



**Digital Magazine for Pediatric  
Occupational and Physical Therapy**  
*June 2017 Issue 95*

## Table of Contents

### Your Therapy Source Digital Magazine June 2017

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM OTHER SCHOOL STAFF? .....	3
CIMT AND BIMANUAL THERAPY ARE COMPLEMENTARY .....	5
5 MULTI-PURPOSE, LIGHTWEIGHT ITEMS FOR YOUR THERAPY BAG .....	6
10 QUICK TIPS TO IMPROVE HANDWRITING .....	7
HOW TO INCREASE HOME EXERCISE PROGRAM COMPLIANCE .....	9
SENSORY QUICK FIXES TO INCREASE ATTENTION SPAN .....	10
FUN GAMES TO PRACTICE SELF REGULATION SKILLS (NO EQUIPMENT NEEDED).....	12
PROPRIOCEPTIVE ACTIVITIES FOR THE CLASSROOM.....	14
ACTIVITIES TO GET CHILDREN READY FOR PREWRITING SKILLS.....	15
EFFECTS OF STABILIZATION EXERCISES ON BALANCE IN CHILDREN WITH CEREBRAL PALSY.....	17
AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: ILEANA S. MCCAIGUE OTR/L.....	18
TIPS TO HELP STUDENTS TO STAY ORGANIZED .....	22
VISION CONTINUES TO DEVELOP BEYOND CHILDHOOD .....	24
SUGGESTIONS TO REDUCE PENCIL PRESSURE WHEN WRITING .....	25
SUMMER WORD BANK COLLAGE – BLACK AND WHITE AND COLOR .....	26
BUMBLE BEE BREATHING BREAK – DEEP BREATHING EXERCISE.....	27
FIDGET SPINNER WORKOUT – EXERCISE WHILE IT SPINS!.....	28
MY BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THIS YEAR .....	29
SUMMER MATCH UP FINE MOTOR AND WORKING MEMORY ACTIVITY .....	30

## WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM OTHER SCHOOL STAFF?



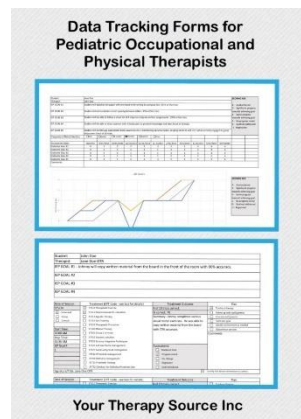
What have you learned from other school staff this year? As school based occupational and physical therapists, we can learn so much from teachers, teacher assistants, administrators, school nurses, school counselors and other staff members. We may know lots of information on fine motor skills, gross motor skills, visual perceptual skills, sensory processing and coordination but we are lacking in many other educational traits. Throughout the school year we may hop in and out of classroom seeing snippets of what goes on during a child's day. Watch, observe and learn from all school staff. Attend all of your students' IEP meetings if able. To hear all of the team members' perspective on a student is invaluable. Here are what I consider the top 5 things school based therapists can learn from other school staff:

1. [Use a plan book](#). Teachers are required to have their lessons planned in advance. Therapists should try this idea. I plan for the next session for a student(s) the week or night before but I do not always write it down. Read here for [5 reasons to use a Therapy Planner this year](#).



2. Group management. Teachers are amazing at managing large groups. Gym teachers are the best! Have you seen some of them in action with sometimes two huge classes at one time? They are organized and routinized for sure! Therapists frequently only have 1 student at a time. Watch and observe how teachers manage large classrooms. If they can manage 25 students at a time we can certainly manage small therapy groups. Read here for some [tips on managing group therapy sessions](#).

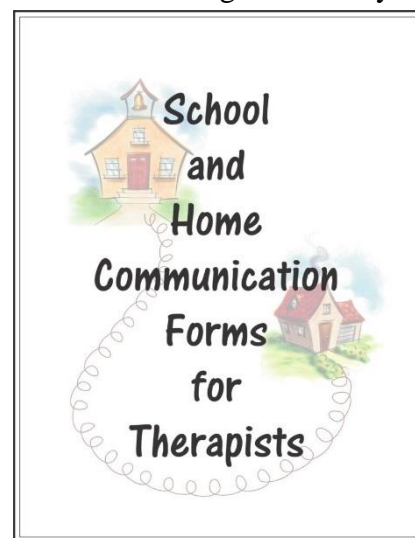
3. Recording grades and [data collection](#). Obviously, we do not have to grade assignments but checking annual goals more often than on a quarterly basis is important. Teachers record grades and correct homework to make sure a student is progressing satisfactorily. Make sure your therapy students are progressing towards their annual goals in a timely manner by checking those goals at least biweekly and using progress monitoring tools (check out [Progress Monitoring Forms for Fine Motor](#) and [Gross Motor Skills](#)). Administrators LOVE [data collection](#). Ask them questions if you need advice on how to get started or improve your current methods of data collection. They are trained very well in data collection. Show them how your services help students to succeed.



4. Progress Reports and Report Cards. Teachers will frequently send home progress reports if a student is not performing as well as can be expected. If a student is not making satisfactory progress towards his/her therapy goals do you let the parents know before the quarterly reports come home? [Communication is key!](#)

5. Have a back up plan. Do you ever notice that good teachers and teacher assistants seem to always have a back up plan? If the class unexpectedly finished an assignment early they always have an extra activity planned and ready to go. Sometimes it is a traditional fun game or it is the next assignment. Therapists should have back up activity ideas if a student reaches the goal quickly, loses interest or fatigues.

What is your favorite lesson you learned from a teacher?





## CIMT AND BIMANUAL THERAPY ARE COMPLEMENTARY



### **CIMT and Bimanual Therapy are Complementary**

The *Journal of Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine* published research indicating that constraint-induced movement therapy (CIMT) and bimanual therapy for children with unilateral cerebral palsy are complementary. Using literature and clinical insight, the authors discuss the evidence-based interventions that CIMT and bimanual therapy highlighting the time-limited,

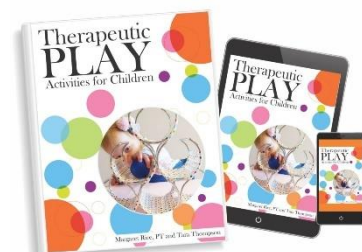
goal-directed, skills-based, intensive blocks of practice based on motor learning theory. The authors determined the following:

- focusing on total dosage of practice for achieving positive outcomes fails to acknowledge the influence of other critical concepts within motor learning.
- limitations exist in the application of motor learning principles using CIMT due to its unimanual nature.
- CIMT is effective for development of unimanual actions generated by implicit learning, but it is hard to encourage explicit learning that is required for learning how to use two hands together.
- using bimanual therapy, object properties can be changed to trigger goal-related perceptual and cognitive processes required for children to learn to determine when two hands are required for task completion.

The authors concluded that CIMT and bimanual therapy are complementary using CIMT to focus on unimanual actions and progressing to bimanual therapy for children to learn how to use these actions for bimanual skill development.

Reference: Hoare, B., & Greaves, S. (2017). Unimanual versus bimanual therapy in children with unilateral cerebral palsy: Same, same, but different. *Journal of Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine*, 10(1), 47-59.

[\*Therapeutic Play Activities for Children\*](#) includes 100 play activity sheets with a photo of the activity, purpose of each activity and materials list. The 12 tip sheets include topics such as modifications, peer interaction, guided play, prompts and several specifically for children with cerebral palsy. The play activities encourage the development of fine motor skills, bimanual skills, rolling, crawling, tall kneeling, standing balance and cruising with a strong focus on children with cerebral palsy. [Find out more information.](#)



Therapeutic PLAY Activities for Children  
Available for immediate download at [YourTherapySource.com](http://YourTherapySource.com)

[Read more blog posts about constraint-induced movement therapy for children with unilateral cerebral palsy.](#)

## 5 MULTI-PURPOSE, LIGHTWEIGHT ITEMS FOR YOUR THERAPY BAG

A day on the life of a traveling school based therapist goes something like this. Pack up a bag at home of equipment and tools (i.e. toys, games, paper and activities) that you will need for your therapy sessions. Some of the equipment may not be easy to carry since many therapy sessions incorporate gross motor, fine motor and sensory activities. Load it into your car.



Stop at school number 1 and get everything out of your car, equipment and paperwork requirements. Carry all of your stuff to the school door. Get buzzed in or use your card to unlock the door.

You rush into your therapy room, classroom or hallway carrying all your equipment. The therapy session begins and you grab a few things

out of your bag if needed. Document the session and on to the next student(s).

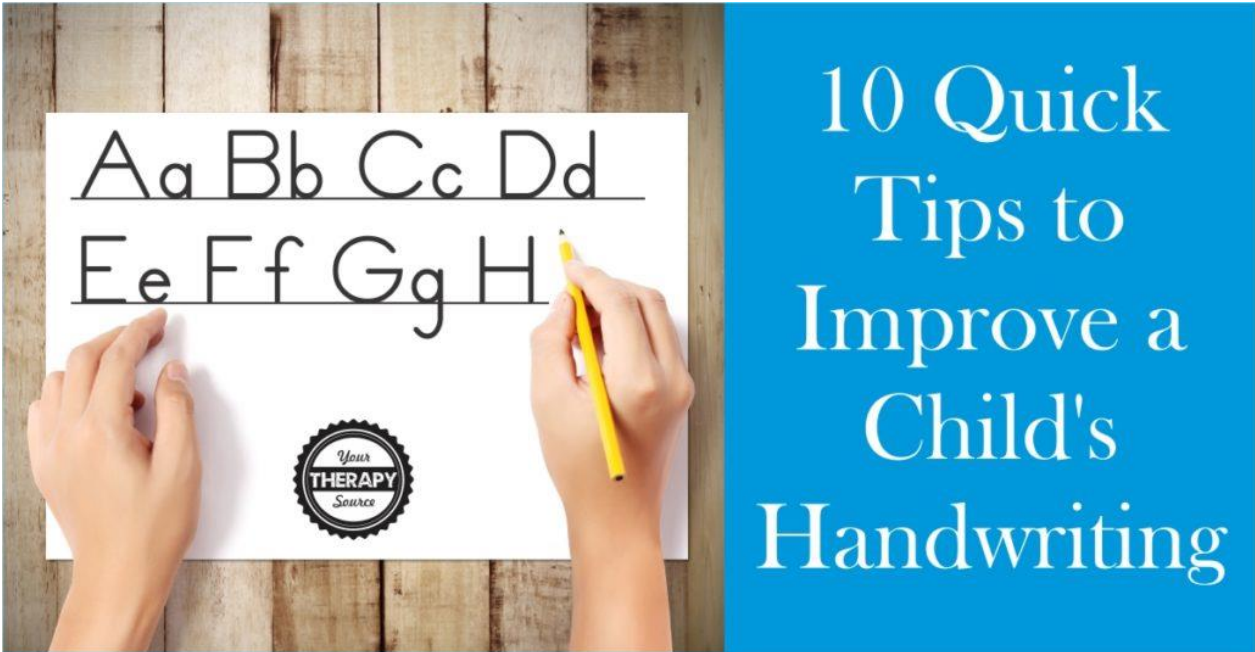
Pack everything up, lug it back out to your car and you head to the next school only to go through the entire routine again of carrying stuff into the school.

Or maybe you are one of the lucky school based therapists who have one school and perhaps even an office or therapy room. Regardless, having some lightweight items that you can carry that are versatile is a must. Here are 5 items that are lightweight, easy to transport and can be used for a variety of activities:

1. Painter's Tape – You can do so many things with a roll of painter's tape. Set up obstacle courses. Use on the wall to throw a ball at a target. Here is a previous post on [5 gross motor activities to do with painter's tape](#).
2. Plastic Cups – Use as targets, stack them, kick them, throw a ball at them, jump over them, turn them over, transfer objects into them, etc.
3. Balloons – Use for various gross motor games, eye hand coordination activities, balance activities and more. If your school does not allow balloons, then toss a beach ball in your bag.
4. Ebooks on the iPad – Save Your Therapy Source books directly to your iPad. Use for reference for activity ideas that [require no equipment](#). Use an app that you mark up pdf's on your iPad. You can find free or paid apps that allow you to mark and draw on the iPad with pdf documents. Therefore, if you have ordered some of our [visual motor electronic books](#) you can now store them on your iPad and have the children practice visual motor skills using the iPad instead of paper.
5. Exercise cards or Yoga Poses – Laminate the small cards and you have a great selection of gross motor and strengthening activities that take up very little space in your therapy bag. Check out [Yoga Poses](#), [Core Strengthening Exercise Program](#), [Physical Activity Cards and Games](#), [Classroom Activity Posters](#) or [25 Bilateral Coordination Activities](#).

What is your favorite multi-purpose, lightweight item to toss in your therapy bag?

## 10 QUICK TIPS TO IMPROVE HANDWRITING

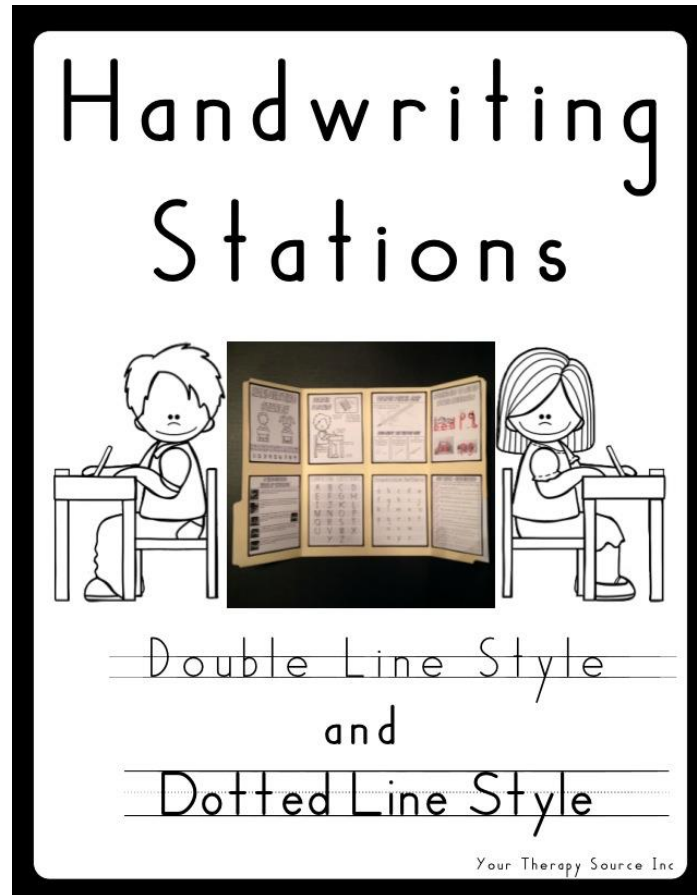


Legible handwriting is an important skill even during this digital age. Handwriting involves motor and cognitive skills that help with letter recognition for reading, memory retention and possibly even better grades. The best way to improve handwriting skills is to PRACTICE. When the child is practicing, try these 10 quick tips to help improve a child's handwriting skills:

1. Provide a model of appropriate handwritten letters. Providing a visual example will help children write with proper letter formation.
2. Check the child's position. The child should be seated with: a stable base of support at the feet, the hips, knees and ankles should be bent at 90 degrees and the desk should be 1-2" higher than bent elbows.
3. Provide appropriate lined paper. Children who are just learning how to write letters need larger lines and/or three lines on the paper.
4. Check the writing utensil. Smaller pencils (i.e. golf size pencils) encourage a better grasp.
5. Provide verbal cues for letter formation. Some children need verbal reminders how to form the letters or to start the letters at the top.
6. Highlight lines. If a child is having trouble writing on the lines, use a highlighter or colored pen to accentuate where the letters belong on the lines.
7. Try an incline or slant board. Sometimes if children write on a more upright surface, handwriting will improve.
8. Stabilize the paper. Encourage the child to stabilize paper with one hand while writing with the other hand keeping the paper in the same position rather than turning while writing.

9. Check the pencil grasp. Teach the child how to hold the pencil correctly from the start to avoid bad habits. The [Occupational Therapy Fine Motor Baselines](#) digital download has research-based pencil grasp categories with picture descriptions and age norms.
10. Be consistent. When children are first learning handwriting skills use one instructional method, similar writing utensils and the same paper to avoid confusion.

What is your best, quick tip to improve handwriting?



[Handwriting Stations](#): includes the materials to create a handwriting station on a tri-fold or in a folder. The station includes proper letter formation for capital and lower-case letters, correct posture, pencil grip, warm up exercises, letter reversals tips and self-check sheet. In addition, there are 27 worksheets for the alphabet and number practice (Handwriting without Tears® style and Zaner-Bloser® style). This download is great for classroom use, therapy sessions or to send home with a student. [FIND OUT MORE.](#)



## HOW TO INCREASE HOME EXERCISE PROGRAM COMPLIANCE



**How to Increase Home Exercise Program Compliance**

How to increase home exercise program compliance for parents of children with disabilities can be a tough question to answer. Parents have a tough job today. Juggling work, home life, children's schedules, homework assignments and more can feel impossible on some days. Add home exercise programs for parents to perform with their children in between therapy sessions and it can certainly feel like overload. As therapists, we know that parental participation in a home exercise program can have positive effects on the children and even themselves. For example, it can be

very difficult to teach a child to get dressed independently, but once they can do the skill by themselves, it is one less skill a parent must help with. We need to be cognizant of the fact that parents need all the help they can to make carry over of home exercise programs easier. According to the recent research below, the therapist's delivery of the home exercise program can make a big difference!

Recent research investigated whether the different behaviors of health professionals and parents influenced home exercise compliance in terms of frequency and duration for children with disabilities. Parents completed a survey in 18 different early intervention facilities to determine how physicians and therapist's interventions influence parents regarding their adherence to a home exercise program (HEP). The results indicated the following:

- rate of adherence to the prescribed frequency and duration of the HEP was similar (about 61%)
- parents who were comfortable integrating the [exercises into their daily routine](#) had a higher probability of adherence to the frequency and duration
- there was a significant impact on the frequency of the HEP being completed when the professional provided information about: the progress, evolution and usefulness of the exercises, ways to include them into the daily routine, checking on skills during follow up and asking about HEP adherence.

The researchers concluded that physicians and therapists can help to increase HEP compliance by providing information on the purpose of the exercises, instructions for the HEP, tips on incorporating the [HEP into the daily routine](#) and following up by checking skills and asking about HEP adherence.

Reference: Medina-Mirapeix, F., Lillo-Navarro, C., Montilla-Herrador, J., Gacto-Sanchez, M., Franco-Sierra, M. Á., & Escolar-Reina, P. (2017). Predictors of parents' adherence to home exercise programs for children with developmental disabilities, regarding both exercise frequency and duration: a survey design. *European journal of physical and rehabilitation medicine*.

[Therapeutic Activities for Home and School](#) provides pediatric therapists with over forty, uncomplicated, reproducible activity sheets and tips that can be given to parents and teachers. This book is an essential tool for all school based therapists to facilitate carry over of therapeutic activities in the home and classroom. [FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION.](#)

## SENSORY QUICK FIXES TO INCREASE ATTENTION SPAN



As the end of the school year approaches, the weather gets warmer, the kids get more antsy and attention spans decrease. Sometimes our bodies need a little extra sensory input to help us maintain an appropriate level of alertness for optimal learning. Here are some simple, sensory, quick fixes that may help children to increase their attention span throughout the school day:

1. Add movement breaks throughout the school day. Quick [brain breaks](#) can help to increase engagement and attention for the lessons that follow. [Mini Movement Breaks](#) offer 60+ activities that require no equipment to get students moving.
2. Create [multisensory lessons](#) that involve different senses – visual, verbal, proprioceptive (heavy work), tactile and vestibular (rotary and linear movement). [Get Up and Learn](#) can help you get started with over 35 activities to incorporate movement with learning.
3. [Try flexible seating](#). Try standing up, sitting on the floor, lying on their bellies on the floor, rocking chairs, exercise balls, air cushion, etc. to help students stay alert. [Wiggle Worms: A Guide to Alternative Seating](#) can get your started.
4. Switch up lessons between pencil and paper with more diverse lessons. Try adding in a tactile component. Sometimes when students can touch and feel something it may increase their level of interest and attention. Make a game out of the material. Children love competition.
5. Offer fidgets. Stress balls, velcro dots under the desk to rub or small manipulatives are nice, quiet fidgets that may help some students focus and attend.

6. Add in gestures when learning material. For example, while completing letter identification flash cards put your hands on your head when reading a capital letter and hands on your hips when reading a lower case letter.
7. Start singing or add in [music](#). There are so many songs today to learn new material even for math and science. Teach the children a song to learn new material or follow a routine.
8. Bright colors or [highlight information](#). If you need a student to attend to a certain section, paragraph, sentence or word, highlight it or print it on brightly colored paper.
9. Chewing a crunchy snack or gum. Sometimes chewing on a crunchy snack like pretzels or chewing gum can help students to increase focus and attention span.
10. Drink through a straw. Ask the students to bring in water bottles with straw lids or provide straws. The oral motor skills and sucking motion on the straw may help to increase focus.



**Brain Breaks Activities Collection – 50% off!** This collection includes the electronic documents below. You will receive immediate download links following payment. Regular price for all 15 titles is \$59.85. SALE PRICE of 50% off for this collection of 15 titles via download = \$29.90. [FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION ON THE BRAIN BREAK COLLECTION FOR 50% OFF.](#)

## FUN GAMES TO PRACTICE SELF REGULATION SKILLS (NO EQUIPMENT NEEDED)



Self regulation skills help children to control emotions, thinking, behavior and motor actions in different situations. Throughout the day, children need the ability to tolerate sensations, situations and form appropriate responses. It requires that children control their impulses to stop doing something if needed and to participate in something even if the children does not want to do it. For example, children need [self regulation skills](#) to control an impulse to move all around the auditorium during an assembly and they need to sit and watch the assembly even if they are not highly interested in the presentation. Research indicates that self regulation in children is a predictor of academic abilities. Children with higher levels of self regulation have achieved higher scores in reading, vocabulary and math. In addition, some research has shown that the ability for young children to self regulate is associated with higher, future education levels. The ability to self regulate is an extremely [important skill that needs to be taught to children](#).

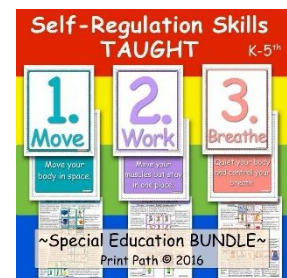
And guess what? Playing games help children to practice and learn those skills! Think about it. Playing games help us to learn to: wait, follow rules and to tolerate losing. Here are 10 FUN games that require no preparation or equipment to practice and learn self regulation skills:

1. Red Light, Green Light – kids move on the green light and stop on the red light. Don't get caught moving on the red light.
2. Mother May I – one child is the leader. The rest of the children ask: “Mother May I take...” a certain number of steps, hops, jumps or leaps to get to the leader. The leader approves or disapproves.
3. Freeze Dance – turn on music. When music stops children must freeze.



4. Follow My Clap – The leader creates a clapping pattern. Children must listen and repeat.
5. Loud or Quiet – Children should perform an action either loud or quiet. First pick an action i.e. stomping feet. The leader says Loud and the children stomp feet loudly.
6. Simon Says – Children have to perform an action only when the leader says “Simon Say do...”. For example, if the leader says “Simon Says touch your toes” and all the children touch their toes. If the leader says “Touch your toes”, no one should touch their toes.
7. Body Part Mix Up – The leader will call out body parts for the children to touch. For example, the leader calls out “knees” and the children touch their knees. Create one rule to start. Each time the leader says “head” touch your toes instead of your head. This requires the children to stop and think about their actions and to not just react. The leader calls out “knees, head, elbow”. The children should touch their knees, TOES and elbow. Continue practicing and adding other rules to change body parts.
8. Follow the Leader – The leader performs different actions and the children have to follow the actions exactly.
9. Ready, Set, Wiggle – The leader calls out Ready...Set...Wiggle and everyone wiggles their bodies. The leader calls out Ready...Set...Watermelon. No one should move. Leader calls out Ready...Set...Wigs. No one moves. Leader calls out Ready...Set...Wiggle. Everyone wiggles again. You can change this to whatever wording you want. The purpose is to have the children waiting to move until a certain word is said out loud.
10. Color Moves – Explain to the children that they will walk around the room. They are to move based on the color paper you are holding up. Green paper means walk fast, yellow paper means regular pace and blue paper means slow motion walking. Whenever you hold up a red paper they stop. Try different locomotor skills – running in place, marching, jumping, etc.

If you need more ideas to teach self regulation skills to children [Self Regulation Skills Curriculum](#) provides an effective, time-efficient structured system to provide classroom breaks, improve self-awareness and self advocacy and teach specific self-regulation skills so that kids have tools to use in their classrooms. This system will get kids moving, give them the benefits of a brain power boost [from getting their heart rate up], give them heavy work and isometrics to help them calm down, and help them learn techniques to quiet and control their bodies in order to return to their academic work. [FIND OUT MORE.](#)

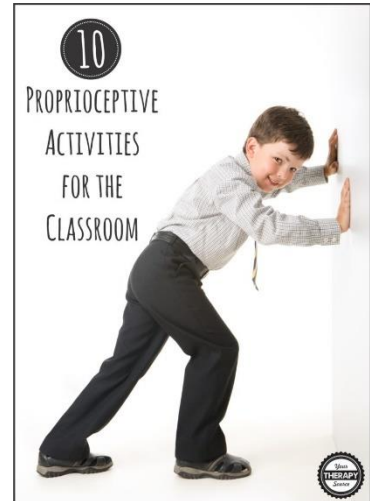


[Read how to play 6 more Self Regulation Games for Children.](#)

## PROPRIOCEPTIVE ACTIVITIES FOR THE CLASSROOM

As pediatric therapists, we all know how beneficial proprioceptive activities are for children. These heavy work exercises help provide students with sensory information about body awareness and positions. They help to calm and regulate a student. Proprioceptive activities can also help to wake up the muscles getting our bodies in an alert state to be ready to learn.

Some of the best proprioceptive exercises for children are monkey bars, jungle gyms and trampolines. Obviously, those are not available throughout the school day so here are 10 proprioceptive activities for the classroom that students can do independently:



1. Chair Push Ups: Sitting with upright posture in a classroom chair, the child put his/her hands on the side of the seat. The child lifts and holds his/her bottom up off the seat for 3-5 seconds and then slowly lowers back down into the chair.
2. Wall Push Ups: Put both hands on the wall with the feet a little farther than arm's length back from the wall. Lean your body towards the wall and back out. Another option is to just push both hands against the wall for 5-10 seconds with arms extended.
3. Desk Push Ups: Place both forearms on the desk, palms facing down and flat. Lean your body weight over your forearms lifting your bottom off the chair. Return to a seated position. Repeat several times.
4. Bear Hugs: Wrap your arms around your chest or knees and give yourself a big, firm hug.
5. Arm Squeezes: Use your right hand to give firm arm squeezes up your left arm starting at the wrist. Repeat with the left hand squeezing the right arm
6. Carry Heavy Books: Give the child a job to organize or hand out heavy books.
7. Wash the desks or boards: The child can apply pressure when wiping the desks.
8. Stack or unstack classroom chairs: Classroom chairs are heavy therefore this is "heavy work".
9. Use a hand held pencil sharpener: The act of holding and turning the pencil with one hand and holding the pencil sharpener tight with the other hand provides proprioceptive input the hands and fingers.
10. Jumping in place: Jumping in place, jumping jacks or marching in place helps to wake up the leg muscles and provide sensory input. This is a great activity to do before activities that require body awareness such as sitting during circle time and walking in a classroom line.

You could create a proprioception station in the classroom. Students could perform heavy work activities prior to school work. [Proprioceptive Poems](#) can help jump start that station into action. This digital document includes the Push Poem and Jump Poem. The poems encourage proprioceptive input with visual cues for the child to follow. Each poem comes with 5 pictures for visual cues along with a poster. The sing song text of the poem is easy for the child to remember. This is a great starter activity prior to table top tasks, fine motor skills and tactile input. [FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION.](#)

Read more about [proprioception and handwriting](#).

## ACTIVITIES TO GET CHILDREN READY FOR PREWRITING SKILLS



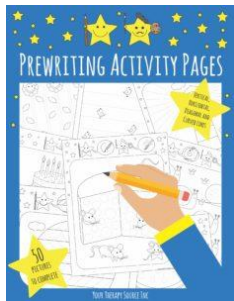
The fingers, hands and shoulders require hours and hours of practicing different skills to get ready for the actual job of picking up a pencil and making marks, lines, shapes and letters on paper. Prewriting skills include the ability to write straight lines, curved lines, zig-zags and shapes. These skills are building blocks for letter formation during handwriting tasks. Here is a list of 10 fun activities to get children ready for prewriting skills:

1. Play Dough – Using [play dough](#) helps strengthen the muscles in the fingers, hands and shoulders which are essential for legible handwriting.
2. Playing in prone – By laying down on the floor on their bellies propping up on their elbows, the shoulders, arms and hands receive proprioceptive and tactile input to help children learn where their body is in space. In addition, this position helps to strengthen the head and neck muscles.
3. Animal Walks – [Children can practice moving like different animals](#) particularly ones where their hands are on the floor such as bear walks, seal walks and donkey kicks.
4. Sensory Trays – Practice making marks in different sensory materials such as shaving cream, sand or flour.
5. [Lacing Activities](#) – Lace beads onto pipe cleaners. Try lacing shoelaces on lacing cards. These types of activities help to fine tune the intricate fine motor skills needed for handwriting.
6. Make shapes and letters with your body – Form the lines, shapes and letters using your body. Check out [Alphabet Movement Cards for easy visuals](#) to get started.
7. [Move in different directions](#) – Perform locomotor skills in straight lines, curved lines and zig zags. Move in a circle. This helps children develop visual spatial skills which is necessary for spacing and sizing of letters.
8. Building blocks – Using Lego or Duplo blocks help children improve fine motor skills, muscle strength in the hands and fingers and visual spatial skills. [Brick Activities for Home and School](#) provides patterns to create numbers, alphabet and seasonal objects using LEGO® style 2×2 and 2×4 size blocks.

9. Fingerpaint – Let children explore making marks with their fingers. It is easy and fun. If the child dislikes the sensation of finger painting, offer different objects to paint with instead such as toy cars or plastic toy animal feet.

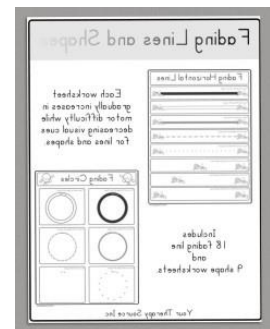
10. Moving or placing objects along a path – The teacher can draw different lines or shapes on paper or put painter’s tape on the floor. If it is on paper, children can try putting stickers along the lines or rocks. If it is painter’s tape on the floor, children can try driving toy cars along the lines. Draw with sidewalk chalk outdoors and children can practice riding a tricycle along the path.

When the children are ready to start with pre-writing skills here are some great resources:



**Prewriting Activity Pages** includes 50 black and white pictures to trace and color. This is a “just right” activity for children who are learning to write, draw and color. Each picture has dotted lines for the child to trace to practice visual motor skills. Once completed, the child can paint or color the picture. Various prewriting practice strokes are included throughout the packet such as vertical lines, horizontal lines, diagonal lines, curves, circles, squares, loops, wavy lines and more! [FIND OUT MORE.](#)

**Fading Lines and Shapes** includes worksheets that gradually increase in visual motor difficulty while decreasing visual input for line and shape formation. There are 18 worksheets for line formations ie horizontal, vertical, curves, waves, diagonals, spikes and combinations. There are 9 worksheets for shape formations ie circle, cross, square, rectangle, X, triangle, diamond, oval and heart. This download is great for push in therapy, therapy homework or consultation services in the classroom. [FIND OUT MORE.](#)



**Lines, Lines and More Lines:** This download is a collection of pre-writing visual motor worksheets. Practice pencil control for vertical, horizontal, diagonal and curved lines. There are 4 separate activities included: 24 task cards to practice pre-writing strokes, 5 worksheets connecting words starting with the same letter drawing different lines, 4 spin and trace the line games and 3 roll and finish the picture games. This download is an excellent choice for: fine motor centers in the classroom, visual motor skill practice, special education classrooms and/or handwriting warm ups. [FIND OUT MORE.](#)



## EFFECTS OF STABILIZATION EXERCISES ON BALANCE IN CHILDREN WITH CEREBRAL PALSY

The *Journal of Physical Therapy Science* published research examining the effects of stabilization exercises on balance in children with cerebral palsy. The participants included 11 school aged children diagnosed with cerebral palsy (GMFCS Levels I-III).

Each child engaged in stabilization exercises of neck and trunk twice per week for eight weeks with each treatment lasting for 45 minutes. The treatment sessions included a warm-up exercises, neck and trunk stabilization exercises, postural control exercises and cool down exercises. The neck and trunk exercises involved:

- 1) lifting the head in a modified bridge exercise to activate the neck flexor muscles and the lower abdominal muscles simultaneously
- 2) pushing the neck backward in supine position to activate the erector muscles of the neck and the upper thoracic vertebrae through the extension of the muscles of the back of the neck
- 3) activation of the deep abdominal muscles in bridge exercise positions with a posterior inclined movement of the pelvis.

The Trunk Control Measurement Scale (TCMS) was used to evaluate the children's trunk control ability.

After treatment, the Trunk Control Measurement Scale evaluation indicated that the exercise treatments had a significant effect on:

- static sitting balance
- selective movement control
- dynamic reaching
- total Trunk Control Measurement Scale scores

The researchers concluded that neck and trunk stabilization exercises that require children's active participation are helpful for improving static and dynamic balance ability in children with cerebral palsy.

Reference: Shin, J. W., Song, G. B., & Ko, J. (2017). The effects of neck and trunk stabilization exercises on cerebral palsy children's static and dynamic trunk balance: case series. *Journal of Physical Therapy Science*, 29(4), 771-774.

[The Core Strengthening Handbook](#): This download includes 50+ activities including:

- Quick and Easy Core Strengthening Activities for Kids
- Core Strengthening Exercises with Equipment
- Core Strengthening Play Ideas

Also includes information on why core strengthening is important and details about the core muscles. [FIND OUT MORE.](#)





Ileana S. McCaigue, OTR/L is a nationally certified/ registered and licensed Occupational Therapist, author, program developer, holistic clinician and educator with 40 years of experience. Her professional career and expertise include a continuum of care. These range from the neonatal intensive care unit to pediatric concerns in the home, school and community for developmental delays, especially for strategy implementation to manage sensory-based problem behaviors. Ileana has worked in a variety of pediatric settings that included over 20 years with Special Education students in public schools at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

She is the author of [Typical Classroom Sensory-Based Problem Behaviors & Suggested Therapeutic Interventions](#), [Autism Sleeps™](#), and has written a new book entitled [Taming Idiopathic Toe Walking: A Treatment Guide for Parents and Therapists](#). She has also created software, the [Scale of Sensory Strategies \(S.O.S.S.\) Tool Kit™](#), for data collection regarding sensory strategies.

Ileana has taken the time to participate in a Q&A session. It is amazing to read about her experiences as an Occupational Therapist allowing her to provide a wealth of information to help children today:

**Q: First tell a little bit about yourself – job experience, years on the job, etc.**

I am a graduate from the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta, Georgia, with 40 years of experience as an Occupational Therapist. I have specialty certifications in Sensory Integration, as a past Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist and for therapeutic use of Interactive Metronome to treat processing disorders. I have served as an expert witness for several court cases involving infants and children, and am a published author in the areas of case management and life care

planning, as well as energy conservation, motion economy, sleep issues for children with Autism and other Sensory Processing Disorders, interventions related to clinical and school-based pediatric practice, and most recently, on the treatment of idiopathic toe walking. I have presented inservices, seminars and workshops throughout the United States throughout my career, but since 2010, a series of seminars focused on how to develop an evidence-based sensory strategy plan to treat sensory-based problem behaviors.

I was honored at the Medical College of Georgia where I was given the Barbara S. Grant Award from the Georgia O.T. Association in October 2005 for what was stated as my dedication and lifetime of outstanding service to the field of occupational therapy. In 1977 I received the Maddak Award in the area of Physical Disability for the design of the S.K.A.T.E. (Skateboard for Kinesthetic Arm Therapeutic Exercises).

My most meaningful accomplishments include the implementation of the first Neonatal ICU Occupational Therapy program in Georgia at DeKalb Medical Center in 1979; the first Occupational Therapist to develop and implement services at Scottish Rite Childrens hospital in 1981, and the establishment of the first private practice Disabled Driver Rehabilitation program in Georgia in 1982.

In 1994 when I was a Rehab Coordinator at Northeast Georgia Center, I assisted Brenau University in the hiring of the program developer for their first O.T. program. Several years since then, I have worked alongside those graduates of which many have gotten their doctorates.

I retired from the Gwinnett County Public Schools after twenty years of service in 2015, and have returned to clinical private practice after providing services in Barrow County Schools in 2015-2016. My primary area of practice is for children with Autism and other Sensory Processing Disorders, especially sleep and sensory-based behavioral concerns. I also consult as a wellness and holistic therapist, and incorporate alternative treatments as appropriate.

I immigrated into the United States in 1957 from Havana, Cuba, and became a citizen at age 7 with my parents. I am bilingual and fluent in English as well as Spanish, my native language.

#### **Q: What made you start to write books and create software?**

My first book in 1980, "*Motion Economy Manual: A Handbook for Conserving Energy*", was written for and published by Northside Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia, where I was the O.T. Coordinator at the time. My next publication was as a contributor, writing Chapter 7 of "*The Handbook of Case Management and Life Care Planning*," by Dr. Roger Weed, Ph.D. Interestingly, it was Chapter 7 on the Role of Occupational Therapy in Life Care Planning which began on page 77 and was exactly 77 pages in length!

I began a private practice on the side in 1981 as a small, home-based business that developed into a brick and mortar-based clinic with a staff of 12: 7 OTs, 1 PT, 1 SLP, 1 Driver Educator for the Disabled Driver Program, an Office Manager and myself. I sold my practice in 1988 to DeKalb Medical Center, and later began working in the school in 1995.

I did not publish my first book until 2009 when I completed the "[\*Scale of Sensory Strategies \[S.O.S.S.®\] Toolkit\*](#)". This was written to validate the quantity and impact of the multitude of sensory strategies that I had been using in classrooms with children with Autism. I needed a formalized data collection tool to compare and contrast the effects of sensory strategies in order

to develop an effective Sensory Strategy Plan [SSP] of action that was used by teachers to manage the sensory-based problem behaviors in the classrooms I served. This was in direct response to a parent threatening litigation because of an accusation that, “Not enough sensory strategies have been used with my child!” The first printing of an SSP was for this child that included the documentation of 72 sensory strategies of which only 11 had a positive impact on managing his severe problem behaviors. There was no argument from the parent at this point, and I knew then that I had a valuable tool that should be shared with other OTs and/or PTs in my same predicament.

My next book, [\*Typical Classroom Sensory-Based Problem Behaviors and Suggested Therapeutic Interventions\*](#) was to compliment the [\*S.O.S.S. Toolkit\*](#) for suggested strategies to use to collect data.

[\*Autism Sleeps\*](#) was written after discovering that the majority (80% or more) of students with Autism on my caseload with behavior concerns were reported to not sleep steadily more than 2-4 hours a night. It was written after overcoming my own sleep disorder, Post-Traumatic Hypersomnia, that I developed after a mild head injury from a motor vehicle accident when I was hit on my driver’s door by an oncoming vehicle traveling 85mph in a 45mph zone. The strategies that helped me, as well as others researched, were included in this book.

My latest book on [\*Taming Idiopathic Toe Walking\*](#) was published after consistent success using a tool that I had initially designed 27 years prior while in private practice that worked more effectively and efficiently than those available commercially for treating toe walkers. I called my tool, Toe Tamers™, since my philosophy is that we may appease or “calm” the need for sensory input that resolves in a problem behavior, but that need may arise at any point of stress and regress in that child or individual’s life further along in life.

So, to answer your question in a nutshell, I wrote books to teach others the therapeutic tools and strategies that I used that were effective with my patients, clients and/or students throughout the course of my years of practice!

### **Q: What is your top tip to therapists who work in pediatrics?**

Work in all areas of pediatrics before you specialize in one area if you know you want to be a “peds OT”. If you are not sure, then work in all areas of adult and pediatrics before narrowing your practice to peds. Once you have decided on the area of peds that most interests and suits you to the point that you feel you are “at home” in that environment, then visit the same setting in many areas of the country or the world to get ideas and exchange your knowledge with them. You would be surprised at how OTs are uniform in some theories of practice, but how differently they approach to treat a similar problem.

### **Q: What is your best advice to someone who is thinking about writing a book or creating software?**

To write a book, find something you have successfully used over time that you think would be of value to another parent, therapist or educator. Then, decide if you have a passion for sharing that tool, philosophy, treatment protocol or whatever the subject may be. Envision what that publication will do and look like, and develop an outline to begin writing, including case studies to validate your clinical expertise whenever possible. Once you have completed your basic manuscript, following your outline so others can follow your train of thought, share your manuscript with trusted individuals (respected colleagues, university-based peers, other



professionals in related fields, depending on subject matter, and a professional editor) to review and help you with the accuracy of your statements and the complete editing process. See if some of those professionals will allow you to print a review of your publication to enhance your credibility. Whenever possible, offer your tool or approach for a research study on which you can consult and assist with the design of the study to add further validity to your book.

**Q: Do you find it hard to juggle practicing OT and creating products at the same time?**

I have done both simultaneously for so long that I simply shift focus as deadlines arise or as a new idea emerges. I always have at least 2-3 new ideas “brewing” in my head that keeps me going and interested in my work as an OT and small business owner while continuing to sell and promote my completed projects. To balance my “work”, as all “good OTs should do”, I enjoy my hobbies of photography and volunteer work. I submit prints for juried shows, while serving on the local Board for the North Gwinnett Arts Association, a non-profit organization for the promotion of arts and education, and I also serve on the Board of New Directions, a day program for adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders in my local community. I have found that the busier I am, the better my time management skills are! I keep my energy levels up with use of wellness products in a “wellness home”. I also remember the quotes from Nike, “Just do it!”, and Mark Twain’s, “Age is a matter of the mind. If you don’t mind, it don’t matter!” I just keep going no matter how “young” I am getting!

**Q: Do you offer seminars or workshops?**

I offer and develop seminars as needed or requested on sensory-based problem behaviors which can include information from several of my publications as spring-boards. Developing Sensory Strategy Plans (I prefer this term over the label, “Sensory Diet”) using strategies in the classrooms and/or homes, treating sleep difficulties in children and/or adults, or the treatment of idiopathic toe walking. Any combination of these concerns can be addressed in a seminar.

If you would like more information on Ileana McCaigue OTR/L providing a seminar or workshop in the United States or other countries please fill out [here](#).

## TIPS TO HELP STUDENTS TO STAY ORGANIZED



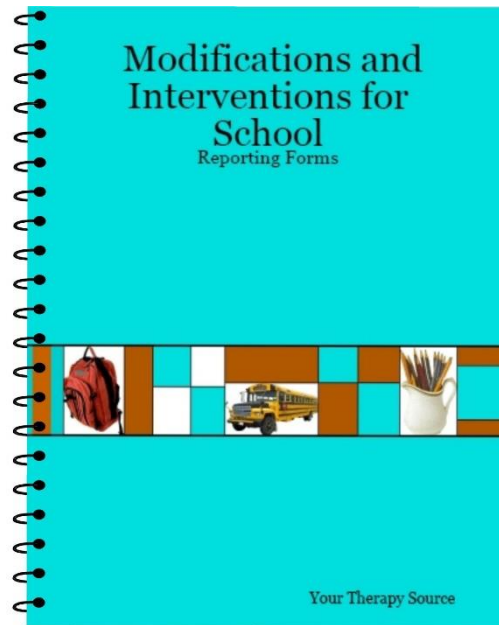
Do you work with students who have trouble with organizational skills? It can be very difficult to manage assignments, books, notebooks, calculators, folders, pens and pencils especially when you have to move from class to class. Here are 10 tips to help students to stay organized:

1. Be a good role model i.e. have desk and classroom materials organized.
2. Remove or have the student remove all unnecessary materials, papers or books from work area.
3. Set aside time daily or weekly to organize work and clean up.
4. Use containers to organize pencils, pens, crayons, etc.
5. Place a sack on chair or desk to organize books when not in use.



6. Using colored tape, mark off a rectangle on desktop to indicate where books should go.
7. Break down long projects or tasks into smaller parts – provide materials at desk needed for each part rather than the entire project.
8. Give assignments one at a time i.e. one worksheet at a time.
9. Encourage the student to use a planner or agenda and write down assignments as soon as possible.
10. Color code notebooks and folders based on subject.

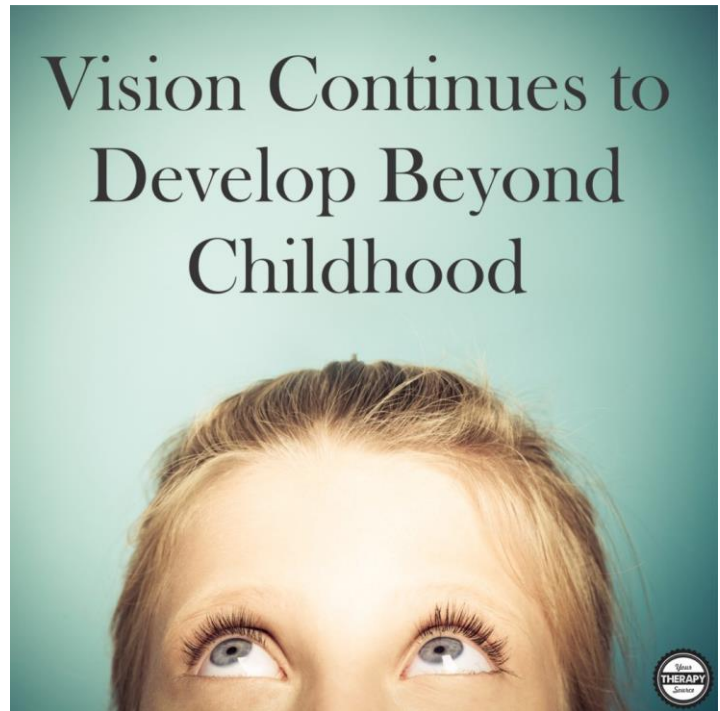
What is your top tip to help students to stay organized?



[Modifications and Interventions for School](#) provides pediatric therapists with over sixty, reproducible reporting forms with hundreds of suggested modifications and interventions for students. Interventions are listed by skill areas such as handwriting, scissors, dressing, walking, stairs, wheelchair skills and sensory skills. This book is a great tool for all school based therapists and teachers to determine what modifications and interventions are successful for a particular student. [FIND OUT MORE.](#)

## VISION CONTINUES TO DEVELOP BEYOND CHILDHOOD

Recent research indicates that vision continues to develop beyond childhood. The *Journal of Neuroscience* published research completed by a McMaster neuroscientist, Kathryn Murphy, and her colleagues who studied post-mortem brain-tissue samples from 30 people ranging in age from 20 days to 80 years. Through analysis of proteins that drive the actions of neurons in the visual cortex at the back of the brain indicated that this part of the brain does not reach maturity until about age 36, plus or minus 4.5 years. The visual cortex, human brain's vision-processing center, was previously thought to mature and stabilize in the first few years of life and reach maturity by 5 to 6 years, actually continues to develop until sometime in the late 30s or early 40s.



“There’s a big gap in our understanding of how our brains function,” says Murphy. “Our idea of sensory areas developing in childhood and then being static is part of the challenge. It’s not correct.”

Murphy says treatment for conditions such as amblyopia or “lazy eye”, for example, have been based on the idea that only children could benefit from corrective therapies, since it was thought that treating young adults would be pointless because they had passed the age when their brains could respond.

Though the research is isolated to the visual cortex, it suggests that other areas of the brain may also be much more plastic for much longer than previously thought, Murphy says.

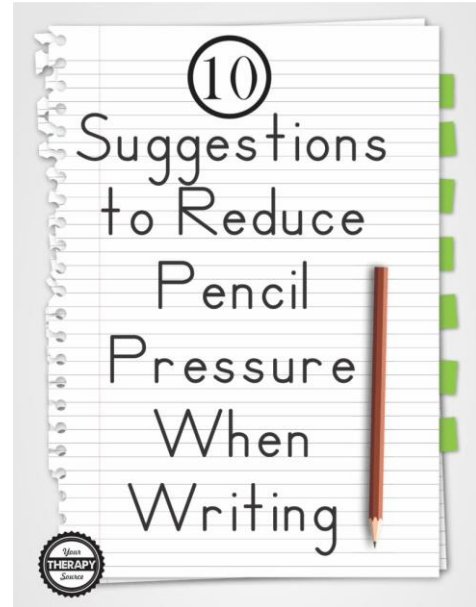
Reference: MedicalXpress. Vision keeps maturing until mid-life: Brain research recasts timeline for visual cortex development. Retrieved from the web on 5/29/17 at <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-05-vision-maturing-mid-life-brain-recasts.html>.

Check out all of our [visual perceptual and visual motor activities](#) such as [Pencil Obstacle Courses](#), [Visual Spatial Mazes](#) and [seasonal activities](#).

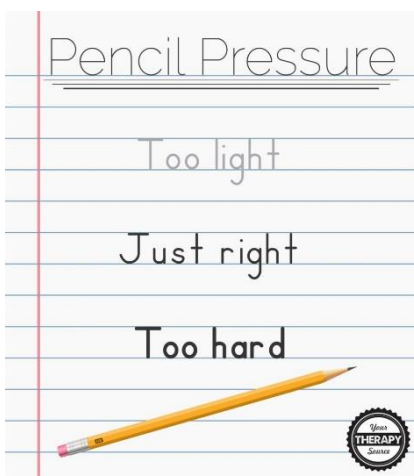


## SUGGESTIONS TO REDUCE PENCIL PRESSURE WHEN WRITING

When students press too hard during handwriting tasks, the hand can fatigue, paper can rip and legibility may decrease. Recently, a reader asked for tips and suggestions to help decrease pencil pressure for when students press too hard during handwriting tasks. Here are 10 suggestions to help children reduce pencil pressure when writing:



1. Write on carbon paper – the child has to write softly so the marks barely go through the paper.
2. Color using shading to demonstrate that different shades require a different amount of pressure. Try this [free Shade Wisely](#) activity or [Missing Monster freebie](#).
3. Provide extra input to the hands before the students write. Warm up by [squeezing a stress ball](#) or upper extremity weight bearing activities such as wheelbarrow walking, [Proprioceptive Poems](#), [animal walks](#) or wall push ups.
4. Fine tune the fingers and grip with clothespin activities. Try the free [Ninja Clothes Pin](#) activity. Play some [visual perceptual clothes pin games](#). Make [clothes pin silly faces](#).
5. Wrap clay around pencil – if student changes the shape of the clay the student is applying too much pressure.
6. Use a mechanical pencil – if student applies too much pressure the tip will break off.
7. Use a slant board – when the students wrist is positioned in extension it can improve pencil control.
8. Place student's paper on top of a flimsy book or Styrofoam – if student presses too hard the pencil will poke through paper.
9. Provide sample of handwritten work with correct pencil pressure. Write one word too light, one word just right and one word too hard to represent the differences in pencil pressure.



10. Explain to students exerting too much pressure when writing can fatigue the hand. Have students practice writing lightly, writing just right and pressing too hard. Can they feel the differences in their hand?

[Click here to read 10 ideas to increase pencil pressure.](#)

**Handwriting Stations:** This digital download includes the materials to create a handwriting station on a tri-fold or in a folder. This download is great for classroom use, therapy sessions or to send home with a student [FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION.](#)

# SUMMER WORD BANK COLLAGE – BLACK AND WHITE AND COLOR



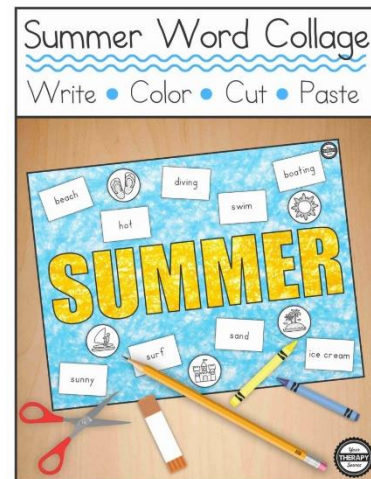
This summer word bank collage is perfect to encourage reading, handwriting and coloring. This summer word bank is FREE for you to download (see bottom of post) to our subscribers. Students can read the words, refer to it when writing or simply color in the collage.

It is part of the [Summer Word Collage complete packet](#).

This digital document is a 21 page PDF document providing practice for handwriting, coloring, cutting and pasting with a summer theme. The handwriting practice pages are provided in: 1. dotted line Zaner-Bloser® type lines, 2. double line Handwriting Without Tears® type lines and 3. boxed lines. This packet offers 6 different options depending upon the student's skill level. [You can find out more about the complete packet here.](#)

Here is a list of the words in the summer word bank collage: beach, hot, sand, surf, swim, ice cream, boating, diving, sunny, vacation, camp, swings, parade, fireworks, bicycle, flip flops, kite, garden, grass, picnic, hiking, ocean, pool, park, fishing, shorts, flowers, nature, berries, travel, sunshine, kayak, walks, popsicle, baseball, barbeque, raft, tent, lake and barefoot.

You can download your free copy [here](#).



## BUMBLE BEE BREATHING BREAK – DEEP BREATHING EXERCISE

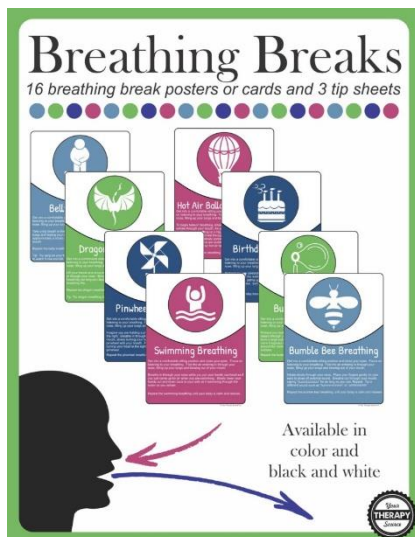
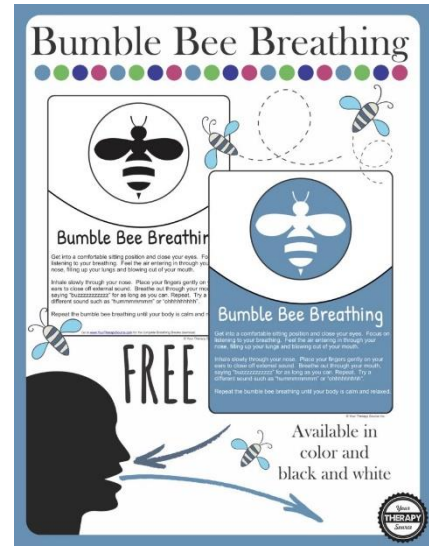
Did you know that deep breathing exercises can help to alleviate stress, reduce anxiety, strengthen the attention span and sharpen the ability to focus and learn? In addition, deep breathing helps certain physiological responses as well such as slow the heart rate and decrease blood pressure. Seems like an easy fix right? Well, maybe not that easy since it takes practice and time to become mindful of your breathing and to improve your deep breathing techniques.

Give it a try with this FREE Bumble Bee Breathing Break. [Download your FREE breathing break here](#) (a tab will open in a new window). This is from the [Breathing Breaks complete packet](#).

Bumble Bee Breathing and all the [Breathing Breaks](#) are a great activity to teach children to help them to tune out stress, to relax and to get the mind ready to learn. Here are some suggested times throughout the day to try Bumble Bee Breathing with children:

1. Before the school day begins.
2. After recess to help calm the class.
3. After a [brain break](#).
4. Following a [kinesthetic lesson](#).
5. After lunch.
6. Before a test.

Give the children some time to learn how to do the bumble bee breathing. Make sure they understand the benefits to the exercise and try and keep it serious. Children can get silly easily so remind them to stay focused and mindful on their own breathing.



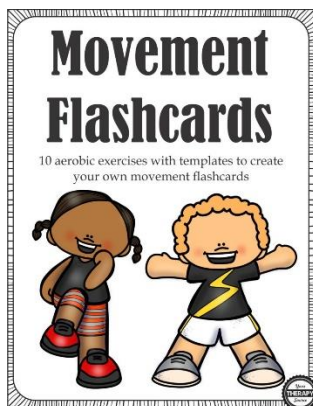
[Breathing Breaks](#): This digital download is a collection of 16 deep breathing exercises and 3 tip sheets. Deep breathing exercises can help to decrease stress, reduce anxiety, remain calm, strengthen sustained attention, sharpen the ability to learn and more! This packet includes 16 full page breathing exercises and 3 tips sheets in color or black and white. In addition, the breathing exercises are provided 4 to a page to make smaller cards or booklets. [FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION.](#)

## FIDGET SPINNER WORKOUT – EXERCISE WHILE IT SPINS!



Right now, fidget spinners are everywhere. Whether they are banned from your school or not, here is a fun way to add in some overall exercise while your spinner spins! You can download your [FREE fidget spinner workout here](#). Years ago, I created a fun printable with a different DIY spinning top ([you can view that here](#)). I thought I would update it so children can use a fidget spinner to time their exercises. The fidget spinner workout would make a great in class brain break to get the body ready to learn again.

**How to Do the Fidget Spinner Exercises:** Get the [free download here](#) and print. Spin your fidget spinner. Try to do the exercises listed the entire time the fidget is spinning. Put a checkmark in box when completed. Write down some additional exercises that you want to try while the fidget is spinning.



If you need more quick aerobic exercise workout for children check out [Movement Flashcards](#). This digital download includes 10 aerobic exercises with flash cards templates. Students can get physical activity while reviewing material. The 10 aerobic activities include: run in place, jumping, hopping, squats, lunges, skipping, twists, cross crawls, jumping jacks and marching. Each page includes a picture image of the aerobic exercise along with a blank template to type in 18 flash cards. You choose what to work on for academic material. [FIND OUT MORE.](#)

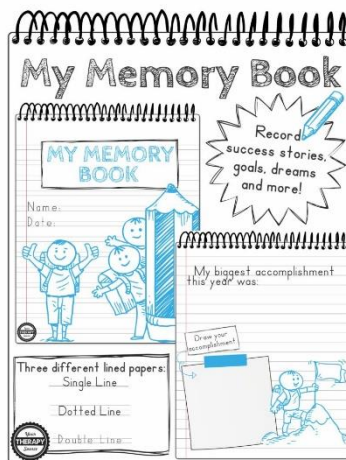


## MY BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THIS YEAR



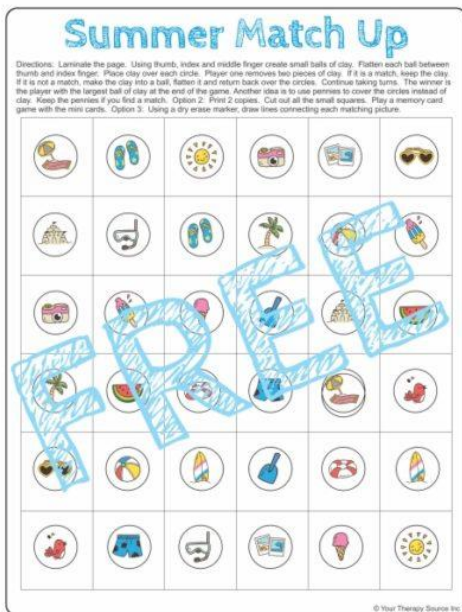
As the school year winds down, encourage self reflection by asking students to record answers regarding their biggest accomplishments, improvements, goals and more. Not only does this help students to stop and reflect what they have achieved, it also helps them to plan for the future. Bonus – it requires handwriting and drawing practice.

Here is a practice sheet from the [My Memory Book](#) complete packet. You can download below for free. It is available in single line, dotted line (Zaner-Bloser type format) and double line (Handwriting Without Tears type format). [DOWNLOAD MY BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THIS YEAR WORKSHEET](#)



[Get more information about the complete My Memory Book here.](#)

# SUMMER MATCH UP FINE MOTOR AND WORKING MEMORY ACTIVITY



Don't you love activities that require little prep and include more than one domain of development? I do for sure so I created this **Summer Match Up board** that you can download for free from the [Summer Sensory Motor Packet](#). This activity incorporates [fine motor skills](#), [hand strengthening](#), [visual discrimination skills](#) and [working memory](#) on one board!

**Preparation:** Print the Summer Match Up board (download link below) and laminate it for durability if you want. Grab some play dough or pennies (finally a use for pennies)!

**How to play with play dough:** Using thumb, index and middle finger create small balls of clay. Flatten each ball between thumb and index finger. Place clay over each circle. Player one removes two pieces of clay. If it is a match, keep the clay. If it is not a match, make the clay into a ball, flatten it and return back over the circles. Continue taking turns. The winner is the player with the largest ball of clay at the end of the game.

**How to play with pennies:** Use the pennies to cover the circles instead of clay. Keep the pennies if you find a match. The player with the most pennies at the end is the winner!

**How to play with just the cards:** Print 2 copies. Cut out all the small squares. Play a memory card game with the mini cards.

**How to add in visual motor skills:** Using a dry erase marker, draw lines connecting each matching picture.

Check out the game in action with play dough and pennies in the video at the bottom of the post.

[DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE SUMMER MATCH UP BOARD](#)

# Summer Packet

**Beach Ball Workout**  
 Directions: Use a beach ball to perform each exercise below. Perform to the right and left sides of the body if needed. Complete on right and left sides of the body if needed.

**Summer Match Up**  
 Directions: Look over the page, using pencils, circles and middle finger make small balls of clay. Further match half between 1 & 2 in not a match, circle. Place the clay on the circle. Then use scissors to cut out the circle. If it is a match, place the clay on the circle with the matching half of clay at the top of the page. Circle the correct answer. Then use the clay to make the shape of the object. Place the pencil on the top of the page. Circle the correct answer to the question. Then use the clay to make the shape of the object. Place the pencil on the top of the page. Circle the correct answer to the question. Then use the clay to make the shape of the object. Place the pencil on the top of the page. Circle the correct answer to the question.

**I Love Summer Vacation**  
 Draw 5 more stars in the sky.  
 Make your body into the shape of each letter in the word: FIREFLY.  
 Fly around the jar.

**Firefly Motor Minute Challenge**  
 Directions: Can you complete all the activities in under one minute?  
 Draw 6 fireflies inside the jar.  
 Draw 5 more stars in the sky.  
 Make your body into the shape of each letter in the word: FIREFLY.  
 Fly around the jar.

**Flip Flop**  
 Lines connecting each flip flop. Circle the one without a match.  
 Write the correct numbers in the box to indicate the missing squares.

Practice gross motor, fine motor and visual perceptual skills with 25+ no prep Summer time activities!

**Your THERAPY Source**

This activity is from the [Summer Sensory Motor Packet](#). Practice fine motor, gross motor, visual perceptual activities with 25+ NO PREP, fun, Summer themed packet. This is an excellent activity packet for in class activities, therapy sessions, class parties, carry over activities, brain breaks, early finishers and summer “homework”. [FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION.](#)