

# Occupational Therapy Advice

2021



## DEVELOPING HAND AND ARM STRENGTH:

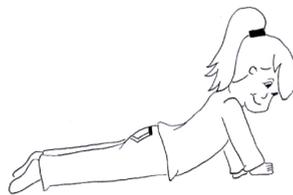
*In order to use hands effectively a child needs strength. As children grow up, they increasingly use their arms to crawl and pull, climb and push. Finger strength develops through involvement in fine motor activities such as construction games and craft activities. Lack of strength in hands and fingers may cause a child to have difficulties holding a pencil or mean that their hands get tired easily during writing tasks.*

### **Suggested strategies and activities:**

- \* Climbing on climbing frames, monkey bars and obstacle courses.
- \* Animal walks: see how many different animals you can think of!



Crab



Seal



Bear

- \* Tug-of-war with a piece of cord or rope
- \* Bat and ball games
- \* Try household activities such as hanging up washing with clothes pegs, wringing out wet clothes or carrying shopping bags.
- \* Playdough or theraputty exercises are great to increase hand strength and finger skill. Try making your favourite animals or use commercially available playdough cutters and rollers.
- \* Baking is lots of fun and helps to increase hand and arm strength. Knead the dough between the two hands, roll it out with a rolling pin and press flat. Use cookie cutters to make the biscuits and decorate with smarties or small silver balls etc.
- \* Keep a stress ball for journeys in the car or bus or when watching TV. Squeeze it using one hand at a time.
- \* Construction games such as Lego or Maccano where you have to pull pieces apart, push them together or manipulate them.
- \* Toilet paper races: Tear a piece of toilet paper and lay it out on the table. Place your hand down on the table so that your fingers touch the one edge toilet paper. Keep the ball of your hand still on the table and scrunch up the rest of the toilet paper using your fingers, trying not to let any of the toilet paper be seen out of the cracks in your fingers.
- \* Scrunching up newspaper using one hand or hands together to make balls for indoor play/paper mache etc.



- \* Use a hole punch to make holes as a border around pictures that you can thread through. Try commercially available shape punches to add to craft pictures.
- \* Plant sprayers or water guns can be used to aim at targets or make patterns on the floor outside. Try adding some food colouring to the water or glitter to make this more fun!
- \* Craft activities: Use squeeze tube glues to stick decorative pieces onto your pictures. You can use rice, lentils, cotton wool balls or tear small pieces of paper to make your pictures more interesting. See if you can pick these up using tweezers!
- \* Finger wrestling
- \* Finger puppets: Start with one only on index finger, then build up to one on each finger. Make up different stories and use your imagination!

*Let us know if you have any questions!*