

Occupational Therapy Education Pack

Contents page

Page Name	Page Number
Occupational Therapy	2
Toilet training	3
Dressing skills	7
Shoe laces	9
Ball skills	11
Scissor skills	13
Pre-writing skills	14
Handwriting	16
Joint Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy Section	
Play	20
Attention and listening	22
Advice for P.E.	24
Environmental Factors	24
Appendix	
How to run a group	26
Toileting record chart	28
Examples of visual aids for shoe lacing	29

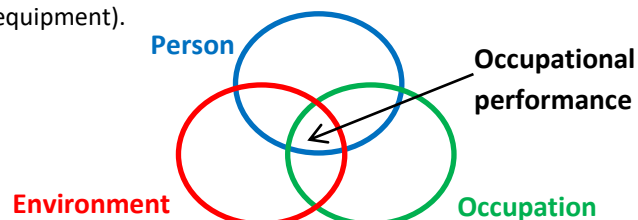
Occupational Therapy (OT)

Occupational therapy can help babies, infants, children and young people grow, learn, have fun, socialise and play so they can develop, thrive and reach their full potential (RCOT, 2017).

What do we mean by “Occupation”?

"Occupation" as a term refers to practical and purposeful activities that allow people to live independently and have a sense of identity. This could be essential day-to-day tasks such as self-care, work or leisure (RCOT, 2017). For children, occupations mean the everyday things that occupy children, which can include play, handwriting, dressing, feeding, toileting and teeth brushing, among many others.

Occupational Therapists (OTs) often talk about “occupational performance” (OP). This is how a child’s performance is impacted by themselves (the “person”), the occupation and their environment. Occupational therapists will consider these areas and what needs to be, or can be, changed in order to make the activity accessible to the child (examples include person: the child’s motivation or self-confidence, occupation: making the task easier or using visuals and environment: reducing noises, providing equipment).



Occupational Therapy in Newham

We operate within “episodes of care”, meaning children are referred, and these referrals are then screened by highly specialist occupational therapists who decide if the referral has met our service criteria, and if so whether they need to attend a screening session or can go straight for a block of therapy. The screening session is an opportunity to gather more information about the child and their occupational performance, and it can be decided at this point if the child needs OT and whether this can be provided as part of a group or via 1:1 therapy. The team offer up to 4x 1:1 therapy sessions within a block. These can take place in the

clinic, school or home environment as necessary. After a child has received therapy they will be discharged with a report and activity suggestions.

This is generally sent to parents, the SENCo of the school they attend and their GP. There may be information on there for school and some for home. The family and school are expected to trial the strategies in the programme for a 4 month period, and if they feel they need further help they are able to contact the OT department for a telephone review appointment. The child can be re-referred if they need further input at a later date. The service has an open referral system therefore anyone (including parents) can refer.

What is the purpose of this pack in regards to OT?

This education pack will be exploring common school-based occupations that children are involved in and common difficulties some children may face when participating in these. It aims to provide school staff with useful information about these occupations and strategies they can try in order to maximise a child’s ability to participate in these tasks to the best of their ability, without, or prior to, referring to Children’s Occupational Therapy.

Many of the suggestions in this pack can be utilised by schools in a “whole-school” approach, meaning they can be used with all children in the class, rather than individual children. Some, however, will need to be approaches for specific children.

It is important to be aware that this pack is not to replace an Occupational Therapist, however it should be used as a support to schools in helping children who may not meet the eligibility criteria for specialist OT input or to provide some input prior to referring to occupational therapy, or whilst children are waiting to be allocated to an Occupational Therapist.

References

Hutton, E. (2009) Occupational therapy in mainstream primary schools: an evaluation of a pilot project. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 72(7), 308-313.

Royal College of Occupational Therapists (2017) What is occupational therapy? Available at:

<https://www.rcot.co.uk/about-occupational-therapy/what-is-occupational-therapy> (Accessed: 23/01/18)

Toilet Training



Toileting may look different for different children; some will take themselves to the toilet and complete the full process independently, some may need help with certain parts of the task and others may need to be “habit trained” where an adult takes them when they have predicted the child is most likely to go, rather than the child informing an adult.

Readiness

Children develop readiness (physically and psychologically) for toilet training at different ages. The teacher (in school and parents) also needs to be ready to devote time and effort to develop this skill in the child.

It is important to assess in the first instance whether a child is ready to start the process of toilet training. The key points to consider are:

- Child can stay dry in a nappy for at least 2 hours.
- Can sit on toilet for five minutes
- Child should have a fibre rich diet and have a regular fluid intake to begin toileting.

Awareness

Is the child aware of their toileting needs, or even what a toilet is or what it is for? Are they indicating their urges at all, such as doing a little “dance” when they need a wee, or hiding to have a bowel



The first thing to see if a child is ready is to complete a toileting chart (*see appendix*) over a 2 week period to monitor their bladder and bowel habits. This is where the child’s nappy is checked every hour during waking hours and it is record whether they are dry/wet/soiled. This will then indicate if they are able to “hold” as well as whether they have any pattern with their eliminations that you can use, such as taking them 15 minutes before they normally eliminate, increasing the chance of success.

movement?

There are ways in which you can increase a child’s awareness for toileting before they are being toilet trained. These are:

- Teach the child a word, sign or gesture for “toilet”.
- Take the child to the toilet using the word, sign or gesture you have taught them each time they need their nappy changed, and change them in this room.

- If the child has had a bowel movement, you should empty the nappy into the toilet in front of the child so they understand that this is where poo’s go.

- Using simple and consistently language when changing nappies, for example “you have had a wee”.
- Use of modelling: this is where a child watches another child or adult (such as their siblings or parents) go to the toilet. This is a powerful way to learn.
- Read a social story with a child that explains the toileting process.
- It may be useful to put the child in pants if they are able to hold their eliminations to encourage their awareness of wet/dry.
- Watch for signs (pulling self, fidgeting) that may mean they have to go. Praise the child, say the word/sign/gesture associated with toileting and immediately take the child to the bathroom.

The child won’t sit on the toilet!

Some children can find the toilet scary or uncomfortable, and will refuse to stay on the toilet or even go near it. There are different ways to encourage children to remain seated.

These are:

- Let the child see other people on the toilet.
- Use a reward for when the child sits on the toilet. Give this immediately afterwards so they understand why it has been given then gradually increase the length of time that you expect them to stay on the toilet. *See chapter on reinforcers for more information.*
- Ensure the toilet is comfortable – see “environment” section below.
- Some children find change difficult so it will be necessary to introduce the toileting routine gradually, first requiring the child to enter the bathroom clothed, then to sit clothed on the toilet, then in a nappy, then unclothed. Start with the toilet seat down if necessary.
- Read a social story about toileting.
- Use a visual timer (a sand timer or an app) so the child can see how long they need to sit for.
- Try to distract the child when they are on the toilet.
- Don’t expect the child to sit for longer than 5 minutes!



Developing a routine

It will be useful to develop a toileting routine with the child, either if they are or are not ready for toilet training.

Encourage the child to be part of the toileting routine with peers, therefore going at the same time as them even if they are not using the toilet but instead sitting on it, flushing then washing and drying their hands.

Date:	Time:	Meals/Sleep	Bladder	Bowel	Comments
		Drink (D) Food (F) Sleep (S)	Wet Nappy (WN) Wet in toilet (WT) Dry (L-)	Poos in nappy (PN) Poos in toilet (PT) Dry (L-)	Showered/changed (A) Indicated/need (B) Toileted with no result (NR)
	6 am				
	7 am				
	8 am				
	9 am				
	10 am				
	11 am				
	12 pm				
	1 pm				
	2 pm				
	3 pm				
	4 pm				
	5 pm				
	6 pm				
	7 pm				
	8 pm				

This increases their understanding of the toileting process, but also gets them used to the environment.

Look at their toileting chart you have previously completed and pick regular times to take them where they are most likely to be successful – e.g. if they are always wet 30 minutes after they have had a drink, try to take them 15 minutes before this point.



If a child does not eliminate when you expect them to, allow them to sit for maximum of 5 minutes then take them again 15 minutes later.

Environment

The toileting environment is a very important factor to developing toileting skills. It needs to be comfortable and set up to enable the child to develop the skill. It is important that:

The toilet is the correct height for the child where their feet can touch the floor; if the toilet is too high a step should be used to support their feet.

You consider the size of the aperture on the toilet. If it is very wide, this can both be scary and uncomfortable for the child. A toilet seat minimiser (often called a toilet trainer seat or a ring reducer) should be placed on the toilet¹.

Outside distractions are reduced, therefore try to keep the toilet a calm and quiet environment.

You consider a toilet frame² if required for the child. This can enable them to independently get on/off the toilet and sit comfortably.

For some children it is the room that is scary or uncomfortable; there may be strange or strong smells, sounds or temperatures for example.

You could try to decorate the room to make it more appealing to the child, for example if they like shiny things you could put a birthday banner on the wall.

If there are smells the child likes that you can easily place in the bathroom, e.g. potpourri, put these in the room instead. If the child is aversive to smells, keep artificial smells to a minimum.



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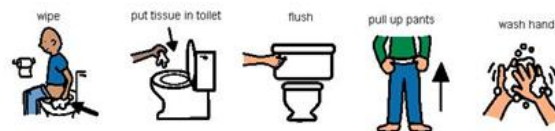
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Create a calm and relaxing atmosphere suited to the child's sensory needs, using music or their favourite calming toys or materials as appropriate.

Some children may benefit from the use of a padded toilet seat³.

Remembering the steps

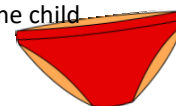


For some children they may understand toileting and their urges, but often forget part of the process. For these children it may be worth sticking a visual aid on the wall that details each step of the task so they can follow this process as they go.

See example below:

Dressing/undressing

Use clothing which is easy to remove for the child in order to reduce stress, but also so they can take it off quickly as often children cannot hold long once they realise they need to go. See chapter on dressing for further information.



The child won't get rid of the nappy!

For some children this is a big change which they find difficult. Some tips to assist with this are:



Introduce underwear gradually. Initially leave this out for them to touch/look at and tell them that they are theirs, but do not make them wear them for now.

Allow the child to have choice by taking them to choose their own underwear from the shop, or when they are tolerating wearing them for a small period of time, give them 2 options of underwear to put on.



Encourage parents to provide motivating underwear, such as those with the child's favourite character on.

Put underwear on for a limited time at first and gradually build this up. A child may need a timer to show them how long to leave them on for at first.

Use a reinforcer when they have worn their underwear (See section on *reinforcers* in appendix).

Read a social story about toileting which discusses underwear.

Cut a hole in the bottom of the child's nappies if they have control over their bladder/bowel.

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Generalising

Some children find it difficult to use the toilet in other places. With these children you may find they use the toilet at home but not at school or vice versa.

- ✎ Take the child as normal to the toilet they do not use and complete the toileting routine regardless of whether they eliminate or sit on the toilet.
- ✎ See the other sections if this is relevant (e.g. will not sit on the toilet).
- ✎ Allow the child to see other children going to the toilet.
- ✎ When beginning toilet training, try to use different toilets (e.g. different toilets around the school, not just the nearest).

Bottom wiping

Many children have challenges in learning how to wipe their own bottom. For some children they find it difficult knowing where to reach without being able to see their bottom, for others it may be because they are scared about getting their hands messy or just don't know what to do.



- ✎ Explain to the child why they need to wipe their bottom, such as to stop a bad smell or an itchy bottom.
- ✎ Make sure the child's feet are support (see *environment*) as this helps the child to be able to reach.
- ✎ Show the child what they need to do, either encourage parents to do this at home or with by using a doll. This may include showing the child how many pieces of toilet roll to get, how to fold it, how to wipe and how to check. You can make a mixture of brown paint, water and corn flour to create fake poo.
- ✎ Encourage the child to practise this with wiping the mixture described above off a doll's bottom in the way they would do their own (wipe then check, new toilet roll, wipe then check).
- ✎ It may be easier for the child to stand to wipe their bottom, rather than sit.
- ✎ Have the child pass something, such as bean bags, between their legs as this will demonstrate whether they have the movement in order to reach around to their bottom.
- ✎ Use wet wipes rather than toilet roll.



Smearing

There are many different reasons a child may smear their poo, such as finding wiping difficult, behavioural difficulties,

boredom, being uncomfortable or in pain, not understanding, to gain attention or sensory seeking.

You can try:

- ✎ Encouraging parents to dress child in clothing where they will have difficulties accessing their bottom to do this, such as dungarees.
- ✎ Try to change the child as soon as possible after they have passed a bowel movement if they are in nappies.
- ✎ When clearing up providing as little attention to the child as possible in order to not provide any positive reinforcement for the behaviour.
- ✎ If it is due to difficulties wiping their bottom, see section on "Bottom wiping".
- ✎ If smearing happens at certain times, prevent this by providing an alternative activity or a distraction.
- ✎ Ensure the child has different activities to do in their time. Some children find it difficult to think of how to fill their time and therefore engage in "unwanted" behaviours. It may be useful to provide workshop style activities, where they are able to go between many different short activities to reduce boredom.



Other things to be aware of

- ✎ It is very important for the child that both school and home start toilet training at the same time. It may be useful to plan a meeting and set an action plan, with the next meeting arranged to review, and to handover at the start/end of each day.
- ✎ Times of stress or sudden change are not suitable times to start toilet training for children or their families. Examples of these times are a recent move, a new baby or another transition phase.
- ✎ Accidents happen! They should be treated lightly with little attention. Use simple language with little emotion to increase awareness of what happened if they do not appear bothered "wee's go in the toilet", or if they are upset "it is ok, wee's go in the toilet". Do not change them immediately, and when you do encourage the child to do as much of changing clothing themselves.
- ✎ With children who find change or transitions difficult (e.g. children with a diagnosis of ASD) it is not recommended to use potty chairs as they may find the transition from this to the toilet difficult.
- ✎ Running water whilst the child is seated on the toilet may increase the chances of urination.
- ✎ Both school and home should try to use the same language and toileting set up.



- 1. If difficulties are not improving with intervention, the child may need to see their GP for further help. Some difficulties may be because of medical reasons that need ruling out.
- 2. It is important that if a child is showing any signs of constipation that lasts for a prolonged period of time, the family should be encouraged to seek further help from their GP.

Resources

1. Toilet seat minimiser:
<https://www.wilko.com/en-uk/wilko-training-seat/p/0493778>
2. Toilet frame:
<https://www.nrshealthcare.co.uk/bathroom-aids/children-s-bathroom-equipment/children-s-toileting-showering/nuvo-childrens-toilet-frame>
3. Padded toilet seat:
<https://www.nrshealthcare.co.uk/bathroom-aids/children-s-bathroom-equipment/children-s-toileting-showering/padded-toilet-seat-ring-reducer>

ERIC, The Children's Bladder and Bowel Charity:
<https://www.eric.org.uk/>

Toileting charts (*see appendix*)

Dressing Skills



Dressing may seem like a simple task, but it requires multiple skill sets from children.

Dressing includes all these different tasks that we all do every day such as: putting on and taking off shoes, socks, garments and fastening buttons and zips.

Top general tips

- ☞ Undressing is learnt and mastered before dressing. Work on this area first!
- ☞ Make sure the child is well supported physically during dressing. Use a small chair to sit on or sit on the floor against a wall to give a stable base.
- ☞ Encourage the child to use a mirror while getting dressed to check that their clothes are on correctly!
- ☞ Teach the child to dress in the same order each time, e.g. underwear first, then trousers, t-shirt etc.
- ☞ Try the 'backward chaining' method! Let the child complete the last part of the dressing task and you do the rest. As their skills gradually develop they can carry out more and more steps of the activity until they can do it independently!

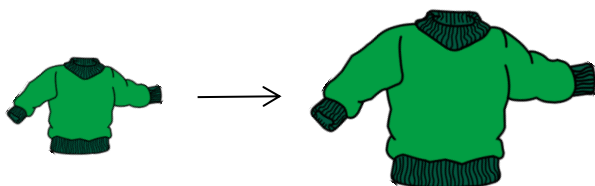
For example – socks:

Start by putting the sock over the foot and heel encourage the child to complete the end of the task by pulling up the leg.



When they have learnt this, they can pull it over their heel.

- ☞ Choose clothing of larger sizes when practicing as it would be easier for the child to put larger garments on. Loose sleeves and elasticated waistbands can also help with achieving independence!



- ☞ It is important to talk through the steps of the tasks using simple 'describing' words e.g. 'Now pull your t-shirt over your head'. This is even if you are assisting.
- ☞ To better help the child save time and be more organised, you can lay the clothes out in order they are put on (laid out in the same way each time).
- ☞ Motivate the child using star charts! Award with a sticker either when a piece of clothing is put on independently or within a certain time allowed. Never

forget to give plenty of praise for hard work and achievement!



- ☞ Make sure the child has time to practise dressing and in an environment that is not stressful, e.g. dressing for P.E. may not be the best time to practise a completely new skill due to the time constraints to get dressed, however they may be able to practise one element (for example if working on buttons, child to complete 1 button, not all).
- ☞ Grade the level of prompting you give to the child when teaching dressing skills. Start by giving physical prompts, then move to visual prompting, and at last verbally prompt the child.

Physical prompting
Visual prompting
Verbal prompting ↓

- ☞ When the child has a weaker side to their body, prompt them to dress the weaker side first and when undressing, remove the stronger side first.
- ☞ Some children may need adaptations made to school clothing in order to make it more accessible for them, e.g. for children who have poor fine motor skills it may be better for school clothes to have Velcro rather than buttons to allow them to dress independently and quickly.
- ☞ The child may benefit from watching videos on YouTube of children practising their dressing skills.
- ☞ Try, as much as is possible, to keep dressing practise meaningful and motivating for the child. This may mean practising with a purpose (e.g. when changing for P.E., when putting their coat on for breaks or home time, practising when playing dressing up or when going swimming).
- ☞ Remember that repetition is key! It may take some children many times to learn the skills to complete dressing.
- ☞ Try to practise dressing skills in a calm and quiet environment with as least distractions as possible.

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- As a child's skills develop they may benefit from the use of a visual aid in order for them to be independent and remember what to do next.
- Consider whether it would be better for the child to use equipment to assisting with dressing, such as a dressing stick, long handled reaching aid, shoe horn or sock aid.
- Some children's sensory needs can impact their dressing skills and therefore it is important to consider these! For example, a child may be aversive to certain textures and not be able to tolerate the feeling of zips or labels touching their skin. For this child labels should be cut out and zips should not be used unless the inside can be covered (and they can tolerate this).

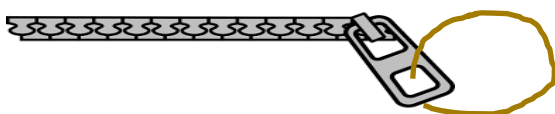
Mixing up

- Use clothing items that have a clear front and back, e.g. has a logo on the front or big buttons to reinforce front and back. You can also remind the child that the clothing label goes to the back of the jumper or T-shirt.
- If the clothing items do not have labels you can add small labels to them to indicate front/back.
- A helpful strategy is also to lay out the garment face down for the child.
- For children who put shoes on the wrong feet, it could be helpful to draw half of something in each shoe (on the right hand side of the left shoe and the left hand side of the right shoe) such as a smiley face. If the shoes are placed correctly together, the drawing will match up to create a whole; if they are the wrong way around it will not.



Tips for zips and buttons

- Start practicing with large buttons and gradually reduce the size as larger buttons are easier to hold and manipulate. Bear in mind that buttons are easier if flat and textured.
- You can always adapt zips to make it easier for the child to do their zips independently! Buy clips that attach to zips to make them larger or loop a piece of elastic or a hair band through the eye of the zip to make a loop.



- Practise doing the buttons and zips on toys, or start with the garment placed in front of the child on a table, not on them.
- Break down the task and demonstrate each step to the child!
- Some children may need adaptations made to school clothing in order to make it more accessible for them, e.g. for children who have poor fine motor skills it may be better for school clothes to have Velcro rather than buttons to allow them to dress independently and quickly and sew buttons on to top flap. Some retailers sell adapted clothing, e.g. M&S.
- Other children may need equipment to use in order to enable them to be independent with fastenings, such as a button hook or zip pull.
- Use the backward chaining method described in the "Top general tips" section for teaching buttons/zips as well.
- Practise when sitting rather than standing as then children do not have to concentrate on their balance and other physical skills whilst also concentrating on completing this.

Resources

- Marks and Spencer kids Easy Dressing range (including school uniform)
<https://www.marksandspencer.com/l/kids/easy-dressing>
- Button hook with zip pull:
<https://www.nrshealthcare.co.uk/bedroom-seating-aids/comfort-posture-aids/getting-dressed/button-hook-with-zipper-pull>
- Dressing stick:
<https://www.nrshealthcare.co.uk/bedroom-seating-aids/comfort-posture-aids/getting-dressed/dressing-stick-deluxe>
- Long handled reaching aid:
<https://www.nrshealthcare.co.uk/household-aids/reachers/nrs-combi-reacher>
- Sock aid:
<https://www.nrshealthcare.co.uk/bedroom-seating-aids/comfort-posture-aids/getting-dressed/sock-helper>
- Shoe horn:
<https://www.nrshealthcare.co.uk/bedroom-seating-aids/comfort-posture-aids/getting-dressed/plastic-shoe-horn-2>

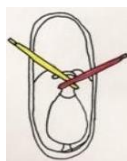
Shoe laces



Shoe lacing is often a skill that children learn later in their childhood and many find difficult. It is a complex task that requires many different skills to complete.

Tips for shoe laces

- 👉 Shoe lacing is best learned step by step. As this task is particularly tricky for most children it is helpful to master the first step before moving onto the next.
- 👉 Demonstrate the step to the child and talk through to them what you are doing. Go slowly and exaggerated and use simple language.
- 👉 Practise with two different coloured laces to make following the shoe lace tying instructions easier.
- 👉 Thicker shoe laces are easier to start practising with than thinner. Rope might be even easier for those who really struggle.
- 👉 Some children will benefit from using a visual aid to continue practising independently. *See appendix.*
- 👉 It is often good to use a mnemonic, with simple language, for the step shoe lacing you are teaching (e.g. "loop, wrap and pull!" to make the bow for method 1 below). This helps children remember the steps of what they need to do.
- 👉 It may be useful for some children to first learn the method without wearing the shoe, then transition to completing it when wearing as they become more competent, however this would depend on the child.
- 👉 Video modelling (watching videos of other children doing the task) can also be another useful teaching tool!



Methods

Remember there are 2 typical methods to tying shoe laces. Some children will find it easier to learn one method over another. It may be worth trying both to see which the child finds easier.

Method 1: Single loop

1. Cross the laces over and push the one in front behind, under the other and through the hole underneath. Pull tight.

2. Make a loop (a "bunny ear") with one lace and hold the bottom of it between your thumb and finger; try to get the bottom of it as close to the knot you made in step 1 as possible.
3. Wrap the other lace around the loop and push it half way through the "burrow" (the hole underneath the bunny ear) until you have another loops or "bunny ear".
4. Pull them tight!

Method 2: Bunny ears

1. Cross the laces over and push the one in front behind, under the other and through the hole underneath. Pull tight.
2. Make a loop ("bunny ear") with both laces and hold the base of both of these as close to the knot you made in step 1 as possible.
3. Cross the loops/bunny ears over then fold the one in front behind the other one and push it through the "burrow" (hole) between the bases of the 2 loops.
4. Pull them tight!

Method 3: One-handed


For some children, such as those who have paralysis or weakness of one side, they may find shoe lacing difficult to complete independently. These children may benefit from learning how to tie their shoes with a different method called the one-handed method. For these children it would be worth referring to the Occupational Therapy team for further advice.

Adaptations

Some children may not be able to complete laces, or may not want to. For these children you could consider using elastic shoe laces, spring shoe laces or lock laces; these turn a shoe with laces into a slip on shoe. It may also be worth encouraging parents to use shoes without laces to enable the child to be independent.

Resources

- 👉 Elastic shoe laces:
<https://www.nrshealthcare.co.uk/bedroom-seating-aids/comfort-posture-aids/getting-dressed/elastic-shoe-laces-3-pair-pack>
- 👉 Lock laces:
<https://www.locklaces.com/>

-  Spring laces:
<https://www.nrshealthcare.co.uk/bedroom-seating-aids/comfort-posture-aids/getting-dressed/spring-laces-pair>
-  Visual aid for shoe lacing (see *appendix*).

Ball Skills



Ball skills are a complex set of skills to develop; they take a combination of many elements, such as timing, eye tracking, ability to adjust speed, distance and direction.

Balls also come in many different shapes and sizes as well, making these skills even more difficult to learn. All ball skills require a lot of practise and repetition to develop.

Throwing

In order to successfully throw a ball you need to:

- ⚽ Be in the correct position to throw
- ⚽ Be able to judge the distance and direction for the ball to be thrown
- ⚽ Be able to judge the force to be applied to throwing the ball

Tips to develop throwing skills in the beginning:

- 🟡 Begin with the child rolling the ball to a target (e.g. bowling skittles) or to you, prior to throwing. This allows them to develop control over the ball in an easier way.
- 🟡 Start with large balls and gradually reduce the size as the child increases their skills.
- 🟡 Begin with the target close to the child, and then as the child develops their skills gradually move this further away.
- 🟡 Some children will require explicit advice to improve their skills, for example they may need to be told how to move their arms or where to look (such as at the target).
- 🟡 Some children will benefit from watching videos of other people throwing balls to reflect on the way they do this and the skills they use.

Tips to develop throwing skills as the child's skills develop:

- 🟡 Start to introduce balls (or similar, e.g. beanbags) of differing sizes and weights to practise with.
- 🟡 Plan activities so the child aims balls at different heights and throws to different lengths.
- 🟡 Use different objects for the child to knock down which require different amounts of force to knock, e.g. filling up bottles with sand to change their weight.

- 🟡 Complete throwing/catching in a group with the child and their peers.

Catching

In order to successfully catch a ball you need to:

- ⚽ Be prepared to catch
- ⚽ Keep your eyes on the ball
- ⚽ Successfully trap the ball in the palm of your hand(s).

Tips to develop catching skills in the beginning:

- 🟡 Start by using a large, light object, such as a volley ball or balloon. As this will move through the air at a slower pace, it provides time for the child to get in the position ready to catch. The size also makes the object easier to catch.
- 🟡 Start close to the child and as their skills develop move gradually further away.
- 🟡 Some children will benefit from explicitly being told (or even placed) in the correct position to catch a ball and may need reminding to think about how their body feels to remember the position for next time. They may also need reminding to watch the ball rather than the thrower.

Tips to develop catching skills as the child's skills improve:

- 🟡 As the child gets better, begin throwing slightly to one side of the child so they have the change their position to catch the ball.
- 🟡 Start introducing a bounce into the throw.
- 🟡 Have the child throw a ball against a wall and try to introduce a clap in before catching

Important things to remember

Motivation is an important factor when learning a new skill, such as ball skills. For this there are a few ways to improve motivation:

- ⚽ Some children may prefer to practise with a peer rather than an adult; an adult can still provide instructions to ensure the activity still follows a "just right challenge" (not so challenging they are likely to fail but challenging enough that they feel a sense of achievement with success).
- ⚽ Some children may enjoy when there is an aspect of competition. This could be built-in in other ways to the activity, rather than the ball skills themselves.

- ⚽ Some children may prefer completing the activity in a more covert way, e.g. tossing a scrunched up piece of paper into the bin, rather than using a ball.
- ⚽ Other games, such as swing ball or tennis ball, where the child is not throwing or catching can also help with ball skills as the child has to develop the same skills, such as tracking the ball, however consider the skill level of the child and activity (e.g. swing ball is often easier than tennis for children).

Scissors Skills

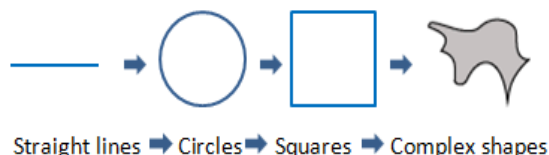


Scissors are a complex occupation requiring postural, fine motor and hand-eye coordination skills as well as using both hands together and isolating movements of fingers and thumb.

Children are usually **ready to start cutting** by the **age of 3**.

Developmental sequence of scissors skills

Before cutting actual shapes make sure that the child is able to open and close the scissors first and snip a piece of paper after!



The basics of scissors use

Before starting a cutting activity, make sure that the child is:

- ✂ Maintaining a good posture with feet flat on the floor
- ✂ Using two hands – one hand should hold the paper, while the other cuts
- ✂ Holding the scissors with the thumbs of both hands pointing upwards
- ✂ Moving the hand that holds the paper not the scissor hand
- ✂ Looking at what they are doing!

Scissor grasp

The correct scissor grasp is with thumb and middle finger through the loops. The index finger needs to be placed on the underside of the scissors to provide support and direct the cutting movement.

Remember that the dominant hand is the one holding the scissors and the 'helping hand' is holding the paper!



Scissor control

In order to control the scissor the following are essential:

- ✓ Grasping and releasing the scissor so that the scissor blades can open and close effectively

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- ✓ Isolating the 3 fingers involved in the scissor grasp in order to move independently

Tips for developing scissor use

- ✂ As paper is flimsy and difficult to hold, practise with cutting thin card paper instead or straws and play dough!
- ✂ Cut in short snips following straight lines, and then increase the length. Remember the developmental sequence of scissor skills and gradually move from cutting basic to complex shapes!
- ✂ Consider using other types of scissors such as ones with larger finger loops or rubber loops for children who struggle with grasping regular ones (See links in Resources). Try different ones and ask the child's opinion on which one feels more comfortable and of course motivating!
- ✂ If the child has difficulty opening and closing the scissors to cut, try scissors that spring open again themselves!
- ✂ For children who struggle with holding a big piece of paper, cut along wide strips of paper/lines, then grade the activities to narrower lines!
- ✂ Encourage the child to look at the hinge of the blades of the scissors, when cutting, rather than the tips, as this is where the cut will be made from.

Left-handed children

- 👍 For the left-handed ones, always use a left-handed pair of scissors otherwise the child will cut using an awkward technique and will not be able to see where they are cutting.
- 👍 When cutting directionality is really essential! Left-handers find it easier to cut out shapes clockwise and right-handers anti-clockwise.

Resources

- ✂ Adapted easi-grip scissors: <https://peta-uk.com/shop/mini-easi-grip-scissors-3/>
- ✂ Adapted long loop scissors: <https://peta-uk.com/shop/long-loop-scissors/>
- ✂ Table top mounted adapted scissors: <https://peta-uk.com/shop/mounted-table-top-scissors/>
- ✂ Adapted scissors kit: <https://peta-uk.com/shop/essential-scissors-kit/>

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Pre-writing Skills



Pre-writing is the developmental stage before a child learns to write. During pre-writing a child will develop their pencil grasp, control and ability to draw the shapes that make up complex letter and number shapes.

It is important that a child has plenty of opportunities to draw in order to learn how to hold and control a pencil. Any drawing is a good way to encourage these skills!

Pencil grasp

A child's grasp will develop as they grow. The grasp they use is important, but it is also important not to force a child to change their grasp but rather encourage a more functional grasp.



1 – 1½ years

Palmar Supinate Grasp



2 – 3 years

Digital Pronate Grasp



3½ – 4 years

Static Tripod Grasp







4½ – 6 years

Dynamic Tripod Grasp



Please note that some children may not fall in the parameters above in development of pencil grasp therefore follow the tips below, however do not expect children to be able to learn these earlier than the ages above.

Tips for developing a more functional grasp:

-  Use small, chunky pencils or chalk; the width makes them easier for a child to hold and the length means a child cannot use a less-functional grasp, such as a palmer supinate grasp.
-  Pen(cil)s with a grip (sometimes built in) will provide a visual prompt for where children need to place their fingers. If you do not have these you can also place a marker on the pencil (such as a bit of contrasted tape, a hair bobble or some playdoh shaped around the pencil, which can mould to the shape of their hand).
-  There are some specialist pencil grips and pen(cil)s that can be used to encourage a tripod grip, such as a triangular pencil, triangular grips or Twist 'N' Write pen.
-  Lay a pencil in front of the child, tip side facing them. Ask the child to pick it up between their index finger and thumb approximately 1cm from the tip (higher for left handers) and flip it back into the webbing of their hand.

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Pencil control




When learning how to mark make, children will first develop the ability to scribble without the ability to contain this (it may not stay on the page). The next stage is scribbling shapes (such as straight lines).

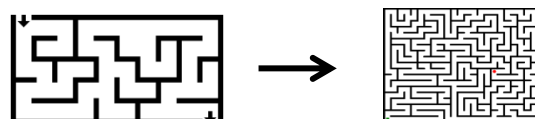
After that children will start to learn how to draw the basic shapes which are required in order to be able to write letters and numbers. These shapes are:







A child will learn how to form straight lines and a circle first, followed by diagonal lines and crosses, then a triangle.

Tips for developing pencil control:



-  Any freehand drawing is good to develop pencil control.
-  Straight lines are developmentally the easiest shapes to draw therefore you should start with them, transitioning to large curved lines, then tighter curved lines and eventually zig-zags.
-  Have the child draw between 2 lines, starting wide apart and with straight lines, then decreasing the width and changing to curved/wiggly/zigzag lines as the child's pencil control increases.



-  Mazes are also a fun way to increase a child's pencil control. Start with mazes that are less complex and have wider spaces, then transition to thinner spaces and more complex mazes:
 -  Keep in mind that activities to develop pencil control do not need to only use paper and a pencil; any activities using hands, such as painting and writing in sand or shaving foam, are good, and at all angles, for example on the floor, on an easel or at a desk.
 -  Motivation and low self-efficacy can be factors in poor pencil control. Try to keep activities motivating for children by giving them choice or using things you know they like, such as certain characters like leading George Pig to his dinosaur!
 -  Always remember to keep a "just-right challenge" where the task is hard enough for the child that it is challenging,
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but not too hard that it is impossible to be successful.
This will be individual to each child.

Resources

-  Pre-writing sheets:
<https://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/pre-handwriting-patterns.html>
-  Pre-writing ideas: <https://tinyurl.com/ybstesz7>

Handwriting

The ability to produce neat and legible handwriting is essential to a child's role as a school student. Good handwriting can affect a teacher's perceptions and marking of student's written work; handwriting that is slow can also impact on the ability to complete work and, as a result, this can cause low self-esteem. (Zwicker & Montgomery, no date).

Positioning


In order to produce good handwriting, children need to sit in the 90-90-90 position:


 If a child cannot get their feet on the floor, place a

- ✓ Feet supported
- ✓ Bottom back in chair
- ✓ Arms rest on the table

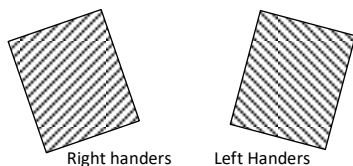


box/step underneath.

 Trial different sized chairs and tables if they are too tall or too short.

 **Height-adjustable tables¹** are very useful as they can change height to suit all chairs.

Paper positioning is also important! The paper should be positioned at 35° to 45° with the right-hand point up for right-handers, or the left-hand point up for left-handers. Do not assume a child knows this. It may be good to provide a prompt to some children, such as tape on the desk to ensure they can place their paper correctly themselves.



Children should use their "strong, supporting hand" (i.e. the hand they do not write with) to stabilise the paper when writing.

Pencil grasp

The type of grasp a child uses can affect their ability to write neatly and legibly. See the pre-writing chapter for tips to develop this.

Motivation

Motivation can be a major factor in a child's ability to produce neat and legible handwriting. Motivation can be

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intrinsic (coming from within ourselves) but often needs to be extrinsic (from outside of ourselves). There are many

ways in which you can improve a child's motivation for handwriting.

Tips for improving motivation:

-  Making sure the handwriting task is meaningful to the child. Instead of making a child write for the sake of practising handwriting, try to encourage them to write for a purpose. This could be by writing their name to sign the register or writing a card to their friend.
-  Giving a child choice, such as about what they would like to write about.
-  Ensure that writing has a "just-right" challenge, meaning it is not impossible for the child to achieve success, however does provide a level of challenge.
-  Ensure development of good relationships between children, their peers and their teacher – groups may be a good way to achieve this!
-  Using a reward system, such as certificates, for achievements in handwriting.
-  Make sure that handwriting takes place in an environment that is motivating, for example if a child is sensitive to sounds, a loud, noisy environment would not motivate them to complete handwriting.



Letter formation

In order to form letters, children need to already be able to form the shapes shown below. If they are unable to form these shapes, see the pre-writing chapter for advice.



Common difficulties with letter formation include forming in fragments rather than a fluid motion or using incorrect patterns. As a child gets older these habits become more difficult to change, therefore it is important to teach the good foundations whilst a child is young. Some letters are developmentally easier to form than others. These go:

Downers: l, i, t, f.

Rounders: c, o, e, a, d

Curvers: s and u then r, n, m, h, b.

Diggers: j, g, q, p.

↑ Easier
↓ Harder

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Sliders: v, w, y, x, z, k

Capital letters are also developmentally easier than lower case. See *Printing Like a Pro in Resources for more information.*

Tips for improving letter formation:

- ✎ Using mnemonics can be a useful tool for children to remember the correct formation.
- ✎ Ask children to review their work themselves to see if they can identify their “best” letters and why, as well as to see if they can identify their own mistakes.
- ✎ Use green and red dots as a visual prompt for start and end points of a letter.



Pressure Problems

Some children will press very hard onto paper to form letters. This can cause their hand to be fatigued faster than their peers, which can then slow their handwriting. It can also result in poor work presentation due to holes in page or smudging of written work. Other children may press too lightly, meaning work is unclear. A lot of children can have problems with squeezing the barrel of the pencil too tightly, causing their hand to tire quickly affecting legibility of work.

Tips to improve pressure problems:

- ✎ Use a writing game where you place carbon paper between 2 pieces of paper and try to get the child to write without it coming through onto the other bit of paper if they press too hard, or get the child to get it to transfer between pages if they press too lightly.
- ✎ Try an angled writing slope to change the angle of the wrist and arm.
- ✎ If pressing too lightly try a pen with a thicker nib to produce bolder work.
- ✎ Try a thicker barrelled pencil which will make it easier to hold and therefore may improve pressure.
- ✎ There are some pencils that will light up if too much pressure is pushed through them – for children who press too hard encourage them not to light the pen and those who press too little, encourage them to turn the light on!
- ✎ If a child is pressing too hard, try writing on materials that rip easily, such as tissue backed onto cardboard.
- ✎ If a child is pressing too lightly, try writing on materials where they would have to press harder for their writing

to be legible, such as ribbed cardboard or using a pencil with softer graphite.

- ✎ Some children benefit from completing some “scribbling” before starting written work to loose up their grip on their pencil if holding too tightly.

Not on the line and sizing difficulties

Common difficulties for children are not placing their letters on their line, having inconsistently sized letters or having

unnecessarily large or small letters. Not placing letters on the line is often because the child is not starting their letter at the correct point.

Tips for improving difficulties with sizing or letters not on the line:

- ✎ Use “earth, grass, sky” sheets to provide children with a visual prompt of which letters “dig into the soil” or “reach for the sky”:



- ✎ Teach children to “bump” the lines to emphasise that they need to touch them every time.
- ✎ Teach children that letters come in 2 sizes: Tall letters – **capitals and b, d, h, k, l, t**. Small letters: **all the rest**.
- ✎ Highlight the line to prompt a child to write on it. This can also make it easier for children who vision difficulties.
- ✎ Check what paper you are giving to the child. Some children will use all the space you provide them therefore if the width of the lines is large, try paper with smaller lines. Other children may find it difficult to contain their writing without a prompt, therefore lined paper should be provided rather than plain.

Important things to keep in mind are:

- ✎ If a child has a visual impairment they may write in slightly larger writing. Do not expect the child to write smaller than the writing they are able to read.
- ✎ If children are having difficulties with letter formation, this should be worked on first as it is difficult to teach these at the same time.

Word spacing

Many children have problems spacing their work correctly when learning to write, which can make it difficult for others to read.

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Tips to encourage appropriate spacing:

- Ensure worksheets have plenty of space for children to complete handwriting to discourage them from squeezing their work together into a small space.
- Encouraging children to use “finger spaces” between words can be useful.
- Have children write on graph paper and instruct them to leave a square between words.
- When writing say “space” after each word as a verbal prompt.
- When writing a sentence children have to copy, highlight the spaces in the words to draw children’s attention to this.
- Encourage children to review their work so they can recognise when they have left enough space or not.

Reversals

Reversals are common in younger children who are learning to write; they are not a concern unless there are a high number of these after 7 years old. Reversals most commonly affect the letters b, p and d and are more common in left handers.

Tips on managing reversals:

- Teach children correct letter formation (see letter formation section) to learn the correct movement.
- Use a visual prompt on a child’s desk with the letters they commonly reverse, such as placing a pencil box and labelling this on all sides **pencil box** so they can see how the letters are formed.

Printing vs cursive

Within school it is generally accepted that younger children print and eventually move on to cursive. Neither method is preferred over the other and both have advantages and disadvantages. For children with handwriting difficulties it is beneficial to let the child use the script that is easier for them; improving the presentation of their work and reducing the physical effort.

The benefits of printing are:

- Letters are simpler, therefore easier to learn and remember.
- Often it is more legible than cursive.

- Younger children developmentally have skills appropriate for printing and it can take them longer to learn cursive styles.

The benefits of cursive are:

- In the long term cursive writing facilitates faster and more automatic writing.
- It prevents reversals of letters and words.
- Can be easier for children with certain diagnoses, such as dyslexia.

Speed of handwriting

There are many different reasons for handwriting being slow; the child may have poor letter formation, hands fatiguing when writing or difficulty copying from the board.

Most of the things discussed above can impact the speed of a child’s handwriting.

- If letter formation is a problem, see the section entitled “Letter formation” above.*
- Hands can fatigue due to pressure problems. If this is the case see section above on “Pressure problems”.
- Reduce the amount of writing a child is expected to do if possible, such as by providing hand outs rather than expecting them to copy from the board.
- Start small with length of handwriting work and build this up over time e.g. start by writing a shopping list then gradually move on to writing longer pieces of work such as songs.
- The child may have difficulty processing their thoughts or with their working memory which can affect the speed of their handwriting. To help this encourage the child to plan their work before they write, such as by writing a mind map and putting the main words/points down.

Some children may produce less work than their peers not because their handwriting is slow, rather because they have difficulty in organising themselves and therefore start the work later than their peers.

Left-handers

Left-handed children make up around 10% of the population. Most things are therefore set up for right-handers. Most left-handers are able to problem-solve and discover solutions themselves, however some develop awkward grips and incorrect letter formation.

Tips for left-handers:





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-  Ensure left-handers are sat on the left hand side of a right-handed child. This is so the children do not have to concentrate on avoiding banging elbows when writing.
-  Most left-handers find it better to hold the barrel of the pencil slightly further up than their right-handed peers (around 2.5-3.5cm up from the tip).
-  When a child is young, practise writing on vertical surfaces, such as on a blackboard or an easel. This discourages hooked grips.
-  Most left-handers benefit from the use of a sloped writing board to assist them to see their work and place their hand and wrist in a better position.

It is important to note that often left-handed children form their letters slightly differently than a right-hander. For example the letter t, the vertical line would be drawn as normal but the cross on the t would be formed from right to left rather than left to right.

When we should consider alternatives to handwriting

When a child has significant handwriting difficulties or the options above have been explored and they are continuing to struggle, it may be time to look into using an alternative to handwriting. This could be in the form of:

-  Typing, including touch typing.
-  Scribing
-  Dictaphone

It is important that if alternatives to handwriting are being utilised, the child continues to have experiences to practise handwriting when possible. This could be when completing smaller amounts of work, such as in Maths rather than English.

Some children may also be able to continue to use handwriting, however need support such as extra time when completing exams or homework.

Resources

1. Height adjustable table:
<https://www.educationsupplies.co.uk/furniture-and-storage/classroom-tables/height-adjustable-tables/valencia-rectangular-4-seater-table>
2. Printing Like a Pro:
<http://www.childdevelopment.ca/SchoolAgeTherapy/SchoolAgeTherapyPLaPWorksheets.aspx>
3. Pencil grips: <https://www.tts-group.co.uk/get-a-grip-pencil-grips-selection-box-33pk-/1002033.html>

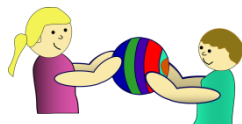
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Play





Play can be defined in many different ways. It is one of the main occupations that most children engage in. It is a way of learning and can serve as an outlet for activity; it is purposeful.



Why is Play Important?

- Play is a motivating way for children to learn; children discover their own likes and dislikes, they build on their motor skills and develop their emotional awareness and problem solving skills.
- Children can learn to understand the feelings of others and to develop empathy, skills that are crucial for healthy peer relationships.
- Play helps a child develop social interaction skills which are important for communication (e.g. taking turns, attention & listening, using eye contact, body language, gestures).

Supporting Participation in Types of Play

A child engages in a wide range of play tasks through their life. It should be noted that whilst each play 'type' starts in its earliest form during childhood; it continues to develop into more complex forms through life.

<p>Practice Play</p> 	<p>The child experiments with their body or with objects. They might move their hands, arms and legs or make sounds for fun. The child may also explore objects with their senses, use toys as they are designed, or explore cause and effect (i.e. drops the objects and listens to the sound).</p> <p>This type of play is typical in the first and second year of life. It includes other commonly discussed play types such as practice play, functional play, sensorimotor play, and body and object play.</p>
<p>Symbolic Play</p> 	<p>The child symbolically uses objects as if it were something else (e.g. banana as a phone). They may also pretend with absent objects (e.g. a cup), with different environments (e.g. living room is a café), and with different roles (e.g. I'm a mum</p>

	<p>and you're the baby). NHS Foundation Trust</p> <p>This type of play typically starts at the end of the second year of life. This type of play is sometimes called pretend play, sociodramatic play or role play.</p>
<p>Constructive Play</p> 	<p>The child gathers, organises, combines and fits objects together to make a final object or achieve a particular goal. This can range from building a tower of blocks, to making a house from LEGO blocks.</p> <p>This type of play starts to develop in the second year of life.</p>
<p>Games with Rules</p> 	<p>The child engages in a game with a specific set of rules that is followed by all players involved. This can include a game of Tag or a running race.</p> <p>This type of play starts to develop at 3-4 years of age.</p>

Adapted from the LUDI Classification of Types of Play (LUDI, 2019)

Assisting participation in play

- It is important to think about where play activities are taking place and how the child can access them, for example is the park wheelchair accessible? Are play activities taking place in a loud, noisy environment? Is the child sitting in an appropriate chair?
- Some children may need equipment or adaptations in order to access play activities, e.g. using easy-press switches.
- For some children, the adult will need to extend play possibilities for the child, using what they know about the child's interests to make common activities into personally meaningful, intrinsically motivating play, e.g. moving from playing with a car, to building the garage for the car to sit within, then layering a basic narrative about driving to pick up groceries or get fuel
- Many children, such as those with autism spectrum disorder, may need to have play activities structured for them by the adult to assist participation. This could be by the adult selecting what to play with, creating play opportunities that naturally facilitate social opportunities or providing a visual structure.
- Many children may require activities modelled to them, to teach them explicitly how to play with certain objects; others may need you to talk them through what is happening (e.g. those with visual impairments).

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It is important to remember that some children may engage in less conventional forms of play, but that this is recognised by the adult as another relevant form of play. Above all remember that play is always meant to be fun!

Development of Social Play

As a child explores through play, they begin to show interest in other players and the play activities they're involved within. Ultimately, this leads to children seeking others to play with and gives them opportunities to develop social skills and friendships.

Solitary Play 	The child does not want to engage with others and pushes them away. The child appears happier on their own, directing their own play without concern towards others. The child is exploring and learning about the materials they are playing with.
Parallel Play 	The children play alongside each other without interaction. The child watches but only makes fleeting attempts for meaningful contact. They might ask to use a toy that another child is playing with, and may take turns with at least one child. Towards the end of this stage the child may share toys.
Associative Play 	The children begin to play the same activity and set of toys, however are not yet working towards a common goal (e.g. building a town together out of LEGO).
Cooperative Play 	The children are beginning to interact with each other. They want to play together, share toys, and take turns in play. Arguments can occur but they are able to enjoy each other's company and cooperate fully with those around them. Small groups of children are able to play together and take part in an activity without direct adult supervision.

- ✓ Reward any attempt the child makes to work with the other child or with you. Choose a child with appropriate social interaction skills to give a good model.
- ✓ Encourage turn taking with simple games that involve 'give and take', such as one child holding the water wheel while the other pours water in, or one holds a bucket while the other fills it with sand.
- ✓ Some children find rule based games easier as there is a clear pattern of turn taking, e.g. skittles, picture lotto, pop-up pirate. Initially avoid games of chance and play all the games with an adult first.

Resources

- ✓ For small group work, refer to the Chatter Box Programme by Newham SLT Service.
- ✓ Early Sensory Skills Activities Book provides ideas for very early sensory play skills for babies and complex needs children: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Early-Sensory-Skills/dp/0863883710>
- ✓ Free eBook, Guidelines for supporting children with disabilities' play: <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783110522143/html>

Supporting Social Play

- ✓ Join the child in their play.
- ✓ Give the child access to a range of toys that they find motivating. This will help improve the child's interest and concentration.
- ✓ Become more interactive when playing alongside the child, e.g. roll a ball or push a car, and ask for it back.
- ✓ Gradually draw in another child and encourage them to play together.



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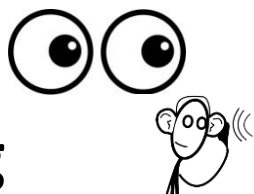
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Attention & Listening



Attention and listening skills are the foundation of language learning.

A child must be able to focus on the speaker or activity in order to interact, to learn, and to participate.

Indicators of difficulties

- Highly distractible (to self or others)
- Difficulty staying on task
- Difficulty sitting still
- Unable to do two things at once e.g., listen while playing with building blocks
- Unable to work independently and may not see tasks through to completion
- Cannot attend to instructions and may copy other children (often incorrectly)

Environmental Strategies

- Place child away from distractions such as doors, windows, wall displays.
- Go to a quieter room. Switch the TV/white board off.
- Introduce only a few toys at once.
- Use visual clues such as demonstration, gesture, objects, pictures, symbols or writing.
- Provide visual timetables or schedules.
- Provide visual rules (e.g. sit, look, listen).

Movement & Physical Strategies

- Consider completing short movement/sensory activities before learning sessions
- Consider having short movement/sensory breaks where children can move around and have a break to help re-focus

Communication Strategies

- Gain the child's attention and eye contact before giving instructions. Get down to the child's eye level. Say their name. You may need to stop the child from what they are doing to ensure they are fully listening.
- Use short sentences and simple words
- Break instructions into small chunks

- Check if the child has understood your question/instruction
- Be repetitive

Early activities:

- Peek-a-boo
- What is the bucket
- Action songs and rhymes
- Ready, steady, go games
- Blowing bubbles
- Early turn-taking games e.g. jigsaws, posting items, building towers
- Responding to noises. Make noises with rattles, keys, instruments then see if your child turns to the noise

Harder activities:

- Simon says
- Lotto, snap and pairs games
- Looking at story books
- Shopping list game. Make a picture shopping list with three or more items on it, tell the child what they are and see if they can find them, then return with the correct ones.
- Musical instruments. Make shakers or other 'noise makers'. Take it in turns to make a noise and the other one then has to copy
- Sorting games where everyone takes turns to sort by colour, shape, size etc.
- Musical statues, musical chairs, pass the parcel
- Anticipation songs such as 'Ten Fat Sausages'
- Jobs around the house. Start by asking them to find one item, then gradually increase the number of things they are expected to do
- Kim's Game. You place 4 items on the floor. The children close their eyes then once they open them they have to try to guess which item you have removed
- 'I Spy'
- Snakes and Ladders

Resources

- For small-group work, refer to Attention and Listening Programmes provided by Newham SLT Service.
- Early Sensory Skills Activities Book:
<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Early-Sensory-Skills/dp/0863883710>

- “Listen-up” Resource pack for parents and practitioners
<https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/resources/resources-for-parents/listen-up/>
- An excellent whole-class intervention is “Teaching Children to Listen” (Spooner and Woodcock)

https://play.google.com/store/books/details/Teaching_Trust_Children_to_Listen_A_practical_approach_t?id=6WkSBwAAQBAJ

Advice for P.E.



Environmental Factors

Physical activity is important for all children. It helps to facilitate their normal physical, emotional and intellectual development.

Children with additional needs can and should participate in P.E., albeit with adaptations and any supervision required from adults. All children should be encouraged to participate in P.E.

The environment can present varied challenges to children. For example, uneven surfaces and slopes in the playground will challenge lots of children's balance reactions, having to negotiate these surfaces with a walker or wheelchair will therefore be even more challenging.

Children still need to practise walking and mobilising on different surfaces as in the community they will be constantly challenged by this, practise will lead to improvement.

Adaptations you can make

- Allowing children with difficulties more breaks during activities if they experience pain or fatigue.
- Some children may need to sit down or lean against a wall to rest between or during activities
- PE sessions could start with stretching and warm-up activities on mats that can include all children, including wheelchair users.
- Where activities that are too challenging for some children, eg. catching a ball, alternatives such as changing ball size and texture; or using a balloon or scarf to develop hand-eye co-ordination as these are easier to track, can help ensure participation and still be fun and achievable.
- Having 'buddy' support from a peer or friend in the class can be a motivational factor for some children's participation in activities.

Adaptations you can make

- In larger schools, children may need more time to get around. It may require children leaving the class a few minutes earlier than the other children to avoid busy corridors, as well as allowing extra time to reach their destination. Where a child has to leave a little earlier, teachers need to be mindful to pass on any homework or information that's often given at the end of class.
- Where the child is positioned in the classroom can be an important factor in how well they are able to get through a school day. This can mean their position, for example, relative to an interactive board and being able to see and access the information being displayed.
- Giving a child with gross motor difficulties more space (and time) to get on/off the floor/carpet; being sat nearer the carpet would be helpful.
- Use of a cushion if cross leg sitting is difficult, particularly if the child is wearing foot splints; or a prop to lean against.

Appendix

How to run a group



There are many different reasons to run groups. Some reasons are that it allows many children to be provided intervention at once, while allowing children to interact with others.

Children are provided with the opportunity to relate to those of a similar ability to them, where they may not be able to relate easily to their peers in class.

Tips for running a group:

- ★ Set clear **group rules**, decided together (if possible), and write them on cards with pictures.
- ★ Ensure the group is **purposeful** for your students, for example instead of completing a “Fine Motor Skills Group”, ensure the students fully understand the purpose behind a group by calling it, e.g. a “Dressing Group” instead. This is more meaningful for the student and also works on fine motor skills. By doing this you will increase the students’ understanding for the group as well as their motivation.
- ★ **Decide who is eligible** to come into the group. Are you going to have students with a similar ability grouped together (e.g. all those who can complete buttons), or will you have students of different levels together, but adapt the expectations for them? There are positives and negatives to both and some groups may be better suited to one style than the other.
- ★ Ensure you get a **baseline level** for the children for the particular aim of the group (e.g. If it is a dressing group, what skills does the child already have in regards to dressing?). This way you can ensure you tailor the group towards the child and can record the improvements made over the course of the group. See the OT service’s *functional checklist* in the appendix which may be helpful with this. For Language Enrichment Groups, ensure that the screening assessments provided are carried out with each child to provide baseline measures.
- ★ It may also help to **break the task down** into small parts to see in which parts of the activity the child is independent, which they need some slight assistance with and which they need full assistance with. You can then track this over time and target the areas they need slight or full assistance with. See the *activity analysis sheets* in the appendix which may be helpful.

- ★ Set **reasonable goals** for the child, tailored towards the baseline you have already gathered. For example if working on dressing and the child can put clothes on

their upper limbs with minimal assistance from another, and their bottom half with full assistance, do not expect them to be fully independent as the next step.

Allow time at the end of each session for the students to talk about what they have done, how they found the activities and whether they have made progress with their targets.

- ★ Think about the group **environment**. There are a few considerations that need to be made in regards to this. Is the size of room correct for the amount of children? Would the group be better completed in context (e.g. if working on dressing, would it be better to complete this when the children are getting changed for P.E.?) and will the environment suit the children’s individual needs (e.g. for children who are sensitive to noise, does the room echo? Are there too many children? Can the children hear each other speak?).
- ★ Ensure you work out **how the child will be motivated** within the group. This can be achieved in a few ways, such as by providing a reward (this could be a certificate or something more tangible - see *reinforcer* section in appendix for more information). You could also provide some competition within the group which is tailored towards the participants’ abilities, or give each of the children certain roles within the group.
- ★ The activities themselves should also be motivating and **include different ways that the children learn** within the group. For example if thinking of a dressing group focussing on zips:
 1. Go through group rules
 2. Watch videos of dressing (completing zips).
 3. Children choose clothes from dressing up box to practise skills with, which all have zips.
 4. Children encouraged to complete the zips themselves and help each other where possible. Visual aids for zips are on walls to help as required. 1:1s help those where required.
 5. Children tell each other about who they are dressed as/children play as their roles.
 6. Children can open a “special bag” (the zip) and choose something out of it to play with for remaining 5 minutes.
 7. Children receive certificate for “completing zips”.

In a Language Enrichment Group, children may need a movement break between activities focussing on

Chair: Mark Lam

Chief Executive: Paul Calaminus

We care

We respect

We are inclusive

developing their listening skills to help maintain their attention.

Toileting Record Chart

Date:

Time	Meals/Sleep Drink (D) Food (F) Sleep (S)	Bladder Wet Nappy (WN) Wet in toilet (WT) Dry (-)	Bowel Poos in nappy (PN) Poos in toilet (PT) Dry (-)	Comments Showed awareness (A) Indicated need (I) Toileted with no result (NR)
6am				
7am				
8am				
9am				
10am				
11am				
12pm				
1pm				
2pm				
3pm				
4pm				
5pm				
6pm				
7pm				
8pm				

Chair: Mark Lam

Chief Executive: Paul Calaminus

We care

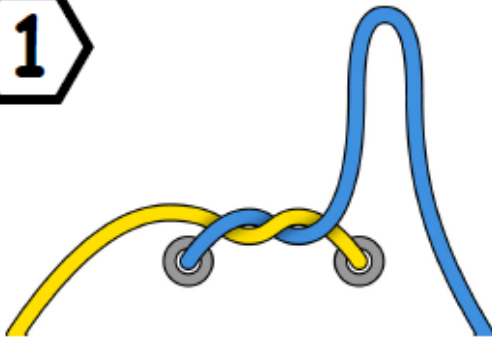
We respect

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Examples of Visual Aids for Shoe Lacing

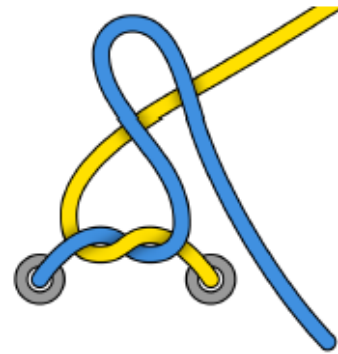
Standard Shoelace Knot

1



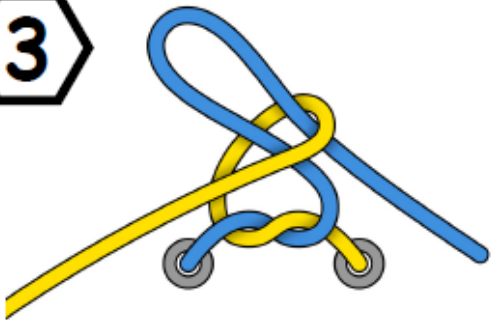
Tie a Left-over-Right Starting Knot as shown, then make the right (blue) end into a "loop" by simply doubling it back onto itself.

2



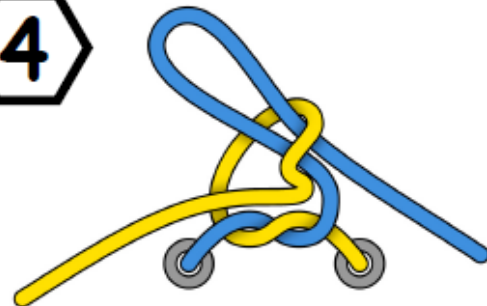
Take the left (yellow) end and pass it around to the right, going **behind** the right loop.

3



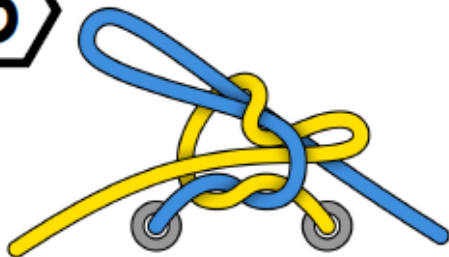
Continue the left (yellow) end **around** the right loop to end up in front.

4



Start to push the left (yellow) lace into the "hole" that has just been made.

5



The yellow lace comes out through the back of the hole to form a right (yellow) loop.

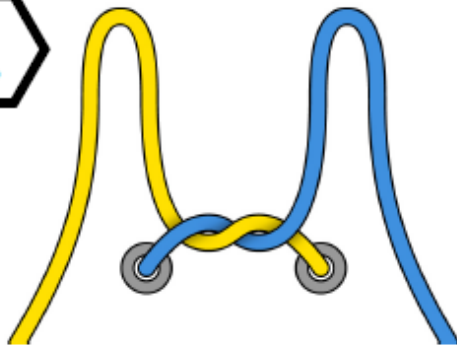
6



Grab hold of both loops and pull tight to complete the knot.

"Bunny Ears" Shoelace Knot

1



Tie a Left-over-Right Starting Knot as shown, then make both ends into "bunny ears" by simply doubling them back onto themselves.

2



Cross the right (blue) ear over the left (yellow) ear so that the **blue** ear sits in front and is now the **left** ear.

3



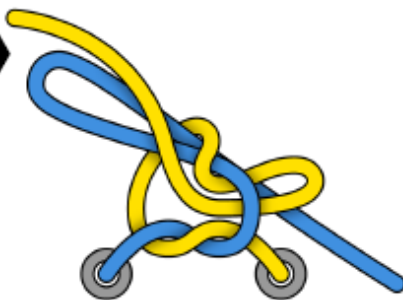
The **yellow** ear is now the **right** ear. Begin to wrap that ear around the left (blue) ear to end up in front.

4



Start to push the right (yellow) ear into the "hole" below the two ears.

5



The right (yellow) ear comes out through the **back** of the hole.

6



Grab hold of both ears and pull tight to complete the knot.

Graphics courtesy of Ian Fieggen ("Professor Shoelace") and reproduced with permission.
For more details, visit Ian's Shoelace Site: www.fieggen.com/shoelace