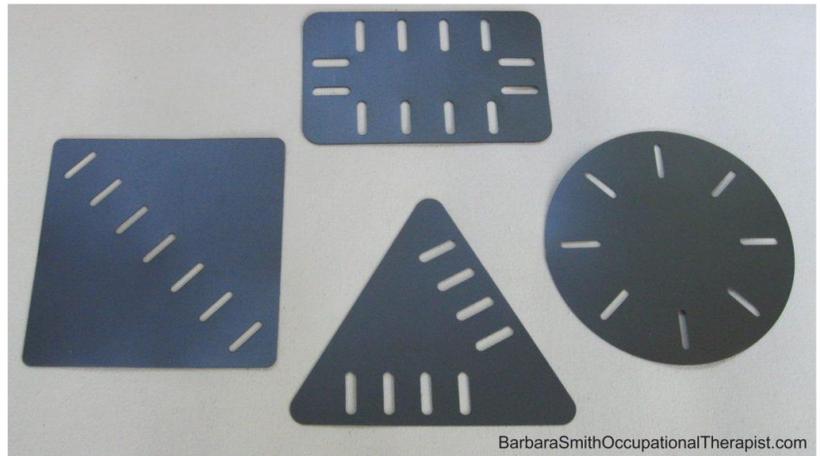
of all- they do not have to be “Do-It-Yourself”, although that is always an available option.

Q: How do you produce/manufacture the product?

A: My friend works at an industrial design company that allows him to manufacture with their machinery using a somewhat slow process. I have not yet decided whether or not to invest in purchasing dies that would enable mass production and lower costs.

Q: How you deal with liability and/or risk when creating a product for children?

A: There is a warning on the packaging that this product has small parts. It is not recommended for children under 3 years of age or with individuals who put objects in their mouths.



Q: Where can we find your products?

A: Weavable Toys are sold as a set consisting of 4 basic shape boards (square, rectangle, circle and triangle), strips that are woven through the boards and small shapes that are woven onto the strips to create designs. They are sold on Amazon and via paypal with free shipping. Information is on my website page Barbarasmithoccupationaltherapist.com/weavabletoys.html

Need more fine motor activity ideas? Check out the [Your Therapy Source fine motor section](#) for immediate delivery of electronic downloads.

Are you a pediatric therapist who owns a small business? Let us know so we can feature your products.





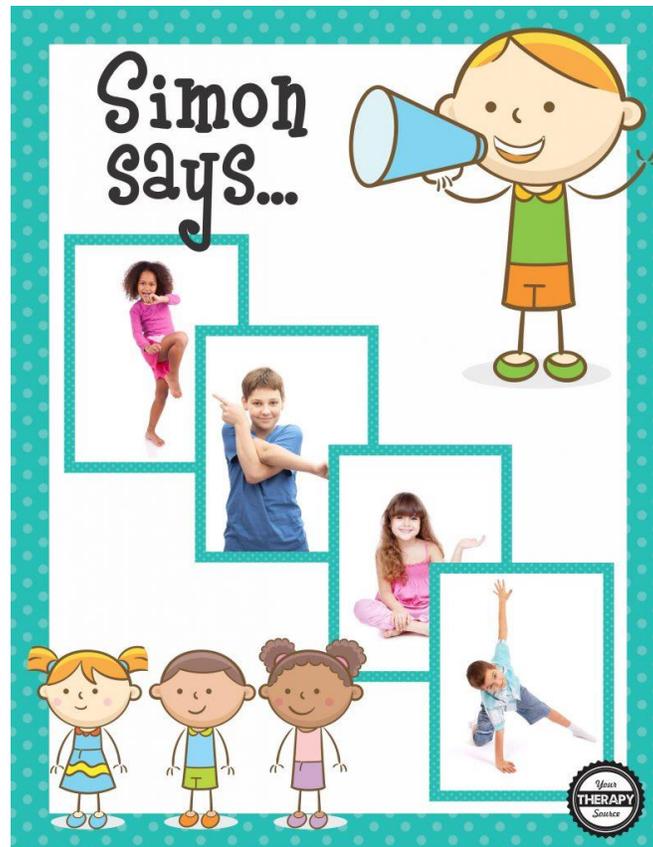
Here is a fun, new freebie from the latest download, [Simon Says](#). [Print off these 9 cards](#) to play a quick game of [Simon Says](#). Can the children copy the body poses exactly? These are [9 samples cards](#) from the HUGE collection of body position cards from the complete [Simon Says download](#).

The complete download includes 68 full page body position cards, 13 stop cards, and 25 game ideas to use with the cards. Children will enjoy practicing motor planning skills, body awareness, following directions and bilateral coordination skills while playing this fun but challenging game. Make sure the right and left sides of the body match the pose correctly as well. It is not as easy as it looks!

The best thing about the [Simon Says packet](#) is that if you want it requires NO PREP. Just download (and print if you want) the PDF document and show the children the full size body position cards to copy. As you move through the

activity, the Simon Says Stop cards appear randomly and children can freeze in the position until you change it to the next card. It doesn't get any easier than this.

[Simon Says](#) is a wonderful extra activity to have available for brain breaks in the classroom, large group instruction or send home copies of the small cards with the game ideas for a home exercise program.



[Simon Says](#) – Find out more information
at <http://www.yourtherapysource.com/simonsays.html>

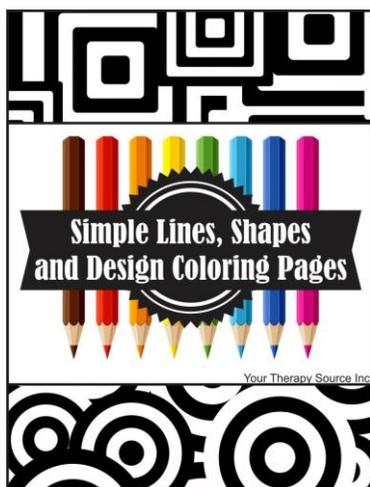
Coloring books are definitely the latest and greatest fad. They are calming and encourage creativity. I, myself have always enjoyed coloring and find it very relaxing. The one problem with the store bought coloring pages is they can be really hard! They take a long time to complete and they can be very intricate. That being said, I have created some pages with bolder lines, larger spaces and just generally easier to finish. Here are two free sample pages from the [Simple Lines, Shapes and Design Coloring Pages](#) download.



Practice prewriting strokes and shapes with these coloring pages. The children can simply color in the different lines and shapes using crayons, markers or paints. The dark black background helps the children to see how to stay within the lines or shapes. If mistakes are made, the errors are not as noticeable so it may help to decrease frustration in children who have difficulty coloring. Compared to traditional coloring pages that you find in the stores, these patterns will be completed much faster and are not nearly as intricate.

Download your [free sample Simple Lines and Shapes coloring pages](#) at Your Therapy Source.

Download a [free penguin coloring page](#).



If you want some more [free coloring pages check out the OT, PT, Speech and Recreation Therapist coloring pages](#).

[Simple Lines, Shapes and Design Coloring Pages](#) – This download is a collection of pre-writing and drawing visual motor worksheets. Practice coloring horizontal lines, vertical lines, curved lines, diagonal lines, zig zags, circles, crosses, squares, rectangles, X's, triangles, diamonds, ovals, hearts and various combined designs. There are 40 coloring page in total.

FIND OUT MORE AT <http://www.yourtherapysource.com/simple.html>



During this age of social media, we are bombarded with inspirational messages of which some hit home more than others. I think this quote is perfect for pediatric therapists. As a profession, I think we live and breathe this everyday for the children and their families. When children want to achieve a certain skill (no matter how big or small) it is our job to teach and motivate them to reach their goals. Part of that job is encouraging children to believe in themselves and for us as therapists, teachers and parents to believe in their own abilities as well. To me this is the core of what we do – teach children to be just a little braver, stronger or smarter.

Think about it with some task analysis using some common therapy goals:

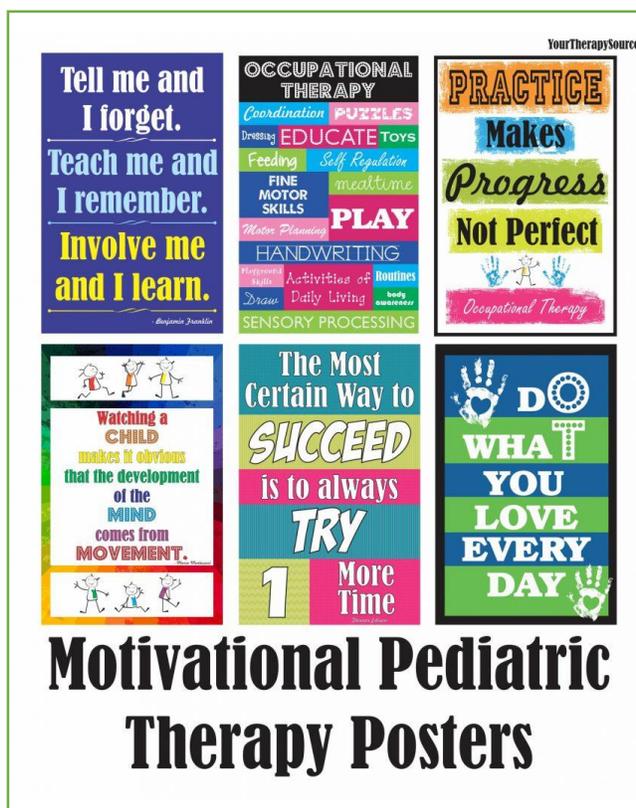
1. Walk across the room independently – the child needs to take the risk that he/she will not fall and get hurt (bravery), strengthen the trunk and legs to physically make it across the room and make choices about what obstacles to avoid (smarter).
2. Tie your shoes – the child has tried hundreds of time to tie his/her shoes and needs to be brave and try one more time to face that fear of failure,

strengthen the fingers and hands to be able to physically pull the laces tight and must be able to sequence the order of shoe tying.

3. Pump a swing – have the courage to try and face the fear of falling off the swing, strengthen the arms, trunk and legs to hold on, balance and pump your legs and understand when to lean back and when to extend your legs.

I could go on and on with task analysis of almost every therapeutic goal. So remind the children that you work with of the wise words of Christopher Robin (aka A. A. Milne) – Always remember, you are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem and smarter than you think.

Check out some other [motivational tools for pediatric therapists.](#)



More of my favorite therapy quotes (click on the link to download a free poster) –

[Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance you must keep moving. – Albert Einstein](#)

[The most important thing to do as a therapist is to educate.](#)

[Move your body, grow your brain.](#)

[The best way to predict the future is to create it.](#)

[The greatest gifts you can give your children are the roots of responsibility](#)

[and the wings of independence. – Denis Waitley](#)

Do you have a favorite motivational quote you would like to see on a poster? Let us know.



Dried Bean Stress Balls

Here is a new twist on a do it yourself stress ball – dried bean stress balls. You might be wondering what make these any different than others? Well until you make one and feel it you will not understand. These dried garbanzo bean stress balls feel more like a deep massage in the hands. It definitely steps up the tactile input! The secret ingredient is the garbanzo beans (also known as chick peas). You can read more about how I colored the [garbanzo beans for a sensory bin](#) in a previous post.

To make the garbanzo beans stress balls you will need dried garbanzo beans, balloons, scissors and the top of a plastic water bottle. I came up with (in my opinion) the most AMAZING hack ever to keep the balloon open. If you have ever

Hack to keep
balloon open



tried to make these it can be so hard to keep the top open to get the ingredients in the balloon. It is usually a two man job. So my idea was to cut off the top of a plastic water bottle. Simply slip the balloon inside and over the lip of the bottle. Presto chango your balloon stays open so you can put the beans in!!!! I know, not that amazing but it sure did impress me.

Moving on... now all you need to do is fill the balloon up. Have the kids help using a nice pincer grasp to get all those beans inside.

Once the balloon is filled up, tie it off. Cut off the top of another balloon and insert the bean ball into the balloon with the top cut off.



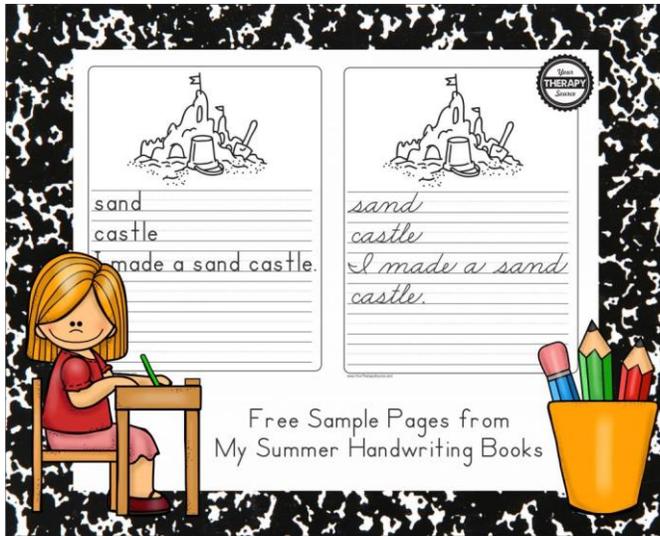


Now you are ready to use the stress balls. Since these provide a heavier tactile input that your typical stress ball some children may dislike the feeling. Some children may crave it. Here are some suggestions:

1. stress ball – use it to relieve stress by squeezing it.
2. fidget – keep the hands busy so you can sit still squish and squeeze the ball (it is a little noisy).
3. warm ups before handwriting – rub this between your hands to wake up the small muscles and get them ready to write.
4. foot massage – place it under your foot and roll it back and forth to work out any small muscle cramps in the foot (alert – this is some serious sensory input).
5. coordination skills – these make excellent juggling balls. The garbanzo bean balls are a nice weight providing some extra input to catch and toss.
6. challenge your balance – try to stand on one foot and roll it back and forth. Kick it to a friend.

Need more ideas for sensory breaks, stress relief and tactile input? Check out the [Sensational Brain membership](#) for creating effective sensory diets.





Here are [two sample pages](#) from the [My Summer Handwriting Book packet](#). The complete [My Summer Handwriting Packet](#) download includes 5 different font styles of an 8 page summer themed handwriting practice booklet. Research indicates that to improve handwriting, practice sessions are necessary (Hoy, 2011). This copy booklet is easy to encourage

handwriting practice. The five types of font/layout include: 1. Dotted line Zaner-Bloser® type font, 2. Dotted line Zaner-Bloser® type font with highlighted lines 3. Double line Handwriting Without Tears® type font, 4. New South Wales (NSW) Foundation Manuscript and 5. Cursive font.

If you want your students to get some handwriting practice over the summer this is a great option. You can print as full size pages or directions are included on how to print multiple pages on one page to decrease the font size for the handwriting practice. It is in black and white so economical to print and kids can color in the pictures to make it their own.

Each page includes 2 summer words and one simple sentence to copy. Children will be practicing labeling, letter formation and word spacing while copying the words.

Reference: Hoy, M. M. P., Egan, M. Y., & Feder, K. P. (2011). A systematic review of interventions to improve handwriting. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 78, 13-25. doi: 10.2182/cjot.2011.78.1.3

Download the sample pages at [Your Therapy Source](#). Find out more information about [My Summer Handwriting Books](#) at <http://www.yourtherapysource.com/hwsummerbook.html>





How cute is this [cat's whiskers busy bag](#)? I happen to find it adorable! Just print out the free download, cut out the kitty's, laminate and hole punch to indicate where to lace the pipe cleaners. Toss some pipe cleaners cut in half inside the busy bag and it is all set to go. The child can lace the pipe cleaners through the holes to give the cat's their whiskers.

I only used one hole punch to lace the pipe cleaners through but you could do two. I liked the end result better with only one hole punched and lacing all the pipe cleaners through the one hole. If it is difficult for the child, punch the one hole several times to make it larger to fit the pipe cleaners easier.



This activity encourages scissors skills, hand strengthening with the hole punching, visual motor skills with the lacing and creativity.



If you wanted to, you could color the cats before you laminate them. I like the black and white cats because the pipe cleaner whiskers really stand out on the white background.

You can download the [cats to print and lace at Your Therapy Source](#) for free!

Here are some [Shape People Punches](#) that are also free.

Want more ideas for hole punching? Check out [Hole Punch Palooza](#)

