

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

### TOOLS FOR SCHOOL (Ideas for little hands)



Building fine motor coordination and hand strength will help children to start Kindergarten with confidence. It doesn't just happen – but you do get better at what you practice!

#### **Home Play ideas:**

- Stress balls and other squeeze toys;
- Screw lids on and off jars;
- Using clothes pegs – wash doll's clothes and hang on line, make patterns with coloured pegs around ice cream containers;
- Threading – beads, macaroni, straws, or make holes with a hole punch in cardboard and thread through the holes;
- Encourage play with marbles – how many can they pick up at once in 1 hand, pick up and post them in a jar 1 at a time;
- Pegboards, threading, pinching playdough;
- Encourage the child to practice touching their thumb to each of their fingers. Roll plasticine into a snake and squeeze the snake between their thumb and each finger. Hide marbles in dough or plasticine and then find.

#### **Drawing:**

- Completing a picture is easier and less daunting than starting from scratch – you take turns to add parts of a person, parts on a face, a house, a car etc – you might start by just having them put the wheels on your car;
- Dot to dots, mazes, sticker and puzzle books;
- Drawing in sand, shave foam, gloop etc;
- Big crayons on big pieces of paper – on the wall, on a blackboard or whiteboard;
- Colouring – shade in most of the picture and let them finish it off with a crayon;
- Groovy textas – scented pens, vibrating pens, stampers and pattern makers add interest for reluctant drawers!
- For fun patterns draw on paper on different surfaces - over wire mesh, on concrete, on foam, or corrugated cardboard.

**Scissoring:**

- You need good preschool scissors that can be used in either hand;
- Using tweezers or little tongs to pick up tiny objects is good practice for scissoring;
- Cutting plasticine, straws, old Christmas or birthday cards;
- Cutting along very thick straight lines, then angled lines, then wavy lines – as skill develops;
- Get them to cut a magazine picture into 3 or 4 pieces and then paste back together;
- Cutting out shapes to make a hanging mobile, Christmas decorations or a king's crown to wear;
- Bargaining!! – see if they will try a table top, or craft activity before an outside game or TV.

**Grasp skills:**

- Use larger crayons;
- Use small stubs of crayons;
- Drawing on a vertical surface;
- 'Pinch the pencil' with thumb and pointer finger.

For further information or advice please ring the Paediatric Occupational Therapist.

Rhonda is available Monday to Thursday  
at Byron Central Hospital  
Ewingsdale Rd  
Ph 026639 9400

