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BODY AWARENESS ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN



Body awareness is the ability to understand where our bodies are in space and how our bodies move. Body awareness activities help us to understand how to relate to objects and people at home, at school and outdoors. For example, proper body awareness tells us how far to reach for objects or how close to stand next to a person. Sometimes, if people have difficulties with body awareness they may appear clumsy, uncoordinated or have delays in motor skill development.

Body awareness activities for children

Proprioceptive input (heavy work activities)

This type of input gives our muscles and joints information about how our arms, legs, head and trunk move. Any weight bearing activities are technically proprioceptive

input. Here are some examples: wheelbarrow walking, jumping, stomping the feet, push ups, pushing/pulling, carrying heavy objects, etc.

Play games that involve identifying body parts

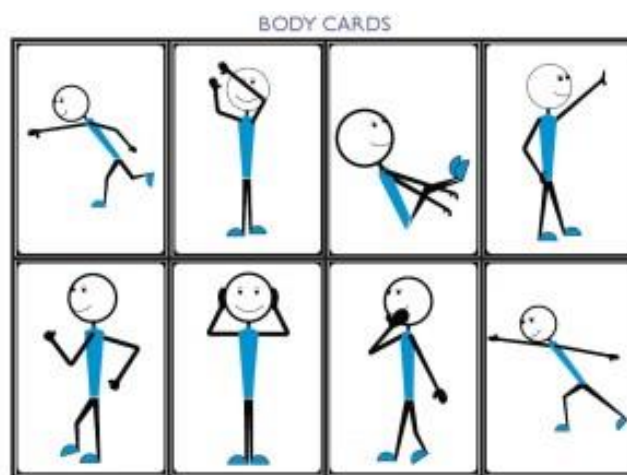
Simon Says is a wonderful game to encourage body awareness and self-regulation. Call out more than one activity to increase the challenge such as “[Simon Says](#) touch your right hand to your left knee”. Check out these [free Simon Says cards](#).

Mirror Games

Give each child a partner. When one person moves the other person has to copy their movements exactly. Have children try to mimic poses of different movements with these [body position cards](#). Try copying the exact actions of the children pictured in the [Move Like Me cards](#).

Practice spatial awareness.

Set up obstacles courses for children to go under, over, through and around objects. Here are [more ideas for spatial awareness](#).

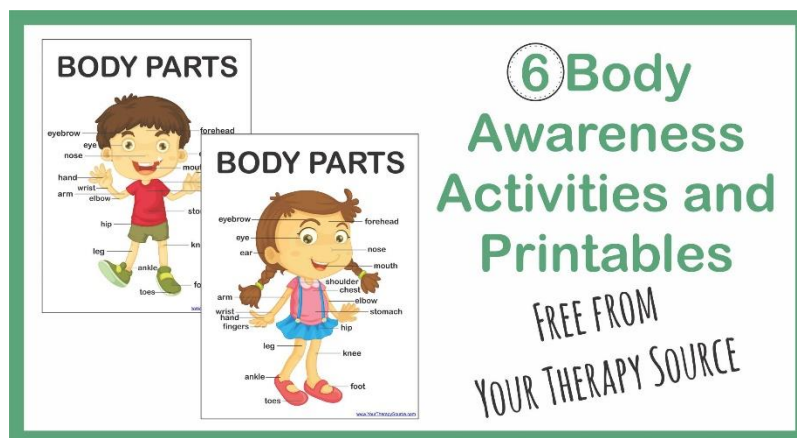


Beanbag Alphabet Game



Beanbag Alphabet Fun Game used beanbags as a wonderful tool to encourage physical activity, body awareness, motor planning, and coordination skills in children. Move through the alphabet with your beanbag – [download this freebie and learn how to play.](#)

Body Awareness Printables



[Download this FREE 6 page printable](#) to reinforce body awareness in children and play games.

Ninja Motor Planning and Body Awareness Freebie

Here is a fun FREEBIE for the Ninja loving fan from [Ninja Brain Breaks](#)! This activity encourages motor planning, body awareness, finger strengthening, and physical activity. You can download the [Ninja Clothes Pin Clip Activity](#) here.



Hula Hoop Game

Through the Hoop – Break up the group into several small teams (about 3 children in each group). Give each group one hula hoop. Establish a starting line and another line about 10-20 feet away. The first person in each group runs to the line that is 10-20 feet away and holds the hoop several inches off the ground. Then the next person runs down, climbs through the hoop and back to the starting line. The third person runs down, climbs through the hoop and back to the starting line. The first person climbs through the hoop while holding it and runs back to start. The first team with all three players through the hoop is the winner.

Creating Self-Portraits

Practice drawing pictures of people or [ask the child to draw a picture of himself or herself](#). Name body parts as they are drawn.

Group Body Awareness Activities for the Classroom

Need a quick body awareness and spatial relationship brain break that combines estimation with movement and motor planning? Here is a simple activity that helps students to understand spatial relationships to objects in the classroom.

Start out with each student standing up next to their desk. Have them guess how many baby steps it will take to walk to the desk in front of them. Once they have made the estimate, they can count the baby steps it takes.

Now try moving to a target further away with a different movement. Guess how many jumps it will take to get to the window. Once the estimate is made, the students can count the jumps it takes them to get to the window. Return to the starting point. Now ask the students to double the number of jumps it took them to get to the window. The students must now adjust the size of the jumps and how the body moves through space to take double the amount of jumps to the window.

Have the students partner up. The students can stand at least 10 feet apart. Estimate how many hops it will take to meet in the middle. Test your guess and hop to meet in the middle. Try again with different movements – ie backward steps, heel to toe walking, lunges, marching etc. Make sure to remind the students that part of the challenge is to meet in the middle but not to touch each other.

Q and A Body Awareness Activities for One or More Children

This game can be played with one player or a group of children to promote body awareness, motor skills, and listening skills.

The adult faces the group and is going to ask the children to move certain body parts based on questions. The children are not to answer the questions. They should move the body part that is the answer to the question.

Here is an example:

Question: What body part waves hello?

Answer: Children wave hands in air.

Here is a list of several questions and answers or make up your own. See what questions the children can come up with.

Q: What body part makes funny faces?

A: Child moves mouth or tongue

Q: What body part wears socks?

A: Child moves feet.

Q: What body part uses crayons?

A: Child wiggles fingers.

Q: What body part smells skunks?

A: Child moves nose.

Q: What body part climbs ladders?

A: Child moves arms and legs

Now change the game and request actions based on different noises:

Make a clapping sound with your body.

Stomp your feet

Snap fingers

March in place

Smack lips

Slap knees

Tap shoulders quietly

Now have children close their eyes. Make one of the sounds with your body that you practiced together. Can the children guess what body part you are using to make the sound.

[Print the PDF of this activity here.](#)

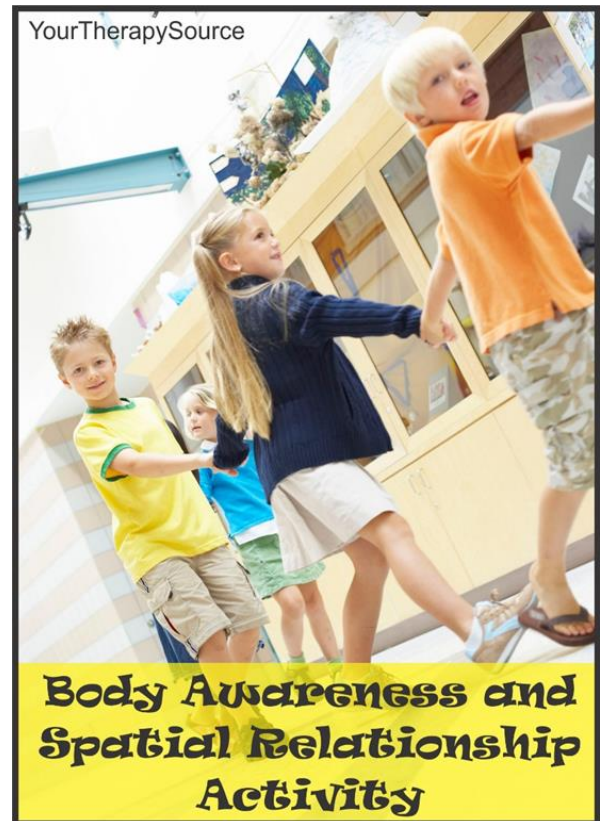
Simon Says Motor Memory Game



Do you need a challenging motor memory and body awareness activity? This Simon Says Motor Memory Challenge game is a super easy activity to prepare although it is not so super easy to play. Challenge yourself to see if you can remember all the moves.

Here is how you play:

1. Download and print the Simon Says Motor Memory Challenge game below.
2. Cut apart the 10 strips on the page.
3. Stack the strips with action #1 at the top.
4. Staple the strips together to form a thin "book" of strips.



5. Perform action #1: Tap your head with both hands 2 times.
6. Turn the page and without looking back, perform action #1 followed by action #2. Tap your head with both hands 2 times and touch both hands to your right knee.
7. Turn the page and without looking back perform three actions: Tap your head with both hands 2 times, touch both hands to your right knee AND jump up three times.
8. Continue to move through the book remembering each of the actions and adding the new one.
9. Can you remember all 10 actions?

[DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE SIMON SAYS MOTOR MEMORY CHALLENGE HERE.](#)

Simon Says Exercise Ball Style

Have you ever played [Simon Says](#) exercise ball style? This is an easy way to adapt a timeless game of [Simon Says](#) but add in more range of motion, muscle strengthening and spatial relationships. It is more of a challenge when you use a large, exercise ball but if that is not available grab a large beach ball which is lighter weight. No beach balls available? Grab a kickball or playground ball? No balls available? Grab a pillow. Just grab something large enough that requires two hands to hold.

Give each child playing an exercise ball or a large beach ball. Provide the usual directions of a [Simon Says](#) game but add in some additional steps. For example "Simon says...."

1. Put the ball over your head.
2. Hold the ball on your right side.
3. Hold the ball on your left side.
4. Squeeze the ball between your knees.
5. Put the ball behind your back.
6. Sit on the ball.
7. Roll on your belly over the ball.
8. Put the ball on top of the desk.
9. Hold the ball next to the chair.
10. Place the ball between your back and the wall.
11. Touch your left foot on the ball.
12. Put both hands on the side of the ball.
13. Place your right foot under the ball.
14. Touch the ball with your left foot, right hand and your chin.
15. Bounce the ball three times.

Other Ideas for Simon Says Exercise Ball Body Awareness Activities

By adding in the extra location directions you are also reinforcing right versus left and spatial relationships. The large ball encourages bilateral skills and crossing midline. Simon Says incorporates body awareness, motor planning, crossing midline and balance.

Working with a group of children and only have one large ball? Play hot potato. Remind the children they always have to hold the ball with two hands (or two feet)! Position the children in standing in a large circle with some space between each child. Turn the music on and pass the ball around the circle. Try passing it to the right, to the left or overhead. Try sitting down and passing the ball using your feet.

Bonus Tip: Take Some Time to Explore New Spaces

When children have difficulties of sensing where a child is in space can interfere with motor skill development, peer interaction, and safety. When new skills are being learned take some time to fully explore the environment where the functional skills are to be learned. Children need to explore and practice skills in the actual environment where they need to have appropriate body awareness.

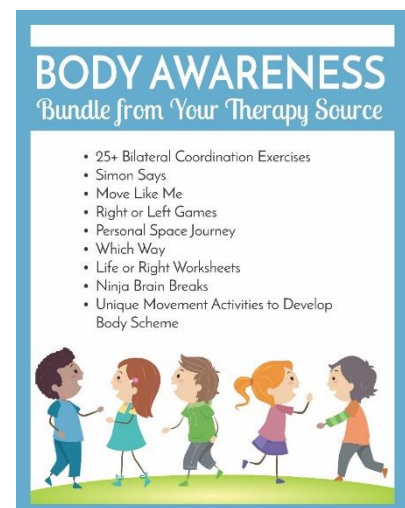
Take for example a student who is bumping into objects or peers in the classroom. When the classroom is empty, go inside and have the student walk in and around the desks and chairs. Practice crawling under desks, kneeling down and sitting in different locations in the classroom. Add in games or activities to keep it novel. Provide verbal cues as the student walks by items if necessary ie. this desk is wide or this aisle is narrow. This exploration allows the child to develop a motor map of his surroundings with him in it. This helps to develop a better sense of how big desks are, how tall are the chairs, how wide is the carpet and how far is the bathroom.

This can apply to different areas of the school or home. How about the cafeteria? Let a child explore it to help define a motor map for in between cafeteria tables, on the cafeteria line and around garbage cans. At home, if the furniture is changed around allow time to just explore the new areas and obstacles without adding in the stressors of different goals.

Keep it simple sometimes and start out with just simply exploring the surroundings without adding in any other functional tasks to help build a strong foundation.

Need More Resources to Help Children Develop Body Awareness?

The [Body Awareness Bundle](#) from Your Therapy Source includes 9 amazing resources to help children develop body awareness, motor planning, and coordination skills. All 9 digital resources will be available electronically immediately following payment. Download this [Crossing Midline](#) body awareness freebie below to get an awesome coupon for the Body Awareness Bundle.



HOW TO INCREASE PENCIL PRESSURE



Do you work with students who have difficulty applying pencil pressure when writing? Students can start out writing lightly and then continue to get lighter and lighter. Sometimes teachers or therapists have had success using markers to write with instead of pencils. Here are a few additional ideas on how students can increase pencil pressure.

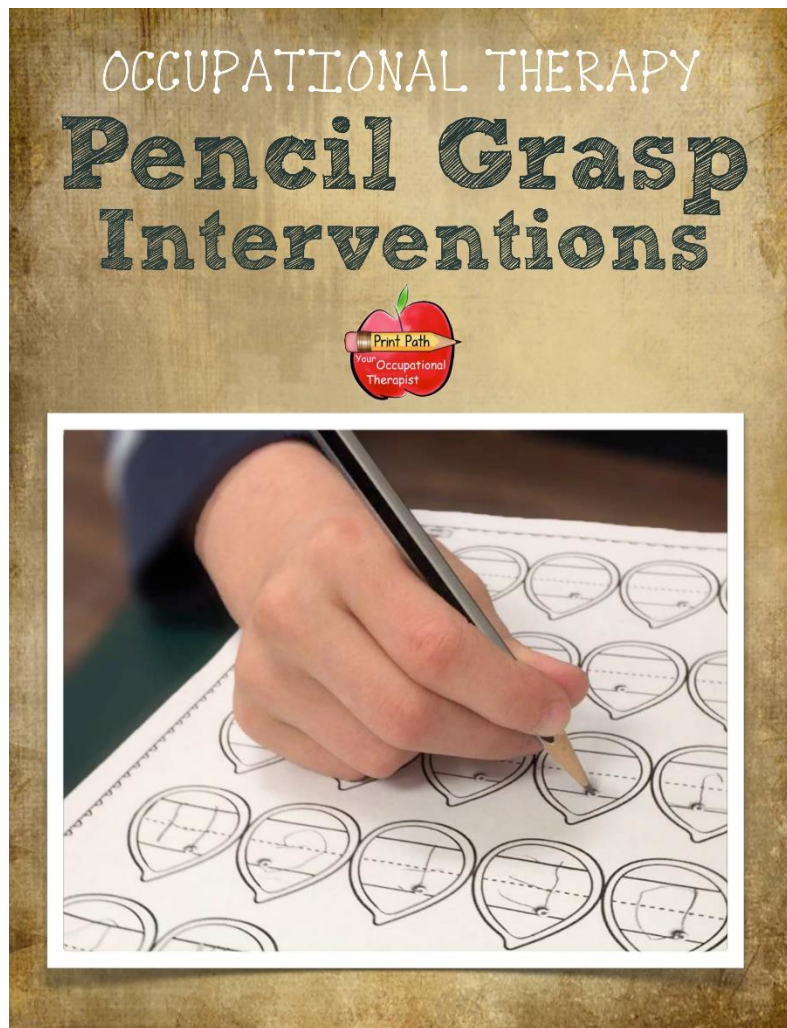
How to Increase Pencil Pressure + Lots of FREEBIES

Here are 10 ideas on how to increase pressure when writing:

1. Try using markers or gel pens to make marks instead of pencils.
2. Use a weighted pencil or hand/wrist weights to increase input to the hand. Check out [Therapy Fun Zone for a DIY Weighted Pencil](#).
3. Write on carbon paper – the child has to press hard to make the marks go through the paper.
4. Poke holes through paper to provide an example of applying pressure – check out these free [Picture Poke cards](#).
5. Put paper over bumpy material such as rough sandpaper or plastic needlepoint canvas. Write on the paper and you will have some tactile feedback.
6. Color using shading to demonstrate that different shades require a different amount of pressure. Try this [free Shade Wisely](#) activity or [Missing Monster freebie](#).
7. Use a dull pencil, golf tee or wooden dowel to write in clay.

8. Warm up by [squeezing a stress ball](#) or upper extremity weight bearing activities such as wheelbarrow walking, [Proprioceptive Poems](#), [animal walks](#) or wall push ups.
9. Strengthen the fingers and grip with clothespin activities. Try the free [Ninja Clothes Pin](#) activity. Play some [visual perceptual clothes pin games](#). Make [clothes pin silly faces](#).
10. Strengthen the fingers with hole punch activities. Try [punching out the matching shapes](#) or these [shape people punches](#). If a traditional hole punch is too difficult try this [type of hole punch](#).

Do you need to help students with pencil grasp too?



[Pencil Grasp Interventions](#) digital download was created by Thia Triggs, OTR. She reports that as a school-based Occupational Therapist, the most frequent issue teachers ask her about is pencil grasp. "Is this grasp OK?", "What should I do about this grasp?" "Should I give my student a pencil gripper?" "What pencil gripper should I use?". This 31 page PDF digital document is available electronically immediately following payment for just \$6.99.

www.YourTherapySource.com

POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS FOR CHILDREN

Positive affirmations for children (and mantras) are terrific tools that children can use to support themselves. They help them develop a healthy sense of self as well as a positive mental-social-emotional mindset.

What are Positive Affirmations for Children?

Affirmations are short; positive “I am” statements that call you into an intentional way of being. They should be accompanied by a visual image and inspire visceral sensations. When you use an affirmation, you should experience yourself as you are declaring.

What are Mantras?

Mantras are words, sounds, statements or slogans repeated frequently as a way to attune with an intentional energy or quality.



Affirmations and Mantras Change How We Feel

Affirmations become mantras when they are repeated over and over to oneself, out loud or silently. They change how we feel by aligning and attuning body, mind, and heart around a life-enhancing aspiration. In other words, affirmations are another technique for kids to use to set themselves up for doing their best and feeling good about their efforts.

Affirmations help children understand that, like the food they eat, the thoughts they think also shape how they feel and behave.

Self-Regulation Flash Cards

Help children develop impulse control, focus, and well-being!



All of the body-mind self-care tools in our [self-regulation flash card](#) set include a poem to be chanted while doing the activity. The words of the chant support children in remembering how to do the exercise and call them into a new way of being. When repeated, the practice and the shift in feeling become an embodied habit.

How to Teach Positive Affirmations for Children

Teach Children to Notice

In using positive affirmations for children, it's important to encourage them to first notice if there are any repetitive thoughts already going on. Explain to the children that repetitive thoughts are like playing a song over and over in their heads.

Ask children how they listen to music. What happens when they want to change the song they are listening to? Do they skip to a new song, download a new song or change the radio station?

Discuss how your inner voice works. We all have negative thoughts or "songs" we hear inside our head sometimes. Maybe we think we are not good at something or we feel sad. Other times we have positive thoughts or "songs" we hear with our inner voice that help us to achieve our goals or feel happy.

If they are playing fearful, negative "songs" such as: *I can't do this. I'm afraid. I'm not good enough. I'm ugly. I'm stupid.* Then, of course, they will feel self-doubt, anxiety or anger. And, if that's how they are seeing themselves, of course, they will have a hard time seeing the good in the people and events around them.

Acknowledge if this is going on and let kids know that it's normal and that everyone deals with those voices.

Encourage Children to Change the Negative Songs!

Explain to the children that you can change your inner voice and that you are going to imagine changing your inner voice. Just like we change the song we are listening to, we can also change our negative thoughts to positive thoughts. Positive self-talk can help us to achieve a positive mindset.

Ask the children to think of a negative thought or "song" that they have in the mind or had in the mind at one time. Invite them to change the music. Lead everyone in miming to teach the children how to change the "songs".

Encourage them to pretend to change the radio station or access a new playlist that plays lyrics such as:

I am healthy and strong.

I am confident and capable.

I learn best at my own pace.

I am safe.

I am loved.

Teach Visualization

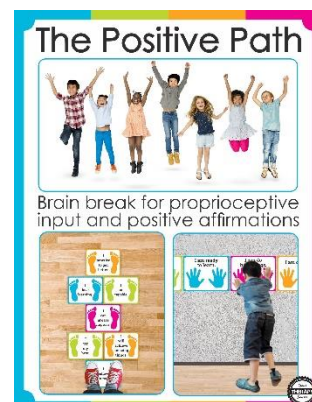
It's empowering for children to act out physically what they are choosing to do mentally. This allows them to disengage with negative thinking and attune instead to a positive affirmation. Practice not only saying the positive affirmation but also visualizing themselves completing the goal they have set in a positive, successful manner.

As they repeat the affirmation to themselves, coach them to see themselves that way – reading well, climbing to the top of the jungle gym, making friends, etc. Give them time to notice how imagining it allows them to also feel it in their whole being.

If you need a picture book to supplement the lesson on positive affirmations for children, check out the beautifully illustrated affirmations for young children [I Believe in Me by Connie Bowen](#). According to early childhood educator, Leah Kalish, when she was first teaching, it inspired her to use affirmations and visualizations with her students daily. Very quickly, she noticed the beneficial impact on attitudes, behavior choices, and the ability to [self-regulate](#).

Add Movement to Further Encourage Positive Affirmations for Children

Combine positive affirmations for kids and proprioceptive input with [The Positive Path](#). Children can jump along the path or do wall push-ups while they read words of encouragement. Using the power of positive thinking with daily affirmations and physical activity can help students get their brain and bodies ready to tackle the school day. [FIND OUT MORE.](#)



Add Drawing and Writing to Encourage Positive Affirmations for Children – FREE PRINTABLES

If you want to further expand your lesson on positive affirmations, download this 5-page digital packet of FREE PRINTABLES below. The lesson is differentiated so students can choose from three different activities:

1. Draw a self-portrait expressing positive traits or goals for themselves.
2. Write out 5-10 positive affirmations on regular lined paper.
3. Write out 5-10 positive affirmations on dotted lined paper to encourage proper letter formation.

Also included is a lesson plan and motivational poster to hang in the room to encourage children to change their inner voice “song” list.

[Download your Positive Affirmations for Children Free Printables Here](#)



[FREE DIRECTED DRAWING AND WRITING ACTIVITY](#)



Do you like to draw? Or maybe you want to learn how to become better at drawing. Step by step drawing activities are a wonderful idea to help children (and adults) learn how to draw. Children can practice their skills and gain confidence with these types of lessons. This FREE directed drawing and writing activity can be downloaded at the end of the post. It is from the complete directed drawing packet – [Draw, Color, and Write Active Play theme](#).

How Directed Drawings Work

Directed drawings are step by step directions to create a picture. Instead of looking at the picture and trying to draw it yourself, directed drawings guide you through each step making it much easier to create the end result.

Children can get frustrated when they decide they want to draw but it doesn't turn out the way they expected it. Using step by step drawings can help to reduce frustration and increase confidence in their abilities.

How to Complete the FREE Directed Drawing and Writing Activity

At the bottom of this post, you can download and print the two pages. Page one is the easier version. Children have to follow the six directions to draw the girl swinging on the swing in the box provided.

Page two is more difficult. Children have to follow the six step by step free directed drawing and then write a few sentences about the picture they created.

If the child is having difficulty with sentence production, offer a few suggestions with words associated with swinging to get the child's creativity flowing. Words such as outside, swingset, playground, park, backyard, friends, etc.

Get the Complete Draw, Color, and Write Active Play Packet

The [*Draw, Color, and Write – Active Play*](#) complete packet includes 10 step by step directed drawings to help children learn how to draw simple cartoon figures and provide inspiration for writing.

Busy teachers, therapists, and parents will appreciate these NO PREP directed drawing activities to encourage the following skills in children:

- drawing
- sequencing
- following directions
- writing skills
- handwriting practice

The [*Draw, Color, and Write – Active Play*](#) packet includes 10 step by step drawing pages (just practice drawing) and 10 step by step drawing with writing pages. In addition, there is a page with additional drawing ideas and a word bank.

Learn how to draw children jumping rope, riding a scooter, swinging, skateboarding, playing with a beach ball, soccer, dancing, flying a kite, hula hooping, and karate. Now only will children learn how to draw and practice handwriting they will also get ideas to encourage an active, healthy lifestyle!

[Download your FREE Directed Drawing here.](#)



PAPER PLATE DRAWING GAME FOR SUMMER



Summer Paper Plate Kinesthetic Drawing Game

This Summer paper plate drawing game is a super fun, kinesthetic, easy activity for a group. It encourages visual-spatial skills, visual motor skills, and body awareness. It is a definite challenge for kinesthetic awareness.

How to play the paper plate drawing game:

Give each player a pencil and a non-coated, white paper plate. If you do not have paper plates you could use recycled, lightweight cardboard i.e. inside of a cereal box or heavy, cardstock paper.

Each player should hold the paper plate on his/her own head and be ready to draw on it with the pencil.

Read these directions out loud for the players to follow:

1. Draw grass on the ground.
2. Draw the sun with rays in the sky.
3. Draw two flowers in the grass that are not touching.
4. Draw 2 birds in the sky under the sun.
5. Draw a ball in between the flowers.
6. Draw one cloud in the sky next to the sun.

Take the plate off of your head and look at your crazy drawing. If you want to score the drawing give yourself points if you –

- Score 1 point if the sun is in the sky.
- Score 1 point if none of the sun's rays overlap.

- Score 1 point if your flowers do not touch.
- Score 1 point if your flowers are in the grass.
- Score 2 points if your birds are under the sun.
- Score 1 point if your ball is in between the flowers.
- Score 1 point if your cloud is not touching any grass or flowers.

You can play this game with any theme. The [original idea](#) I saw was a Christmas game. Just create new directions and a new scoring system.

Want to make the paper plate drawing game easier?

Instead of putting the paper plate on your head, play by having the children close their eyes and draw on regular paper.

Looking for an even easier version of the game? Plan to only focus on visual-spatial skills. The children can keep their eyes open and practice drawing all the objects in the right location based on the directions.

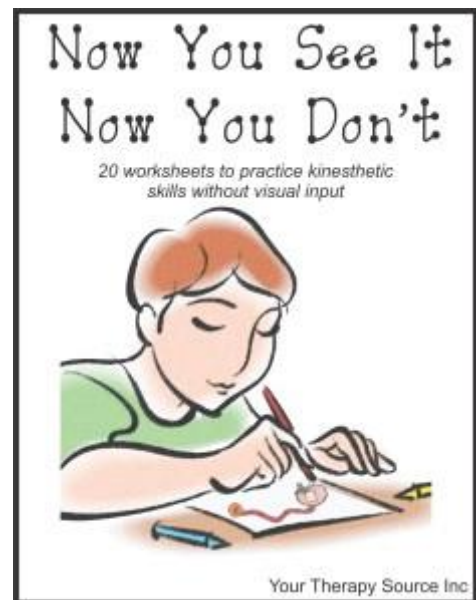
If you are looking for more kinesthetic awareness activities, check out [Now You See It, Now You Don't](#).

[Now You See It, Now You Don't](#) includes 20 worksheets to practice kinesthetic skills without visual input. Some children rely too much on the visual system when completing visual motor activities. These worksheets encourage a child to use his/her kinesthetic sense (where the body is in space) to complete a visual motor task rather than relying on the visual system. The ebook includes 10 easier worksheets and 10 harder worksheets. The theme is animals and sports. [FIND OUT MORE.](#)

Want to Play the Paper Play Drawing Game Again?

Read these directions out loud for the players to follow:

1. Draw a campfire on the ground.
2. Draw the moon in the sky.
3. Draw three stars that are in a straight line.
4. Draw a tree next to the campfire.
5. Draw a triangle for a tent under the moon.
6. Draw a marshmallow on a stick over the campfire but not touching the fire.



Take the plate off of your head and look at your crazy drawing. If you want to score the drawing give yourself points if you –

- Score 1 point if the campfire is on the ground.
- Score 1 point if the moon is near the top of the drawing.
- Score 2 points if your three stars are in a straight line.
- Score 1 point if your tree is next to the campfire.
- Score 2 points if your tent is under the moon.
- Score 2 points if your marshmallow is on a stick over the fire but not touching it.

Looking for more silly drawing games?

[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.

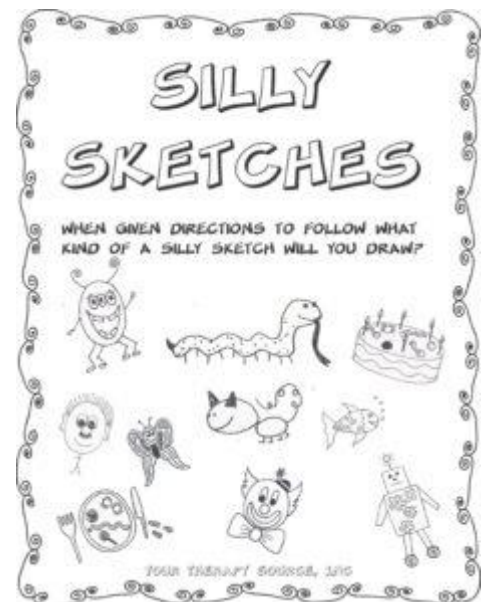
This download encourages drawing skills, ability to follow step by step directions, creativity, visual motor skills and visual perceptual skills.

[Find out more information about this drawing game for kids.](#)

When to Play the Paper Plate Drawing Games for Kids

The best thing about these quick and easy paper plate drawing games is that they can be played anytime anywhere. Here are a few ideas of when you can start up these games:

- indoor recess
- five-minute filler activity
- anytime the kids are getting antsy
- boredom buster
- to encourage children that drawing can be fun! It is a novel warm-up for those students who dislike handwriting practice.
- want to add in academics? Pick a theme for the silly drawings. Maybe draw pictures from a vocabulary list.
- try some of the activities with paper taped to the wall. This will encourage all sorts of different muscle activation.



INTRINSIC MOTIVATION IN THE CLASSROOM – HOW TO HELP

Intrinsic motivation in the classroom is the ability to complete a skill or activity based on personal interest, achievements, and enjoyment not for external rewards.

Many children need external motivation in the classroom or with related service providers to complete tasks or practice skills. Teachers and related service providers may use [different reward systems](#) such as [Punch Cards and Reward Cards for Therapy](#) to encourage children to participate.

Intrinsic motivation in the classroom can be harder to facilitate in children than extrinsic motivation.

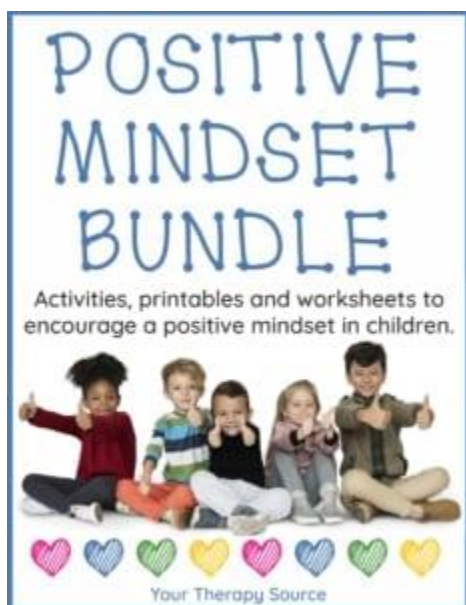
Suggestions to Increase Intrinsic Motivation in the Classroom

Independent thinking

Allow the student to work on a certain skill and report back to you how they have improved that skill. They can improve or change it any way that they think will help.

Provide choices

Children can be more intrinsically motivated if they have a say in how they are accomplishing a goal. Try not to make any activity a requirement. Offer various choices or let them create their own suggestions of how they can accomplish the goal or complete the task.



Power of positive thinking

Having an "I can" attitude can help tremendously and build up a student's confidence. Check out [the Positive Mindset bundle](#).

Cooperative learning

Students may feel more motivated when they can work with other students to help or teach them a skill.

Ask questions

Encourage students to think for themselves rather than provide answers to them. For example – what suggestions do you have to increase your handwriting speed? Read more on [executive functioning and questions here](#).



Keep it fun with some competition

Most kids like to win and feel a sense of pride when they do. Therapeutic activities or academic material can be intertwined with games.

Shoot for your personal best

If the students in your classroom struggle with competition, don't compare abilities to others but rather that each student improves each time. Teach the student to track his/her own goals to visually represent improvements over time. Check out [My Goal Tracker](#) for student-generated data collection.

Plan together

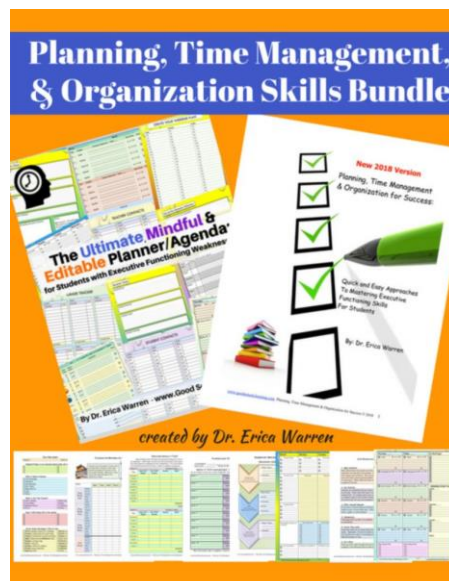
Ask the student how they would like to reach a goal? Explain what options are available and plan together what may work best.

Educate the student

When you are working on a certain activity, explain to the student why you are doing that specific activity or learning new material and how it will help him/her in their everyday life.

Teach self-direction and independence

Everyone feels a larger sense of accomplishment when you are able to do something all by yourself. Many students struggle with planning and organizing their school assignments and tasks. If you need strategies and methods to help structure, guide, and support student self-direction and independence in the areas of organization, time management and planning (executive functioning skills), check out this [Planning, Time Management, and Organization Skills bundle](#).



[FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE BUNDLE to help develop self-directed and independent students.](#)

WHAT IS PROMPTING?

What is prompting?

What is prompting? When teaching children new skills, therapists and teachers provide instruction and prompts to complete the skill. Many times different prompts are used together to help a child learn a new skill or complete a targeted response.

What are the different types of prompts?

There are many different types of prompts such as:

Verbal Prompts

Verbal prompts are instructions or words to direct a person to complete the skill. It is the most commonly used prompt.

Modeling

Modeling is demonstrating the skill either in person or on a video. It is the second most commonly used prompt.

Manual Prompts

Manual prompts are when physical contact from a teacher is used to help the child complete the skill.

Gestural Prompts

Gestural prompts are when the teacher uses pointing, motioning or nodding toward the child or the objects to complete the skill.

Photographs and Line Drawings

Teachers can use visual supports pictures or step by step instructions to complete the skill. You could use [visual supports for occupational therapy](#) and [physical therapy](#).

Text Prompts

Using written instructions, checklists, scripts, and reminder lists are examples of text prompts. Here is a [self-regulation checklist with text prompts](#).

What are the Benefits of Using Prompts?

Prompts are beneficial when teaching children new skills but in order for the child to become fully independent in the skill, the prompts need to decrease over time until they are no longer needed.



How Do You Use Prompts Effectively?

Types of Prompts and How To Use Them Effectively to Teach Children New Skills



One approach is to start with the least amount of prompts possible (least to more prompting method).

Begin with minimal assistance and only add additional prompts if needed. Prompt along a continuum of verbal prompt, gestural prompt, modeling and then a manual prompt. Sometimes even with one type of prompt, you can move along a continuum of least to greatest prompts. For example, use one verbal request. If needed, add

additional verbal requests. The benefit to this technique is that with every additional prompt needed the child is getting repeated time to respond to requests and more practice time. This least to most prompts approach is a good choice for skill assessment to determine how much of the skill the child can do independently.

Another approach is to reduce the prompts as the child learns the skill (most to least prompting method).

When children are first learning a new skill they may need physical cues, modeling and verbal prompts. As the child learns to master parts of the skill, reduce prompts to encourage full independence by the child. Some research indicates that reducing prompts is the most effective fading prompts technique because it results in fewer errors and quicker skill acquisition than the least to more prompting method.

Delay prompting by increasing the amount of time before you offer assistance.

For example, when providing a verbal prompt wait 3 seconds before providing the manual prompt. When the child is ready try to fade the prompt, by providing the verbal prompt, now wait 5 seconds and if the child does not complete the request provide the manual prompt.

Grade the guidance you are providing for manual prompts.

The instructor can gradually change the intensity or location of the manual prompt. For example, if you need to provide hand over hand manual guidance, slowly grade the guidance to just the wrist, then elbow, then shoulder, then standing behind and finally moving away entirely.

Gradually fade the properties or characteristics of the materials used to elicit the skill.

For example, if you want the child to point to a specific object perhaps you make that object stand out more during early trials (ie "Point to the red circle" and the red circle is bright red versus the other choice which may be a dull green circle). Then as the child responds correctly decrease the difference between the two choices. Perhaps you offer the child motivational and fun tools to complete the skill but over time you gradually fade the use of the fun tools and replace them with everyday objects.

Prevent prompt dependence.

The child should respond to the prompts and relevant cues, not just the prompts. Fade prompts as quickly as possible to avoid prompt dependency. When a child is first learning a new skill, responding to prompts can be rewarded. As the child progresses, reward or affirm the child when unprompted responses occur. Some research indicates that rewarding more unprompted responses than prompted responses results in more correct responses and more rapid learning.

Return to the previous levels of prompting if errors occur.

When the child practices the skill the next time provide enough prompts to decrease the chance of errors again.

Evaluate the effectiveness of prompts.

Using direct observation and data collection to determine what prompts are successful and when to fade the prompts. Remember to treat each child and each skill as a whole new set of circumstances and don't necessarily rely on previous observation and data to determine new prompts for different skill sets. Try to do short term trial runs of different types of prompting to create a plan of action.

The next time you are teaching a child a new skill remember to have an ongoing evaluation of what types of prompts you are using, how are you using them and a plan of action to fade the prompts as quickly as possible. Educate all the people who interact with the child to make sure all of you are utilizing the same prompting techniques.

*Reference: MacDuff, Gregory S., Patricia J. Krantz, and Lynn E. McClannahan. "Prompts and prompt-fading strategies for people with autism." *Making a difference: Behavioral intervention for autism* (2001): 37-50.*

Resources for Visual and Text Prompts

[Visual Supports: Schedules, Self Regulation, and Classroom Inclusion](#)

[Self-Assessments and Checklists for Good Work Habits](#)

Here are two digital downloads that work on fading visual prompts.

[Fading Alphabet](#) includes worksheets that gradually increase in visual motor difficulty while decreasing visual input for letter formation. [Find out more.](#)

[Fading Lines and Shapes](#) includes worksheets that gradually increase in visual motor difficulty while decreasing visual input for line and shape formation. [Find out more.](#)

HOW TO IMPROVE FOCUS AND MEMORY IN CHILDREN



Do you work with students who struggle to maintain focus and find memory tasks difficult? Are you in search of ideas of how to improve focus and memory in children? Here are several strategies to help children.

Ideas for How To Improve Focus

Classrooms are busy places! A student's visual and auditory focus and attention can dart around the room due to the many distractions. Other students chatting, teachers giving directions, doors opening, windows, lights, bulletin boards, whiteboards, computer screens, the list goes on and on of what can disrupt students' focus and attention.

Reduce distractions as much as possible

Quickly look around the classroom or home. Reduce unnecessary visual distractions in the room such as pictures on walls, mobiles or hanging objects. Decrease auditory distractions by instructing students to be quiet during work time when able. Keep adult directions to a minimum when students are busy working.

Complete one assignment at a time

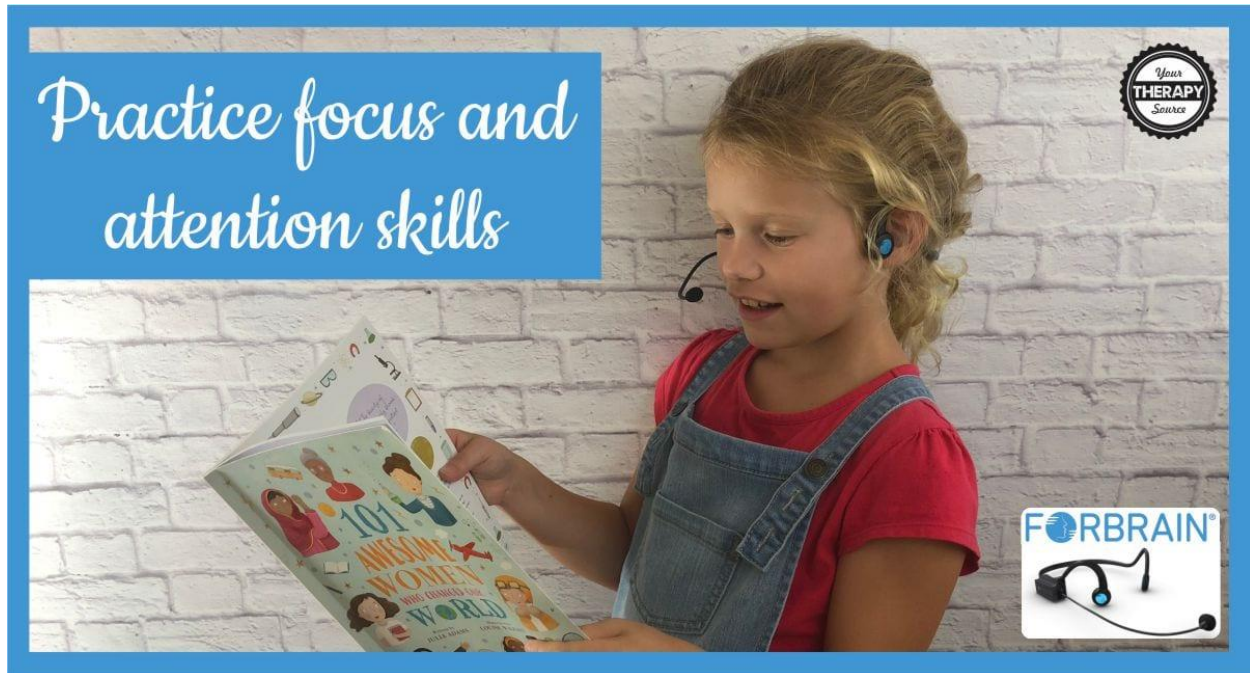
Provide only one task or assignment at a time. Breaks up large tasks into smaller parts. If a student has to complete 3 sections on a worksheet, try cutting up the paper into three different parts. Or place the paper in a folder and cut the folder into thirds. Open up one section at a time to complete the work. Try to [teach older students higher-level organizational skills](#) so they can be independent in breaking up large assignments into smaller chunks.

Practice

Focus and attention can improve through practice. Work on sustaining focus for longer periods of time. One tool to help with this is [Forbrain®](#). We were given the opportunity to test out [Forbrain's](#)

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[dynamic filter](#) that trains the brain to be more attentive improving not only attention but auditory processing and sensory integration. (Affiliate links are used in the post for Forbrain®).



What is Forbrain®?

[Forbrain®](#) provides an auditory feedback loop with a dynamic filter to enhance specific frequencies of speech and constantly surprise the brain to increase focus and memory. It is a small, low-profile, comfortable, headset that wraps around the back of your head with a padded microphone near the mouth.

How can Forbrain® Help to Improve Focus?

When we tested out [Forbrain®](#), it was amazing how much it filters extraneous and distracting noises while you speak. When you use [Forbrain®](#), you speak into the small, padded microphone and you can hear yourself speak inside the headset along with small vibrations with bone conduction directly in front of the ears.

Three of the four children ages 5 through 17 who tested the device found it to be helpful when reading out loud to increase focus and attention on the material (One child disliked the sensation of the bone conduction vibration). Due to the auditory feedback loop, you do not hear distracting noises while wearing the headset.



Ideas for How To Improve Memory Skills

Students are required to use their memory skills day in and day out. For some, this results in a significant struggle especially when working memory is necessary. Working memory is used when a student needs to think and remember at the same time.

Write it down

It is as simple as that. If you need to work on your memory skills, write down what you need to remember.

Use Cues

Use mnemonics or other strategies to help you remember the important material. Mnemonics are when you use an acronym or other cues to remember the facts. Try underlining or highlighting important information.

Read It and Say it Out Loud

Practice reading the material you need to memorize. Then put the book or notes down and try to say the important facts out loud again without looking. The [Forbrain® device](#) is a great tool to practice reading and saying it out loud to help store the information in your memory.



Other Suggestions for Forbrain® to Learn How to Improve Focus and Memory

Practice proper voice modulation

Another suggestion is to use [Forbrain®](#) to improve voice modulation. Children who struggle with modulation sometimes speak too loudly. When using the [Forbrain® device](#), students get a clearer

understanding of using an appropriate voice level by modulating the intensity of the voice. When reading out loud they can focus and attend to improving this skill.

Practice deep breathing skills

Teaching children deep breathing techniques can help with emotional regulation and focus. When using the [Forbrain®](#) during deep breathing exercises, students can focus on the exhalation phase combining the auditory feedback with the bone conduction. Read more on [deep breathing exercises for children here](#).

Practice Singing

The children who were testing the [Forbrain® device](#) enjoyed singing with it on. Not only can you hear your voice very clearly, but it also helped them to remember the lyrics and provided a sense of novelty.

Practice Expressive Speech

Personally, for myself, I found [Forbrain®](#) to be very useful for practicing diction and expression when making speeches or recording webinars.

More ideas on How to Improve Focus and Memory:

[3 Steps to Help Children Improve Focus and Self Control](#)

[Classroom Displays and Children's Ability to Focus](#)

[Working Memory Deficits, Emotional Regulation and ADHD](#)

[What is working memory and hemisphere integration?](#)

[Exercise and Working Memory in School Children](#)

[10 Tips for Written Expression for Students with Working Memory Deficits](#)

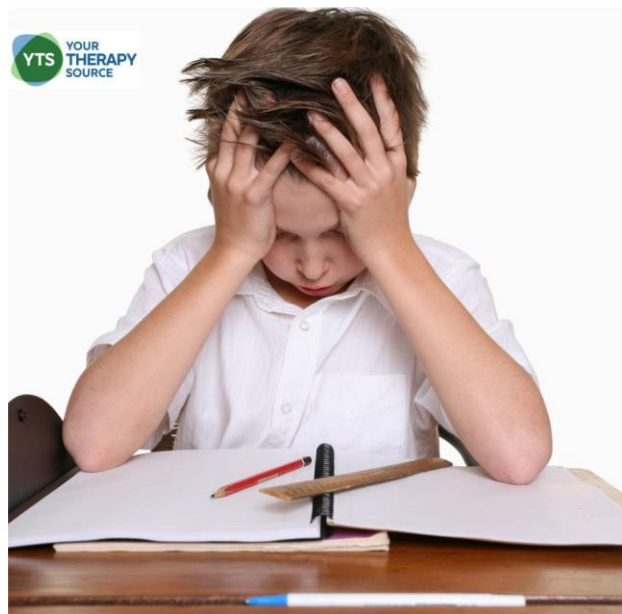


WORKING MEMORY DEFICITS, EMOTIONAL REGULATION AND ADHD

The *Journal of Attention Disorders* published research on working memory deficits, emotional regulation, and ADHD. Previous research indicates that emotional regulation is related to the development and refinement of executive functions, such as inhibition, planning, and working memory.

Methodology of the Study

This study investigated the functional relationship between varying working memory demands and ADHD-related emotion regulation deficits. The researchers coded overt emotion regulation behaviors while 68 children (ages 8-12) with and without ADHD completed experimental tasks that manipulated low and high working memory demands.



Some of the emotion regulation behaviors that were observed were negative emotion, negative self-talk, self-praise, and shut down.

Results of the Study on Working Memory Deficits

When comparing the typically developing children and children with ADHD, data analysis revealed that children with ADHD exhibited:

- large-magnitude overall emotion expression deficits.
- disproportionately greater self-criticism during high working memory conditions.
- disproportionately greater positive emotion expression during low working memory demand conditions.

Conclusion

The researchers concluded that working memory demands may be functionally related to emotional regulation deficits displayed by children with ADHD. These working memory deficits may explain the variability of emotion regulation difficulties related to environmental demands.

Reference: Tarle, S. J., Alderson, R. M., Arrington, E. F., & Roberts, D. K. (2019). Emotion Regulation and Children With Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: The Effect of Varying Phonological Working Memory Demands. *Journal of Attention Disorders*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1087054719864636>

More Resources for Working Memory

Working memory is a part of short-term memory that allows us to hold and use information in our minds for brief periods of time. It is used when a student needs to think and remember at the same time. You can get a working memory practice exercise for your students below. Dr. Erica Warren, a learning specialist, and educational therapist created the [Working Memory, Hemisphere Integration and Attention Building Bundle](#) which includes 2 digital downloads that offer cognitive remedial tools to strengthen working memory, attentional skills, mental flexibility, and processing speed.

Working Memory, Hemispheric Integration and Attention Building Activities



Find out more!

The [Working Memory, Hemisphere Integration and Attention Building Bundle](#) includes fun NO PREP activities have been created by Dr. Erica Warren, a learning specialist, and educational therapist.

Read more on working memory:

[What is working memory and hemisphere integration?](#)

[Exercise and Working Memory in School Children](#)

[10 Tips for Written Expression for Students with Working Memory Deficits](#)



VISUAL MOTOR ACTIVITIES – 10 FREE WORKSHEETS TO PRINT AND PLAY



What are visual motor activities?

Visual-motor activities help children to practice coordinating the hands, arms, legs, and body with the eyes. Visual-motor skills help us to complete activities of daily living such as buttoning a shirt, fine motor skills such as handwriting, gross motor skills such as catching and throwing, and many other visual perceptual skills such as copying from the board. There are many other ways to practice these skills.

10 FREE Worksheets to Print and Play

Here are 10 free visual motor activities printables – just print, grab a pencil and you are all set!!!

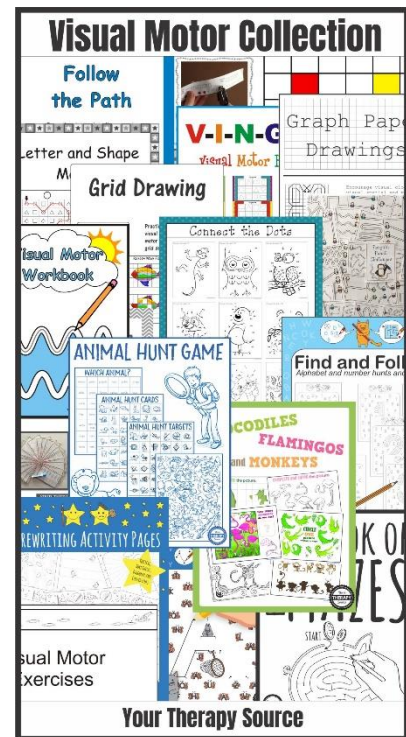
1. [Visual-Motor Exercise](#) – download the directions and free longer maze to complete
2. [2 Pages from Visual Motor Workbook](#) – from the [complete Visual Motor Workbook](#)
3. [Follow the Path](#) – copy the dot to dot diagrams to practice visual motor and visual-spatial skills.
4. [Letter and Shape Maze](#) – download two mazes: circle and the letter c
5. [Connect Puzzle](#) – challenge visual motor, visual-spatial and motor planning skills with this puzzle.
6. [Graph Paper Drawing](#) – download a 10×10 grid drawing to copy to practice visual motor, visual spatial and visual closure skills.

7. [Crossing Path Puzzle](#) – practice visual motor, visual spatial and motor planning skills all with this pencil and paper game.
8. [Frog Grid Drawing](#) – download this puzzle to work on spatial reasoning and visual motor skills.
9. [Patterns Freebies](#) – this freebie includes 7 pages to practice visual motor skills!
10. [Lines, Lines and More Lines Freebie](#) – this includes simple visual-motor activities and a construction themed more challenging visual motor game.

Looking for a deal?

If you are looking for a deal on visual motor worksheets, the [Visual Motor Bundle](#) includes 18 visual motor titles. When you purchase all 18 together you get 50% off the total price. You can [view all the titles included in the bundle here](#).

Visit [Your Therapy Source](#) for more visual perceptual activities.



Read more about the research on visual motor skills in children

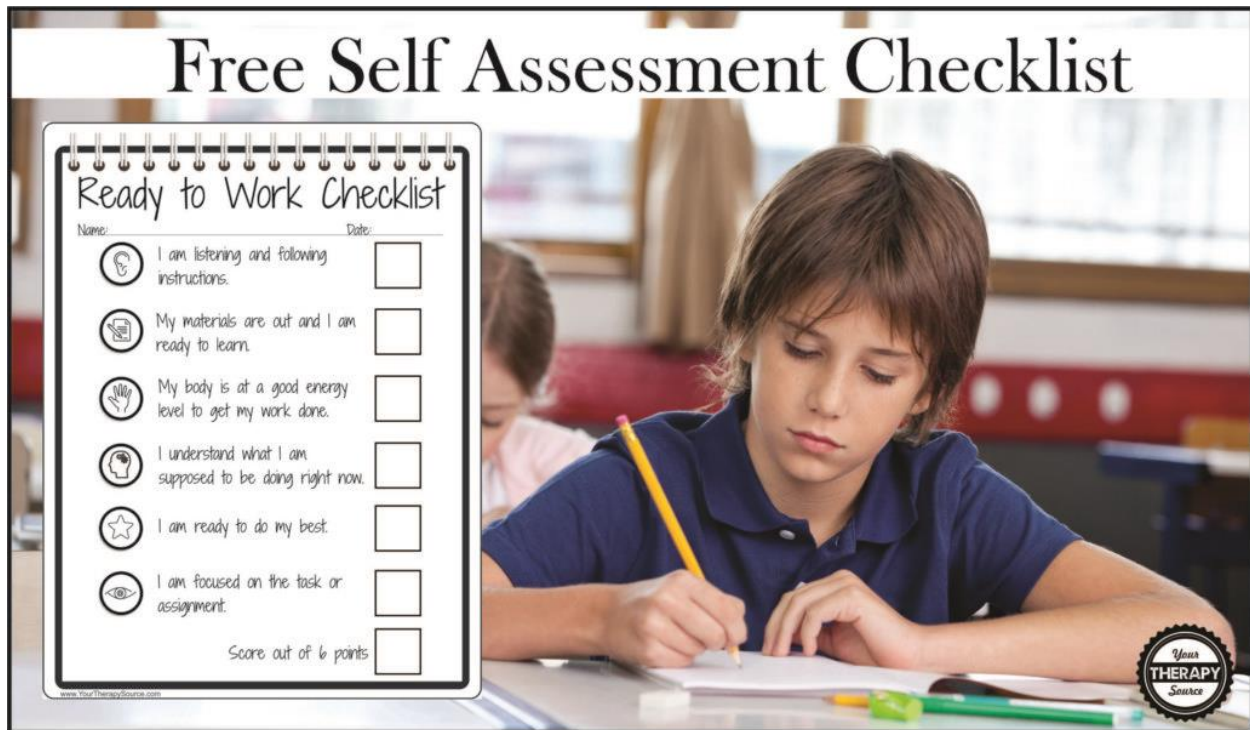
[Visual Motor Skills, Executive Function and Achievement in Children](#)

[Eye Tracking and Visual Motor Skills in Children](#)

[Visual Motor Integration Skills and Speech Sounds](#)

[Link Between Visual Motor, Object Manipulation Skills, Executive Function and Social Behavior](#)

[SELF REGULATION CHECKLIST FOR SELF MONITORING](#)



Are you looking to encourage students to improve [self-regulation skills](#) and maintain classroom expectations? This free self-regulation checklist will help students gain independence in school. This checklist helps children:

1. to understand what behaviors are expected of them.
2. how to succeed in the classroom.
3. to reflect on those behaviors during class time.

Students can refer to the self-regulation checklist throughout classroom work to check in on their organizational skills, [state of regulation](#), focus, effort, and behavior in class.

This checklist is from the [Self-Assessments and Checklists for Good Work Habits](#) digital download.

The [Self-Assessments and Checklists for Good Work Habits](#) provide 8 checklists to encourage successful students. Each checklist includes 6 areas to self-assess with written directions and picture symbols.

How to use this self-regulation checklist:

Print it out full size, half page or 4 to a page.

Review the checklist and expectations with the student.

Confirm understanding of the student.

Provide the student with the checklist for during class time.

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The student can write his/her name and date at the top.

The student can periodically refer to the checklist to self check and confirm he/she is ready to work.

The student can put a check mark in the box if the reminder is being accomplished.

When the task is completed, the student can record his/her score out of 6 points.

BONUS IDEA – student-generated data collection on his/her goals!

The image shows a 'My Goal Tracker' form. It has a red border and a multi-colored chevron pattern. The form includes sections for 'My goal is', 'I will accomplish the goal', 'I will evaluate my goal', and a 'My Goal Tracker Table' for data collection. It also has fields for 'Name' and 'School Year'. The text 'YourTherapySource' is visible at the bottom.

The student can keep track of the data using [My Goal Tracker](#). This is an electronic book of data collection forms for students to track their own progress. The student can track his/her goals over time, by monitoring the skills over the course of a day, week, month or quarter. [Find out more information.](#)

[Download your FREE Self-Regulation Checklist](#)

FUN HANDWRITING GAMES FREEBIE



There is no doubt about it, children can get tired of practicing handwriting. Even more so when they need to improve their handwriting. Handwriting is a difficult task to practice over and over again. Why not add in some fun handwriting games? This freebie can be downloaded at the end of the post.

How Do You Play the Fun Handwriting Games?

Have you ever heard of MASH, the fortune telling pencil and paper game? These two games are just like MASH but with different topics. This freebie is from the complete [fun handwriting worksheets](#) packet that includes over 20 other similar games.



There are two freebies included in the download.

How to Play the Story Starter MASH Game:

Directions: Fill in the blank boxes with your story starter ideas. Draw a spiral in the circle. Count all the rings of the spiral. It is your lucky number. Start counting up to your lucky number at the #1 character.

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Stop counting lines when you get to your lucky number. Cross that item out. Continue counting up to your lucky number and crossing items out leaving only one option left in each section to decide what story to create!

How to Play the Boredom Buster MASH Game:

Directions: Fill in the blank boxes with some boredom busting ideas. Draw a spiral in the circle. Count all the rings of the spiral. It is your lucky number. Start counting up to your lucky number at #1 in outdoor ideas. Stop counting lines when you get to your lucky number. Cross that item out. Continue counting up to your lucky number and crossing items out leaving only one option left in each section to determine what you should do next!

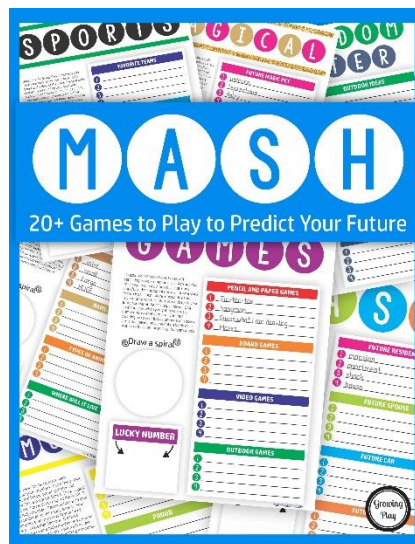
When to Use the Fun Handwriting Games?

The best thing about these two games is that you sneak in handwriting practice but you are also encouraging literacy, creativity, expressive writing, and independent play time. Wow – that is a lot for 2 pages, right?

So use them anytime! Quiet time, before screen time, rainy days, indoor recess, handwriting homeworks, when ever your child needs a boredom busting enrichment activity just print and play!

Get the Complete MASH Game Packet

Trust me, once kids start playing these games they will want to do more handwriting practice. You can get the [complete MASH Game Packet here](#).



The [MASH games for kids](#) is loaded with 20+ printables to practice handwriting, creativity and more! Busy professionals, teachers, and parents will appreciate these ready to go activities to help children succeed and have fun.

[Download your FREE Copy of the Games](#)

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