



OT Fine Motor Kit ideas

1. Clothes Pins/ tweezers or tongs

Therapeutic Benefit: Strengthens muscles used for a pincer grasp which is a precursor to a tripod grasp on writing utensils (the most efficient type of pencil grasp).

- Use for color or number matching, spelling words on a plate
- Pick up items to sort – puff balls or erasers
- Hang up doll clothing on a hanging ribbon
- Make a cute craft, Pin on animal shapes for legs
- Play leap frog with two pins around the index cards.

2. Scissors

Therapeutic Benefit: the open and closing motion of the hand against a resistive medium helps strengthen the same muscles of the hand that are used for handwriting. Cutting is also an excellent bilateral coordination activity because as one hand cuts with the scissors the other holds and moves the paper (active assist). Furthermore, cutting takes motor planning skills to plan how to cut out a figure. You can use scissor type tongs to practice picking up items.

- Cut straws to make a necklace
- Make long playdoh hot dogs and snip
- Cut along a maze or a road (great motor coordination activity)
- Cut on strips of paper or cardstock
- Use stickers for where to cut or where to place the holding hand.
- Cut up a wiki stick and form letters.

3. Putty or Playdoh

Therapeutic Benefit: Great resistive medium to strengthen little fingers. Hide items in the dough and have children find them. Then have them re-hide the items after trying some exercises below: (pennies are great to hide)

- Make a hot dog and cut it with a plastic knife or scissors
- Stick in golf tees and balance marbles on top
- Stick in dry spaghetti or skewers and string beads on them (you can do a pattern)
- Roll out dough and use cookie cutters, rolling pins and cutting wheel
- Make little balls with fingers and pinch
- Roll out into worm and spiral it to make a snail, then flatten it into a pancake shape
- Make letters out of putty.

4. Shoelaces

Therapeutic Benefit: These can be used to work on various fine motor skills. When holding the tip of the lace, children work on improving neat pincer grasp. This is an important part of dexterity.

- Use for beading to make a necklace
- Teach your child to tie shoelaces using 2 DIFFERENT colored laces
- Make punch holes on card stock paper and use shoelaces to teach lacing

5. Beads (large or small)

Therapeutic Benefit: The small size of beads provides the opportunity to work on many fine motor skills that require neat pincer grasp. They can also be used for in-hand manipulation skills such as nesting and retrieving.

- Large beads: Make bracelets or necklaces on string, pipe cleaner or shoe laces.
- Stack and sort large beads.
- Hide small beads in playdoh and look for them (strengthens fingers).
- Puting small beads on a pipe cleaner is easier than shoelaces or string. Sort by color.
- Pick up beads with kitchen tongs.

6. Dice

Therapeutic Benefits: This is a great way to improve the arch in the hand needed for proper pencil grasp and cutting. Shake two die so you can hear them click.

- Roll the dice and write down the numbers rolled.
- Use the numbers on the dice rolled to create addition, subtraction or math problems.
- Get a list of spelling words and write out the word the number ot times shown on the die rolled. Or, write that number of sentences.
- Look on google images for “roll a face”, “roll a story” or “roll and chat” and draw or discuss based on what you roll.

7. Mini Tops

Therapeutic Benefit: Tops require coordination and pincer grasp. They can also be used for in-hand manipulation skills such as nesting and retrieving.

- How long does it spin?
- count how many times you have to spin it in a minute.
- try your non-dominant hand or spin two tops at once.
- hold the top of the top and trace large playdoh or putty letters by pressing in the point of the top.

8. Cards (playing cards or index cards)

- Flip Cards over - forward to back, backwards to front, side to side.
- make a card house
- cut index cards for hand strengthening
- write on cards to make lists or fill with stickers as rewards
- draw a story on the cards
- Clip clothes pins to the cards.

9. Fidgits

Therapeutic Benefits: Calming or alerting, focus

- Children fidget to get the movement their body needs to tackle tasks.
- Alerts them and wakes up the brain
- When we ask them to sit still and focus, the brain goes back to sleep.
- Kids with ADHD move twice as much when asked to perform tasks that require “working memory” (recalling and manipulating information)

10. Wiki Stix

Therapeutic Benefits: fun to fidget with or for activities, pinch or writing and cutting.

- Place it around the top end of crayons to give children a visual and tactile cue as to where to place their fingers. Use them to form letters.
- Teach how to color in the lines by outlining a shape with the string.
- Use for word match games to connect two columns.
- Play wall tic tac toe. Great for strengthening wrist flexors.

*Bonus: Add these four items in for more fun!

Hole Puncher

Therapeutic Benefit: This is a good tool to strengthen muscles of the hand and also a great activity when teaching cutting skills because the hole puncher mimics the open/close motion of scissors.

- Teach cutting complex figures by hole punching along the shape and cut through the holes.
- Punch out holes from different colored construction paper and use the “confetti” to create a picture or write your name

Tennis Ball Buddy

Tennis Ball Buddy: Cut a 3 inch horizontal line across a tennis ball (so when you squeeze the ball, it looks like the tennis ball is opening a mouth).

- Put the coins or beans or beads inside the mouth.
- Show the child how to squeeze the ball so it opens its mouth using only one hand (preferably the dominant hand). Then have the child pick up the coins, one coin at a time, using a pincer grasp and "feed" the ball by squeezing it with the other hand and opening its mouth.
- To work on finger translation, ask the child to pick up 2-3 coins at one time and "feed" the tennis ball one coin at a time.

Stickers

Therapeutic Benefit: Stickers are small and delicate. They require children to use a neat pincer grasp with the tip of their fingers and to be gentle so as not to crumple the sticker (graded finger control).

- Draw a line to cut and place stickers on the line. Encourage cutting through the sticker.
- Place a sticker on the side of the paper where the other thumb holds the paper.
- Place a sticker on where to start a letter, for spacing words or for making dot to dot letters.
- You can also use sticker for where to place the fingers when grasping a crayon or marker.
- Write about the picture on the sticker. Make a story out of several stickers.
- Removing small stickers requires pincer work. Stickers are a great reward!

Push Pins

Therapeutic Benefits: These can help strengthen neat pincer grasp which in turn is a precursor to a tripod grasp with writing utensils.

- Use push pins to poke around a shape
- Use similar colors to match answers on a cork board
- Poke on playdoh to practice making letters

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