

Fun Handwriting Activities  
Compiled by Chaviva Braun B.Sc. OT(c)

Some of the ideas in this list were contributed from members of the pediatric listservs. Many thanks to those who shared ideas.

1. Tic tac toe.
2. Hangman
3. Child throws a beanbag onto footprint letters, or letters written in a grid, in sequence in order to spell a word (or jump on the letters in sequence), then they can write the word on the board.
4. Handwriting Bingo (OT Ideas, 973-895-3722), or make your own.
5. Join the dots on a grid by drawing a horizontal or vertical line (each in turn), form squares and write your/child's initial or a predetermined word in each square that's formed.
6. Write a silly story with a child - they write one word or a sentence, and you write the next, etc. Make it up as you go along.
7. Writing a letter to a family member, friend or have a mailbox in the classroom where the students write letters, messages, cards, etc to each other, to teachers, etc.
8. Make a sign for classroom bulletin board.
9. Come up with a holiday shopping list, gift wish list, etc.
10. Party "To Do" list - make list of friends, what party games to play, what to make/buy/do, make invitations, place cards, name cards or stickers for party favours. Can even write names with frosting on cupcakes!
11. "Cloze"- like Mad Libs - fill in words to make silly paragraphs (Good way to learn grammar, i.e., What are nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs).
12. Dialogue with kid in a notebook (Q's & A's).
13. Have child make up game & write instructions for it.
14. Have child make up way of using a therapy device (e.g., hammock), and write up instructions.
15. Photograph child in action and have him write headings/paragraph for photos. Mount on coloured cardboard or construction paper, punch holes, lace up and present as end of year/treatment memento.
16. Write in notebook what to bring for next treatment session.
17. Write in notebook what ex's to do for homework with instructions (e.g., *Wall Crawl: Get on all fours, with feet near the wall. Walk up wall and hold for as long as I can. How long did I hold position? \_\_\_seconds*) - accompany with sketch of position/task.
18. Child/Therapist chooses funny picture or photo, child then writes descriptive heading/paragraph.
19. Comics - draw pictures, or take from computer, colour and fill in "balloons" with what each character says.
20. Make Word Search and photocopy for others in class. Use timely ideas, holiday themes, hottest movies, etc. Topic I found to be a big hit is "Harry Potter"!

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Page Two

21. Decipher hidden message (Each letter is represented by a different sign. e.g., A= #, B=^, C=\*...). Can be letter, or instructions for an obstacle course, task, etc.
22. Make birthday/holiday/get well/miss you/congratulations, etc. card for a friend/family member, including message. (I love the pop-up kind; makes a big hit, and uses a lot of other skills: organization & planning, F.M., scissor skills, etc.).
23. Write up schedule for the treatment session (e.g., 1. Swing on bolster, 2. Theraputty, 3. Puzzle...), to practice # and letter formation. Do this on white board (kids love using eraseable markers) or on blackboard with chalk.
24. Write with Shaving Cream/Finger paint or mixture of the two (cover a section of black board or wall in clear contact paper, outlined in red to emphasize borders).
25. Write on board covered in plasticine, use pencil with broken tip or other simulated writing utensil. Great kinesthetic activity.
26. Write with chalk on damp blackboard (for more resisted activity); clean with water-filled spray bottle or squirt guns.
27. "Black Magic" writing- Colour a piece of white paper with coloured pencils/crayons. Go over it with black pastel or wax crayon, Etch out words/pictures with pencil without lead, toothpick, etc.
28. Write on Magna Doodle, regular or mini size.
29. Write on "Magic" board, that you use a pencil-like plastic tool and lift the film-like cover and the words/drawings disappear.
30. Write with colour changing markers. Always a fun activity. Child can go over letters, shapes, path you write, and see if he stays on the line.
31. "Callirobics"- pictures formed from words (Nan Barchowsky, P.O. Box 6634 Charlottesville, VA 22906, 804-293-7055). Invent your own!
32. "Boggle".
33. Scrabble - Write the words on a grid, instead of using tiles.
34. Address book (write in friends & family member's phone numbers, addresses, e-mail addresses, birthdays).
35. Crossword puzzles - solve &/or make up your own, give out in class.
36. "Gematria" - Assign a numerical value to each letter, and write/solve a secret message.
37. Make clues for a treasure hunt.
38. Alphabetically name one of the following:  
Country-City-A living being (animal, bird, fish)-A growing object (plant, fruit, vegetable)- An inanimate object-A profession-Name of female-Name of male-Activity. Go through the entire alphabet. Make a chart. Do this activity in a group. Can cut out categories as necessary.  
Eg. Australia-Albany-Alpaca-Apple-Axe-Accountant-Annie-Arthur-Acting.

## Occupational Therapy Classroom Strategies for Kindergarten Centers

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Therapist Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Developing Pencil Grasp

- Use clay, silly putty, or Play Doh in your centers for a variety of manipulative activities which can include ropes, balls, cookies (pushing the ball flat to make a cookie), rolling pins, cookie cutters and scissors for additional tool manipulation.
- Use a pizza wheel, dressmakers wheel and a plastic knife – position these so that the extended index finger is placed on top of these utensils. Use in cutting playdough or copying patterns on clay.
- Use clothespins and paper clips (different sizes) to join cards or match pairs
- Use tongs, tweezers, strawberry hullers to practice picking up objects for sorting colors, size etc. Tongs can also be used with cotton ball art.
- Use water in a spray bottle to have students wash the chalkboard or their work area and wipe it dry
- Use simple tops to make them spin using various art activities or games
- Have students pick up objects one at a time and see how many they can hold in their hand without dropping (i.e. pennies or paperclips) 3-5 objects could be an estimate.
- Tearing paper or newspaper with the thumb opposing the index and middle fingers
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Developing Right/Left Skills

- Shake hands with each child and use a variety of modalities to impress that this is his/her right hand. Say "This is your right hand, I'm going to..."
  - Stamp your hand with a smiley face, look at that!"
  - Dab some peppermint on your finger, smell it!"
  - Put some lotion on your thumb pad and index finger, rub them together."
- Have child raise his/her right hand and say:
  - "This is my right hand. I say the Pledge of Allegiance with my right hand.

### Fine Motor Center Activities

- During coloring, tracing, painting activities have student place sand paper underneath paper (bumpy side up)
- Use carpet remnants to practice writing using fingers or chalk
- Have student "write" in a clay tray, made by pressing non-hardening clay into a cookie sheet
- Teach and provide opportunities to play simple fine motor games (i.e. marbles, Jacks, cards, Pick-up-Sticks, Cat's Cradle, etc) during free choice centers
- Highlight cut and paste worksheets
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Occupational Therapy Elementary Special Education Rubric

Category	1 Beginning	2 Developing	3 Good	4 Excellent
<b>Cutting</b>	Holds scissors incorrectly; snips across 6" paper; frequent cues for visual attention; requires assistance to rotate paper	Verbal or physical cues for correct grasp on scissors; cuts smoothly at times, other times snips; inconsistent visual attention while cutting; cuts within 1/4" of thick line; may need assistance to rotate paper w/ opposite hand	Independently cuts on straight lines; rotates paper w/ opposite hand, but not automatically	Independently holds scissors correctly; makes fluid cuts; eyes focus on object being cut at all times; cuts on thin straight, curved, angled lines; rotates paper w/ opposite hand
<b>Manipulation of Objects</b>	Uses pincer grasp to pick up small objects; isolates index finger	Requires physical cue (object under ring/little fingers) to manipulate another object with thumb/index/middle fingers; crumples paper using one hand	Manipulates objects with thumb, index, and middle fingers; strings beads; flicks cotton ball	Able to move 3+ small objects from palm to fingertips without dropping (advanced in-hand manipulation skills); spins a top; uses tripod grasp to write/draw
<b>Design Copying</b>	With model, copies +, X with visual cues; traces dotted lines to form square, rectangle, triangle	Copies +, X from memory; with a model, copies a square, rectangle, triangle with visual cues	Copies square, rectangle, triangle from memory; with model, copies simple designs containing diagonal and/or intersecting lines; draws person figure w/ at least 7 parts	With model, copies moderately complex designs containing diagonal and/or intersecting lines; draws person figure with at least 10 parts
<b>Prewriting</b>	Follows 9" long 1/2" wide straight pathway with < 3 errors;	Follows 9" long 1/4" wide straight, curved, and/or zigzag pathways with < 3 errors; completes simple (1-10) dot to dot pictures	Traces lines left to right and top to bottom; traces curved and zigzag lines; completes simple 1/4" wide mazes with <2 errors	Independently completes complex dot to dot pictures and moderately complex mazes
<b>Writing Letters</b>	With model, forms upper and lower case letters with manipulatives; traces upper case letters with minimal error; may need assistance	With model, copies upper case letters legibly with <3 errors	With model, copies lower case letters legibly with <3 errors	Prints upper and lower case letters legibly on a baseline without a model
<b>Writing Name and/or words</b>	Attempts to trace name/word but does not stay on dotted lines; requires hand over hand assistance for accuracy	Traces name/word with minimal error; attempts to copy letters from model with 2+ letters recognizable	Prints name/word legibly, but with a mixture of upper and lower case letters; may need a model for 1-2 letters	Prints name/word legibly on a baseline using upper and lower case letters without a model

1. **Brain Gym – Teacher’s Edition Revised** <http://www.braingym.org/>
2. **The Learning Gym – Fun-to-Do Activities for Success at School**  
<http://www.braingym.org/>
3. **S’cool Moves for Learning; Minute Moves for the Classroom**  
<http://www.schoolmoves.com/>
4. **Bal-A-Vis-X** <http://www.bal-a-vis-x.com>
5. **The Fine Motor Olympics Activities and Manual**  
<http://www.flaghouse.com/itemdv00.asp?T1=36754>
6. **TRICS for Written Communication**  
<http://www.alaska.net/~otkids/TRICS.html>
7. **Handwriting Without Tears** <http://www.hwtears.com/>