

# TMCSEA

## **TAZEWELL-MASON COUNTIES SPECIAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

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## Activity Ideas to Improve Handwriting

### **Activities to improve strength and joint control**

- Ball tapping-have the student use a stick to tap a ball suspended from the ceiling at shoulder height (or play with a piñata ☺)
- Mirror arm patterns-have the student sit or stand facing a peer or adult and imitate arm movements such as raising arms above head, holding arms out to the side, rotate arms forward or backward
- Turn jump rope-have child hold one end of the rope for other children, first with dominant hand, then with non-dominant hand
- Play jump rope-swing the jump rope over head, first forwards then backwards
- Slinky-have child shift slinky back and forth while holding hands in palm up position
- Volleyball, badminton, ping pong-these games require the child to use and often maintain a palm up position to play or hold a paddle or racket
- Floor activities-have the child color or paint large “murals” on the floor while positioned on their stomach with forearms resting on the floor
- Wheelbarrow races-have child support self using arms with straight elbows
- Chalkboard activities-have the child write/draw/color on an easel, chalkboard or whiteboard, games such as Lite Brite, Etch-a-Sketch, or Magna Doodle could also be placed in a more vertical position such as on an easel

### **Activities to improve finger movements**

- Play with a palm-size ball such as a stress ball or clay, theraputty, play dough in a large ball
- Shake dice-cup both hands and shake dice or use one hand to shake very small dice
- Play dominoes-arrange dominoes on their narrow end, close together
- Seal Ziploc plastic bags: have the child seal bags for lunch items (chips, sandwich) or bags containing games
- Tongs-use strawberry hummer or small tongs to pick up and place small objects such as square beads, sugar cubes, etc.
- String beads-use a variety of sizes of string and beads, start with larger beads and strings and move to smaller beads/strings
- Lacing boards-have child complete lacing boards placed in a vertical plane
- Squirreling objects-have the child pick up and add small objects to their palm such as unit cubes, mini-marshmallows, beads, Cheerios, pennies, and M & M’s, etc.
- De-squirreling objects-have the child replace small objects on the table one at a time while not dropping objects remaining in palm
- Wedge sponge-have the child move a cosmetic wedge sponge from thumb to little finger and back using only one hand
- Pencil flip-have the child “flip” a pencil from writing position to erasing position using one hand

- Fill in circles-have child color in tiny circles with pencil or thin marker (approximately ¼ -½ “ in diameter-larger than opscan circles)
- Play dough food-have the child roll clay, theraputty, or play dough into small balls (1/16” to 1/8”) using the thumb and index fingers
- Play dough snakes-have child roll clay, theraputty, or play dough into “snakes or hot dogs” and then squeeze lengthwise between two fingers
- Penny flip-flip pennies from heads to tails as quickly as possible, start with dominant hand and move to non-dominant hand
- Squeeze bottles-squeeze the trigger on spray bottles with fingers 2 & 3 while holding bottle neck with fingers 4 & 5, child could spray windows/mirrors for washing, spray tables for cleaning, etc.
- Remove lids-remove/replace small lids such as toothpaste tubes using only fingers, similarly this could be done removing nuts from bolts attached to a board
- Fine motor games-play with small Lego’s, K’Nex, unifix cubes, transformers, Polly Pocket toys, dressing Barbie or Bratz dolls, etc.
- Pennies in the bank-using a bank or plastic container with a slit in the lid, have the child place checkers, bingo markers, or coins in the slit
- Paper clips-have child slide paper clips onto and off paper, start with larger clips on heavier stock paper such as index cards or construction paper and move to small clips on notebook paper
- Stickers-have child remove stickers from original page and “make a picture” on paper or give themselves their “reward” or their schedule or paper
- Shape sorter-have child place shapes in sorter (typically a toddler toy)

(Compiled from Mary Benbow’s (OTR) Developmental Hand Program and Charles Boardman (OTR) Occupational Therapy Forum Articles titled Reasonable Answers to Commonly Asked Handwriting Questions)