

FINE MOTOR SKILLS PROGRAM

Guaranteed to Improve Handwriting Skills or Your Money Back!!!

These are some suggestions to follow. Fine motor activities must be done 30 minutes per day in order to see improvement. Fine motor and gross motor skills can be alternated, but some type of motor development program needs to be done on a daily basis to get the best results.

You or the children may come up with other ideas, but try to pick activities that can be done daily for a month. In this way children can develop some skills before moving on to a new medium. "How to" books from Klutz Press are good for ideas, as are crafts stores.

AUGUST & SEPTEMBER - CLAY

Standard Brands sells 25 pounds for \$5.00. This is the type of clay that needs to be fired in a kiln to keep. When it dries it turns to dust. This makes it easy to vacuum out of the rugs. If it dries up just add water. If it gets too wet let it dry out.

Week 1

Free Play - each student gets a lump of clay and does whatever they want for 30 minutes.

Clean Up - slam clay into table to make it into a block - this is known as "wedging" the clay.

Week 2

Pinch Pots

1. Make a big ball of clay and put it in your hand.
2. Push your thumb into the ball.
3. Pinch the clay between your thumb and finger starting from the bottom and going to the top.
4. Smooth the clay with water.
5. Decorate the pot by carving them with a pencil.
6. Pretend you are a cave man / Indian / crash landed on a planet and you found some mud and have to make your own utensils. What will you make?

Clean Up - Wedge the clay into blocks, wash up the pencils.

Week 3

Coil Pots

1. Roll the clay into long snakes or coils.
2. Wrap them around and up to make pots.
3. Smooth the clay with water.
4. Decorate the pot by carving them with a pencil.
5. Pretend you are a cave man / Indian / crash landed on a planet and you found some mud and have to make your own utensils. What will you make?

Clean Up - Wedge the clay into blocks, wash up the pencils.

Week 4

Making Letters

1. Roll the clay into long coils.
2. Make the coils into letters.
3. Print your name in capitals.
4. Print your name in upper and lower case letters.
5. Write your name in cursive.

Clean Up - Wedge the clay into blocks.

Week 5

Illustrating Stories

1. Read a story.
2. Make the clay into something from the story (monster, car..., etc.)
3. Make a scene from the story (trees, houses, etc.)

Clean Up - Wedge the clay into blocks.

OCTOBER - PICK-UP STICKS

Pick-up sticks can be purchased at some Walgreen's, MacFrugals, Fry's and other places that carry low-cost toys. For some reason they are hard to find at toy stores. Don't buy the magnet kind.

Week 1

Introducing the game.

1. Play in groups of two to four players.
2. If the table is wobbly, play on the floor to prevent accidental movements.
3. Hold the sticks in one hand, perpendicular to table, sticks on table. Let go of sticks. No throwing sticks.
4. Pick up sticks until one is moved. Take turns.
5. The rest of the group has to watch carefully.
6. Pick up sticks not touching other sticks first.
7. Push down one end of the stick and pick up the other to move sticks leaning on other sticks.
8. Use both hands very carefully to pick up a stick on top of other sticks. Hold the stick with a finger on each end.

Week 2 & 3

Keeping Score

1. Youngest goes first (or make your own rule.)
2. You can't pick up the black stick unless you have one of all the other colors.
3. You can use the black stick to help pick up other sticks. Put the stick under the stick you want and flip it out carefully.
4. Pick up sticks until one is moved.
5. Count the number of sticks you have and write it down. (Hash marks or numbers)
6. Pass all the sticks to the next player.
7. Add up all your scores (hash marks or addition)
8. Highest score wins.

Week 4

Multiplying your Score

1. Yellow sticks count 3 points.
2. Red sticks count 4 points.
3. Green sticks count 5 points.
4. Blue sticks count 10 points.
5. Black sticks count 35 points.
6. Use a calculator to multiply and add your points.
7. Have other players check to make sure you have the right answer.

NOVEMBER - PAPER FOLDING

Use Origami books from G & L Imports or other bookstores; The Ultimate Paper Airplane by Richard Kline or similar books from the Bookmark; The Dollar Folding Book from Klutz Press. Use computer paper rejects, copier rejects, wrapping paper, notebook paper. Don't use newsprint or construction paper.

Week 1

Make regular paper airplanes or fortune telling folded toys. Find out what the kids make in your school. Have them teach the class.

Week 2

Make more advanced paper airplanes from the paper airplane books. Some come with preprinted instructions, but they are impossible to copy correctly so practice them at home and teach the class with blank forms. They won't be quite as perfect, but they will work.

Week 3

Try some origami. Make the simpler patterns like boats and balls and boxes. Stay away from the birds and frogs which are very complex. Try these at home first. Some of these might be good tree ornaments.

Week 4

Try some dollar folds, like the ring. These are hard to do but with all the previous practice they should be possible. The rings are great conversational items for the holiday.

DECEMBER - CHILDREN'S CHOICE

Choose from the previous months of activities or introduce something new.

JANUARY - STRING GAMES

Get Cat's Cradle by Anne Akers Johnson, Klutz Press. Get some strong yarn or string.

Week 1

Start with the Witches Broom Move on to Cup and Saucer and the Eiffel Tower once they catch on.

Weeks 2, 3 & 4

Introduce the Cats Cradle which is played by two to six players. You can teach one step to each person. Then they can teach each other during the rest of the week. If anyone gets really good at these teach them Jacob's Ladder.

FEBRUARY - SEWING

Get material, buttons, and needles with large eyes (#15-20 sharps or embroidery needles would work). Call me if you need material scraps. SAS Fabrics on Speedway between Rosemont & Craycroft has lots of buttons, material and other gew-gaws for sewing. Get a few sharp scissors (Fiskars is a good inexpensive brand.)

Week 1

Explore the materials.

1. Learn how to thread a needle.
2. Take a few stitches in the same place to anchor the thread.
3. Attach pieces of material together by making some stitches.

Week 2

Sew on buttons.

1. Anchor the thread with a few stitches.
2. Sew on a button.
3. Sew on more buttons to make decorations.

Weeks 3 & 4

Make something.

1. Use simple patterns like a bag or a vest.
2. Have kids make their own patterns by measuring themselves.
3. Cut out the patterns.
4. Pin the patterns to the material. (Make sure it is smooth.)
5. Cut out the material.
6. Decorate the pieces with other pieces of material or buttons or whatever can be sewn on (shells, beads, etc)
7. Sew the pieces together.
8. Add any finishing touches.

MARCH - KNIT & CROCHET

Get a teacher. Get yarn. Get needles.

Week 1

Basic Stitches - Make a square or rectangle.

Weeks 2, 3 & 4

Make something easy like a pot holder or a small bag.

APRIL - FELT MAKING

Get a teacher. Try yarn stores or Meet Ups. Get a fleece from a sheep farm or get some raw fleece. Get some old pillowcases. Get some unsweetened Kool Aid for dyes. Avoid Rit or other chemical dyes unless you know everyone will wear rubber gloves and not drink any by accident!

Week 1

Sorting and washing the fleece.

1. Get rid of really dirty or short pieces of fur.
2. Wash what is left in 1 to 2 pound bunches.
3. Use a bucket, Ivory Flakes or detergent, and cold water.
4. Don't agitate the fleece too much.
5. Dry it in a pillowcase.
6. It might need more than one wash.

Week 2

Dyeing the fleece.

1. Draw a picture that you will make into a felt mat.
2. Figure out how many colors and how much of each you will need.
3. Dye the wool by putting it in gallon jars with several packets of Kool-Aid depending on the color and shade.
4. Leave the jars in the sun all day.
5. Rinse the wool in buckets of cold water until the water stays clear.
6. Dry the wool in pillowcases.

Week 3

Carding the fleece. You will have to get carders from your local spinners or borrow a carding machine.

1. Put all the wool through the carders until it is fluffy.
2. Get some old sheets.
3. Lay white wool out to make your background.
4. Lay some more wool to make a second layer going a different direction.
5. Lay a third layer if there is enough.
6. Use the colored wool to make your picture.

Week 4

Making the felt.

1. Lay another sheet on top of the pictures.
2. Sew the two sheets together with big stitches.
3. Make sure the wool pictures are securely sewn in between the two sheets.
4. Roll up the sheets with the pictures.
5. Wash them in hot water in a washing machine on the Normal cycle.

6. Let the sheets dry on the line.
7. Take out the stitches and you will have felt.

MAY - CHILDREN'S CHOICE

Choose from the previous year of activities.

Children may have some ideas of their own for activities.