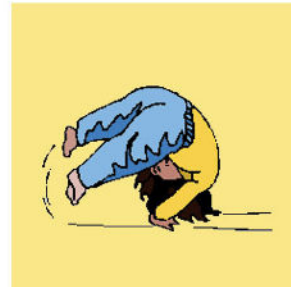


OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

PARENT'S GUIDE TO GROSS MOTOR AND FINE MOTOR ACTIVITIES



VASANT VALLEY SCHOOL
SPECIAL SECTION

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SKILLS FOR THE JOB OF LIVING

What is occupational therapy?

Occupational Therapy (OT) focuses on helping people function to their fullest potential in their environment, through therapeutic inputs in the following areas:



- **Fine motor**--the use of small muscles of the body including the face, hands, fingers, feet and toes.
- **Gross motor**--the use of the big muscles in the body including legs, arms and abdomen
- **Visual Motor coordination**--Being able to coordinate vision with the movement of the body i.e. Eye- hand coordination.
- **Visual Perception**--How the brain perceives what the eyes see.

It may be needed due to a psychosocial, motor, or cognitive impairment.

What does therapy involve?

Activities engaged in to reach our goals can vary greatly and may include:

- Age and skill appropriate games that address goals,
- Learning & practicing adapted methods for daily skills
- Home safety, arm strengthening exercises
- Co-operative groups,
- Manipulating small objects.
- Activities that focus on following directions, sequencing, and movement

An Occupational Therapist works in the following domains:



Activities of daily living (ADL)

The basic tasks performed on a daily basis in order to engage in daily routine. Can include bathing, toileting, dressing, hygiene, and eating skills.



Cognitive skills

Relating to the developmental area surrounding thinking skills. Includes how to receive, process, analyze and understand information



Fine motor skills

The development and use of small muscles coordination to perform activities. This most often refers to the hands.

Gross motor skills

The development and use of large muscles such as trunk and legs to perform activities.

Life skills

The practical skills used & applied in daily life. Can include reading menus, schedules, phone skills, everyday money skills, and social concepts.

Motor skills

Motor refers to the use & coordination of muscles to achieve a goal. Can be gross motor, fine motor, sensorimotor, or any combination.

Motor planning

The ability to organize all inputs and execute a series of movements

**Sensory integration**

The ability to receive, understand, learn from, and develop skills through physical sensation from the environment. Input is through all 5 senses

Vestibular stimulation

Activities that utilize the inner ear structures that assist in maintaining balance. Vestibular activities such as swinging & rocking help increase awareness of body position and balance.

Visual motor coordination

The ability to perform skills that integrates both visual and motor skills for one goal.

ASSESSMENTS

An occupational therapist uses a developmental framework in assessing:

- Play
- Sensorimotor skills
- Posture
- Adaptive skills
- Fine Motor Manipulation
- Oral-Motor Feeding.

Assessments and observations are used to assess:

- Muscle Tone
- Strength
- Coordination
- Motor Planning
- Sensory Processing

Occupational therapists working with children strive to optimize a child's occupational performance. The primary occupations of children are considered to be:

- Muscle Tone
- Play
- Activities of Daily Living (feeding, toileting, dressing, grooming, mobility)
- Learning and school performance
- Vocation or performance in a workplace

In order to maximize a child's potential in each of these areas, an Occupational Therapist works on the following parameters:

- Evaluates gross and fine motor skill development.
- Evaluates the proficiency of gross and fine motor skill performance
- Evaluates the integration of visual motor and visual perceptual skills for purpose of early identification of learning difficulties.
- Screens visual perceptual skills by requiring the child to indicate her response using only pointing.
- Assesses the areas of spatial relationships, visual discrimination, figure-ground, visual closure, and visual memory.
- Evaluates visual perceptual skills using both motor and non-motor responses.

- Assesses the areas of eye-hand coordination, position in space, copying, figure-ground, spatial relations, visual closure, visual-motor speed, and form constancy

INTERVENTION

Therapeutic treatment is aimed at helping the child develop and improve:

- Self-Help Skills
- Adaptive Behavior
- Play Skills

Occupational therapists provide intervention to children using one of five approaches.

- **Establish/Restore**
The occupational therapist identifies the deficits and creates strategies to remedy the problem.
- **Adapt**
The occupational therapist identifies adaptive strategies to work around the problem to improve performance. When tasks, materials or environments are changed, an adaptive approach is being used.
- **Alter**
The occupational therapist helps to identify an environment or physical arrangement that is more conducive for the desired occupational performance. In this situation adaptations are not made, but rather a more appropriate existing setting is identified.
- **Prevent**
The occupational therapist helps to identify activities, contexts, etc. that will help prevent an undesired outcome.
- **Create or Promote**
This approach is most frequently used in early intervention settings. For example the occupational therapist collaborates with families and other professionals to create an environment and routines to support optimal developmental progress and outcomes.

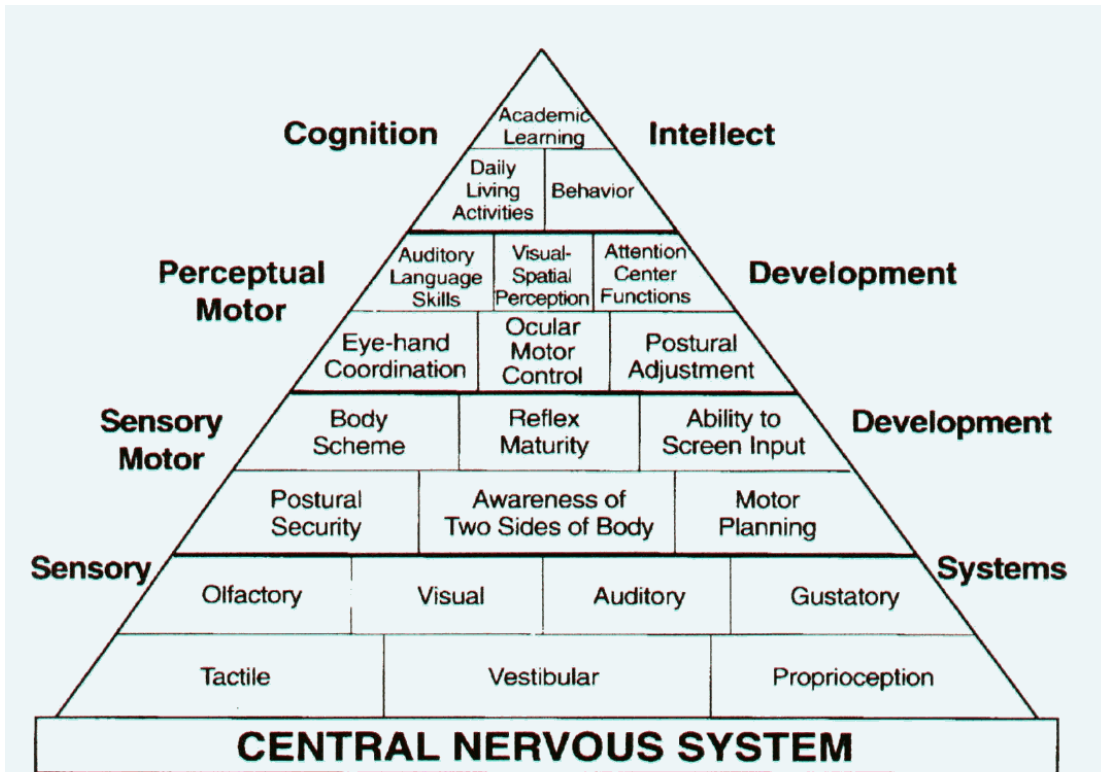


Figure 5. Pyramid of Learning. (Williams & Shellenberger, 1-4)

What is Occupational Therapy in the Educational Setting?

Occupational therapists are part of the education team within a school. The profession of occupational therapy is concerned with a person's ability to participate in desired daily life activities or "occupations."

In schools, occupational therapists use their unique expertise to help children to be prepared for and perform important learning and school related activities and to fulfill their role as students. In this setting, occupational therapists support academic and non-academic outcomes including social skills, math, reading, writing, recess, participation in sports, self-help skills, prevocational/vocational participation and more, for children and students with disabilities.

They are particularly skilled in facilitating access to curricular and extra-curricular activities for all students through supports, design planning, and other methods. Additionally, they play a critical role in training parents, other staff members, and caregivers regarding educating students with diverse learning needs.

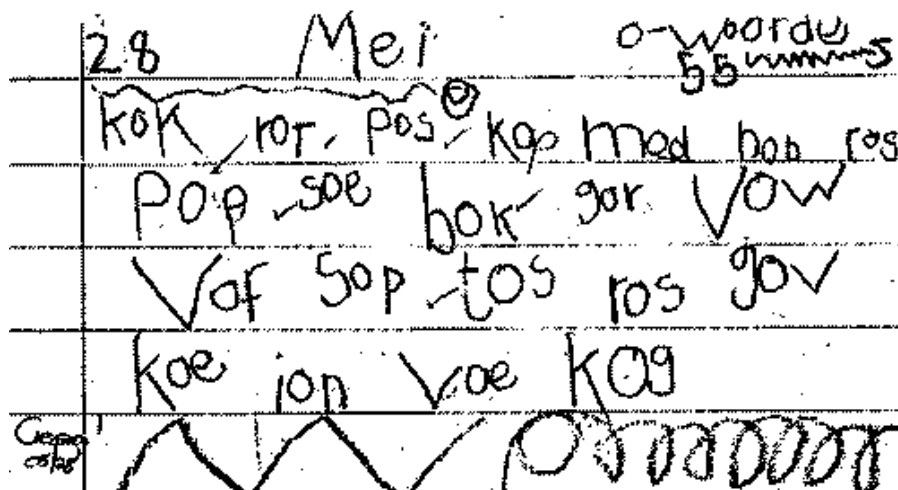
Occupational therapists bring specific knowledge and expertise to the education team to appropriately address student needs. Their role is to:

- Observe a student engaging in an activity and provide strategies to facilitate the student's full participation
- Reduce barriers that limit student participation within the school environment
- Utilize assistive technology to support student success
- Support the needs of students with significant challenges, such as by helping to determine methods for alternate assessment
- Help identify long-term goals for post-school outcomes
- Help plan relevant instructional activities for ongoing implementation in the classroom
- Help students to improve their performance in a variety of learning environments (e.g., playgrounds, classrooms, lunchrooms and bathrooms).

In a school setting, the OT would primarily be working on the areas of:

- **Fine motor skill** - the ability to use hands and fingers to complete skills such as writing
- **Gross motor skills** - skills that children master using large muscles.
- **Self-help skills** - skills that include a child's ability to take care of his/her own needs.

What are fine motor skills?



Fine motor skills are those skills which require a child to manipulate and gain control over a range of materials and tools. These are often used for communication purposes both functional and expressive, e.g. writing a name or message, manipulating a computer mouse, creating a sculpture. Opportunities to develop these skills exist in all six key learning areas of the primary curriculum.

The components of fine motor skills can be considered to be:

- Grasping -e.g. using a crayon, pencil, brush, glue stick, beater, and blocks.
- Manipulating - e.g. play dough, clay, paper, sewing, scissors, finger plays.
- Hand-eye co-ordination - e.g. writing, cutting, threading, moving a cursor, using a glue gun

Activities with Fine Motor Manipulatives.

Pre-kindergartners benefit from experiences that support the development of fine motor skills in the hands and fingers. Children should have strength and dexterity in their hands and fingers before being asked to manipulate a pencil on paper. Working on dexterity and strength first, can eliminate the development of an inappropriate pencil grasp. The following activities involve the use of manipulatives which will support young children's fine motor development, and will help to build the strength and dexterity necessary to hold a pencil appropriately.

Fine Motor Activities

- Molding and rolling play dough into balls - using the palms of the hands facing each other and with fingers curled slightly towards the palm
- Rolling play dough into tiny balls (peas) using only the finger tips.
- Cutting play dough with a plastic knife or with a pizza wheel by holding the implement in a diagonal volar grasp.
- Using pegs or toothpicks to make designs in play dough
- Tearing newspaper into strips and then crumpling them into balls. Use to stuff scarecrow or other art creation.
- Scrunching up 1 sheet of newspaper in one hand. This is a super strength builder
- Using a plant sprayer to spray plants, (indoors, outdoors) to spray snow (mix food coloring with water so that the snow can be painted), or melt "monsters". (Draw monster pictures with markers and the colors will run when sprayed.)
- Use sprayer bottles filled with water and sponges to have the child "clean" a desk or table, then squeeze the excess water into a dishpan. This is a great pre-scissor skill activity.
- Picking up objects using large tweezers such as those found in the "Bedbugs" game. This can be adapted by picking up Cheerios, small cubes, small marshmallows, pennies, etc., in counting games.
- Shaking dice by cupping the hands together, forming an empty air space between the palms.
- Using small-sized screwdrivers like those found in an erector set.
- Lacing and sewing activities such as stringing beads, Cheerios, macaroni, etc.
- Using eye droppers to "pick up" colored water for color mixing or to make artistic designs on paper.
- Rolling small balls out of tissue paper, and then gluing the balls onto construction paper to form pictures or designs.
- Turning over cards, coins, checkers, or buttons, without bringing them to the edge of the table.
- Making pictures using stickers or self-sticking paper reinforcements.
- Playing games with the "puppet fingers" -the thumb, index, and middle fingers. At circle time have each child's puppet fingers tell about what happened over the weekend, or use them in songs and finger plays.
- Painting: Try to alternate between large, stubby brushes and smaller, finer brushes. The smaller the brush is, the more control they need over their hands. Also try getting them to do some painting with cotton swabs. This affords some really fine work and allows them to develop their pincer grip; needed for learning how to write
- Puzzles: For younger children; start them off with large peg puzzles. These are puzzles that have the little knob sticking out of each puzzle piece. This allows them to garner more control over their finger movement. For starter puzzles you can buy them with very large knobs that require a full fist grip

then you can move onto the puzzles that require a thumb and forefinger grip (pincer grip).

- Threading. Buy some beads to thread or use some colored pasta and string. This activity requires a lot of control and a steady hand. Perfect practice for fine motor development.
- Blocks. Start out with larger blocks and move your way towards the smaller variety. The smaller the blocks, the more control they need to develop. But be careful not to introduce blocks that are small too quickly they will only get frustrated and give up.
- Pick up and sort objects such as blocks, spools, coins, beans, marbles, cotton balls, pins, buttons, straws, nails, nuts, bolts, popcorn, etc.. and place them into containers of varying sizes (i.e. egg cartons, cups, mugs, jars, etc.)
- Pick up objects (blocks, cotton balls, counters, etc.) using various sized tongs and strawberry pickers, transferring them between containers
- Stack objects (i.e. coins, cards, checkers, blocks, etc.)
- Screw and unscrew objects such as nuts and bolts, caps from jars
- String beads onto a shoelace
- Run a threaded needle through cloth
- Fasten safety pins
- Cut straight and curved lines/shapes drawn on paper, cloth, etc., with scissors
- Play the piano
- Type
- Crumple paper in a small ball and then flick it with the finger (play "soccer" with the paper ball)
- Shuffle cards, deal cards one by one, turn cards over
- Roll a pencil between thumb and fingers without dropping it
- Knead dough
- Stick small objects into play dough for him/her to pull out
- Wind thread on a spool evenly
- Put rubber bands around various size containers and objects
- Move spoonfuls of small objects from one bowl to another
- Do up buttons, zippers, hooks, etc.
- Tie shoelaces
- Cut finger and toenails with clippers
- Trace and copy letters
- Do connect the dot puzzles
- Solve mazes
- Manually sharpen pencils
- Use a manual can opener
- Tie a box with string or ribbon
- Put keys into locks to open doors
- Put paper clips onto paper

- Use a stapler
- Remove staples with a staple remover
- Place clothespins on the edge of a box or container
- Dial a telephone
- Set a watch or clock
- Pick up or move marbles (or nuts in shells) using a melon baller.
This could be made into a game - i.e. take turns rolling a die.
Whatever number turns up, pick up that number of "marbles" and place them into an egg carton.
- Use therapy putty to form shapes, letters, numbers, and other designs. You may want to use a template.
- Color using the flat side of a crayon. Put paper over leaves, stencils, and other objects so that the child gets sensory feedback as he colors.
- Make a matching game (pictures, letters, etc.) using a coffee can and clothespins. Have the child put the clothespins on the rim of the can.
- Use sprayer bottles filled with water and sponges to have the child "clean" a desk or table, then squeeze the excess water into a dishpan. This is a great pre-scissor skill activity.
- Lace various sized beads. Any activity involving the use of both hands is good to develop bilateral integration.
- Oriental Trading Company has some cute manipulatives, like small locks with keys and slimy putty for poking and rolling. You could have a cutting center. Give the student a magazine and let him cut out the pictures he likes to make a poster. Glue on pictures and later let him tell why he chose those pictures.
- A fun activity with young toddlers is to fill a sensory table/bucket with colored pompoms and provide small tongs and strawberry baskets (or another basket/bucket) for the children to fill their baskets.
- Older children may practice strengthening their fingers for cutting by using a rubber band to just stretch, release, stretch, release, etc.
- Play dough play with young children with the terms: poke, squeeze, pound, press, knead, etc. is always good for language too.

Scissor Activities

When scissors are held correctly, and when they fit a child's hand well, cutting activities will exercise the very same muscles which are needed to manipulate a pencil in a mature tripod grasp. The correct scissor position is with the thumb and middle finger in the handles of the scissors, the index finger on the outside of the handle to stabilize, with fingers four and five curled into the palm.

- Cutting junk mail, particularly the kind of paper used in magazine subscription cards.
- Making fringe on the edge of a piece of construction paper.
- Cutting play dough with scissors.
- Cutting straws or shredded paper.

Sensory Activities

The following activities ought to be done frequently to increase postural muscle strength and endurance. These activities also strengthen the child's awareness of his/her hands.

- Wheelbarrow walking, crab walking
- Clapping games (loud/quiet, on knees together, etc.)
- Catching (clapping) bubbles between hands
- Pulling off pieces of thera-putty with individual fingers and thumb
- Drawing in a tactile medium such as wet sand, salt, rice, or "goop". Make "goop" by adding water to cornstarch until you have a mixture similar in consistency to toothpaste. The "drag" of this mixture provides feedback to the muscle and joint receptors, thus facilitating visual motor control.
- Picking out small objects like pegs, beads, coins, etc., from a tray of salt, sand, rice, or putty. Try it with eyes closed too. This helps develop sensory awareness in the hands.

Midline Crossing

Establishment of hand dominance is still developing at this point. The following activities will facilitate midline crossing:

- Encourage reaching across the body for materials with each hand. It may be necessary to engage the other hand in an activity to prevent switching hands at midline.
- Refrain specifically from discouraging a child from using the left hand for any activity. Allow for the natural development of hand dominance by presenting activities at midline, and allowing the child to choose freely.
- Start making the child aware of the left and right sides of his body through spontaneous comments like, "kick the ball with your right leg." Play imitation posture games like "Simon Says" with across the body movements.
- When painting at easel, encourage the child to paint a continuous line across the entire paper- also from diagonal to diagonal.

Activities to Develop Handwriting Skills

There are significant prerequisites for printing skills that begin in infancy and continue to emerge through the preschool years. The following activities support and promote fine motor and visual motor development:

Body Stability

The joints of the body need to be stable before the hands can be free to focus on specific skilled fine motor tasks.

- Wheelbarrow walking, crabs walking, and wall push-ups.
- Toys: Orbiter, silly putty, and monkey bars on the playground.

Fine Motor Skills

When a certain amount of body stability has developed, the hands and fingers begin to work on movements of dexterity and isolation as well as different kinds of grasps. Children will develop fine motor skills best when they work on a VERTICAL or near vertical surface as much as possible. In particular, the wrist must be in extension. (Bent back in the direction of the hand)

- Attach a large piece of drawing paper to the wall. Have the child use a large marker and try the following exercises to develop visual motor skills: Make an outline of a one at a time. Have the child trace over your line from left to right, or from top to bottom. Trace each figure at least 10 times. Then have the child draw the figure next to your model several times.
- Play connect the dots. Again make sure the child's strokes connect dots from left to right and from top to bottom.
- Trace around stencils - the non-dominant hand should hold the stencil flat and stable against the paper, while the dominant hand pushes the pencil firmly against the edge of the stencil. The stencil must be held firmly.
- Attach a large piece of felt to the wall, or use a felt board. The child can use felt shapes to make pictures. Magnetic boards can be used the same way.
- Have the child work on a chalkboard, using chalk instead of a marker. Do the same kinds of tracing and modeling activities as suggested above.
- Paint at an easel. Some of the modeling activities as suggested above can be done at the easel.
- Magna Doodle- turn it upside down so that the erasing lever is on the top. Experiment making vertical, horizontal, and parallel lines.

Eye-hand Coordination

This involves accuracy in placement, direction, and spatial awareness.

- Throw bean bags/koosh balls into a hula hoop placed flat on the floor. Gradually increase the distance.
- Play throw and catch with a ball. Start with a large ball and work toward a smaller ball. (Koosh balls are easier to catch than a tennis ball.)
- Practice hitting bowling pins with a ball. (You can purchase these games or make your own with soda bottles and a small ball.)
- Play "Hit the Balloon" with a medium-sized balloon.

Finger Tracing

- Many times when a child is unable to do a worksheet, it helps to trace the pattern with his finger before he tries it with a pencil.
- Have the child trace a pattern in sand, cornmeal, finger paint, etc. The textures give the child kinesthetic feedback.

Pre-Writing

- Dot-to-dot drawings of pictures, objects, shapes, numbers, letters, etc.
- Typing exercises
- Tile and mosaic work
- Folding activities
- Fine coloring
- Have the child do repetitious strokes (with an increasingly smaller writing tool) similar to those found in manuscript or cursive letters. Emphasize accuracy, spacing and flow or rhythm. Sometimes doing it to music helps.

Writing

- Have the child write in the air and in front of his eyes (arm outstretched) with his finger.
- To increase his tactile awareness, have him trace over letters on textured surfaces. Have him manipulate 3-dimensional letters when blindfolded.
- When a writing tool is introduced, letters which involve similar strokes should be taught first (moving simple to complex). Next, combinations of letters in short words, sentences and finally spontaneous writing. (Remember to use words which are within the child's reading vocabulary).

Things to remember:

Upright working surfaces promote fine motor skills. Examples of these are: vertical chalkboards; easels for painting; flannel boards; magnet boards (or fridge); windows and mirrors; white boards, etc.

Kids can also make sticker pictures; do rubber ink-stamping; use reusable vinyl stickers to make pictures; complete puzzles with thick knobs; use magna-doodle and etch-a-sketch as well.

The benefits for these include: having the child's wrist positioned to develop good thumb movements; they help develop good fine motor muscles; the child is using the arm and shoulder muscles.

In general, it is more fun to learn while you play. Keep that in mind when teaching fine motor skills. Try to incorporate activities like dress-up to teach zipping and buttons; card creations to practice writing or tracing skills; cutting and pasting to make a creation other than just a plain piece of paper, etc. Be creative and have fun!

What are gross motor skills?

Gross motor skills are big motor skills; i.e. running, jumping and hopping etc. They require balance and coordination.

Gross Motor Skills involve:

- Body awareness
- Movement awareness
- Spatial awareness
- Predicting
- Timing
- Reacting to directions
- Problem solving
- Assessing and adapting
- Muscle-memory
- Coordination
- Control
- Motor-recall
- Judgments



Movement Skills can be divided into 3 areas:

<i>Locomotion.</i>	<i>Manipulation.</i>	<i>Stabilization.</i>
• walking • running • skipping • jumping • hopping • galloping • chasing • fleeing • dodging • climbing • crawling	• throwing • catching • collecting • kicking • rolling • punting • dribbling • volleying • striking • squeezing • pushing	• bending • stretching • twisting • turning • rolling • balancing • transferring • curling • landing • flexing • hanging

Basic Activities.

- Running. Create a game that requires moving quickly. This is great for encouraging the development of gross motor coordination.
- Climbing. Take them to the park and let them climb all over the jungle gyms. Climbing is an innate characteristic of children that develops important gross motor muscles.
- Hopping. Try a game of hopscotch. All that hopping about is developing some balance.
- Ball play. Kicking, rolling and throwing are some great ways to encourage gross motor development.
- Batting. Get out the cricket bat and polish up your batting skills.

Games and Activities.

Bean bag games:

This activity develops:

- **Eye-hand coordination**
- **Gross motor coordination**
- **Interest in a game**
- **Following directions**
- **An awareness of distance and time in relation to when the ball is first tossed and when it stopped**

Toss in the Can

Assemble a sock ball, a bean bag or a yarn ball and an empty trash can or tub. Place the can or tub close to the child.

Show the child how to toss the ball or bean bag into the trash can or tub.

Encourage the child to use one hand, but accept either under- or overhand tosses. Insisting on one or the other at this age may confuse or frustrate the child. The child may even prefer to use both hands. The object is to aim for the target with the ball or bean bag.

This is a simple activity and should interest the child. However, make it clear to the child that he should aim for the trash can or tub and not the furniture, lamps, tables, etc. When the child has gained confidence in tossing the ball a short distance, the trash can or tub can be moved farther away from the child. This will offer more of a challenge to the child and will increase his skill and confidence.

Heads or Tails: Toss two-color bean bag in the air and have child guess which color will land facing up.

Bean Bag Crawl: Put bean bag on child's back and see how far he/she can crawl before it falls off. Racing this way is great for a birthday party.

Bean Bag Walk: Child balances bean bag on head as he/she walks, sits in a chair, sits on the floor, walks backward, etc.

Keep a Straight Face

Two teams sit facing each other in two lines. One team is chosen to go first and they must keep a straight face no matter what. In the meantime, the opposing team is doing everything within their power to make the other team laugh or crack a smile. No touching or tickling, but other than that, anything goes! It's so funny to watch the creative ways people try to make each other laugh.

Monkey Tag

Number of Players: Any number

Location: Outdoors with over the head places to touch, such as tree limbs, clotheslines, etc. (backyard or park)

Equipment: None

Object: Avoid being tagged by "IT"

Set-Up: One player is chosen as "IT"

Play: "IT" cannot tag any players if they are touching something over their heads AND standing on only one foot. (This position prevents players from remaining in the safe position too long). Players should be encouraged to move around and take chances. Also, "IT" cannot stand next to one player to wait for them to

move and cannot push them to make them get off balance. "IT" has to keep moving from one player to the next. NO two players can touch the same overhead object and the "last" player to an object wins that spot, thereby causing the other player to have to run.

Winner: None

Flamingo Ball Relay

Required: Balls

Players: Small to large groups

Category: Relay Games

Set up teams of 8 - 11 players and each team will need one ball. Choose one player on each team to toss the ball to their team players. The teams are to line up side-by-side about one to two feet apart from the other team players.

The players with the balls are to be facing the first player in line about 5-8 feet away. On go, the first player is to stand on one foot (left foot) and the ball is to be passed to them 5 times by their player with the ball.

If they put their foot down they are to start over with the count of 5 again. Once that player has completed the 5 passes then the next player will complete the task. You do this all the way down the line until the end. Once the last person has completed standing on the left foot, they will now stand on the right foot for 5 ball passes. The next player will do the same standing now on the right foot working your way back up to the starting point. The first team to complete the ball passing while standing like a Flamingo is the winner

Bubble Wrap

. Get a large piece of bubble wrap paper and tape it onto the carpeted floor. Place plastic and wooden toy hammers all around. The children bang and pop the bubble wrap.

"Foot" Ball

Materials: sponge balls

large box or basket.

Scatter the balls around and let the children pick them up using their feet instead of their hands.

Big Blocks

Live up your blocks center with these attractive, lightweight building blocks. Collect a supply of concentrated detergent boxes. Tape over the opening of each box with packaging tape. Cover each box with colored paper. Youngsters will demonstrate new heights of creativity when they're building with these larger-than-life blocks!

Parachute Games

Mushroom

This is not so much a game, more an essential starting point for parachute play. Get everyone to spread out the parachute and hold the edge, spaced out more or less evenly so they're standing in a circle. Pull the chute taut and lower it to the ground (or knee level). On the magic word (e.g. Mushroom!) everyone pulls the chute upwards (don't let go). It will fill with air and rise up like a giant mushroom - or igloo. To get it as high as possible everyone must take a couple of paces towards the center as the chute rises. It's good to practice this so that the group can learn to work effectively as a team and get the chute really high. It won't work without co-operation.

Variations on Mushroom

Once you've mastered the basic mushroom it's fun to experiment. See what happens if:

Everyone mushrooms and then runs to the center, still holding the chute.

Everyone mushrooms, then lets go, especially outdoors on a windy day!

Everyone lets go at exactly the same time. If there isn't any wind, the chute will retain its perfect mushroom shape and rise straight up in the air. Indoors it may go up to the ceiling. To get this right it's best for someone to shout "One....

Two.... Three.... Go!", or similar, immediately after the "Mushroom!" instruction.

For everyone to let go at exactly the right instant will take practice and concentration. Groups of children who haven't played with a parachute before will probably be delighted and fascinated by the effect for quite a while before you move on to other games. It's particularly spectacular when the sun is shining down through the chute.

Roller ball

Everyone holds the chute taut. Place a large ball near the edge. Try to make the ball roll around the edge of the chute. To do this someone starts the ball rolling.

As it comes towards you, you lower the edge you are holding, and as it goes past you raise your edge. When all the players do this in synchronization it creates a wave going round the edge, pushing the ball round in front of it in a smooth, steady circle. It can not be done without concentration and co-operation!

However, it is very rewarding for the group to eventually achieve a smooth, continuous motion. Once you've done this try speeding up - or change direction.

Big Turtle

Have the children get on their hands and knees under a large "turtle shell" and try to make the turtle move in one direction. As a cooperative game, children

have to work together to get the turtle to move. Variation: Have the turtle go over a hill or bench or through an obstacle course without losing the shell.

The Ocean

We pretend the parachute is the ocean. I have them give me the name of an ocean. Children move the parachute in response to the 'weather report' they heard. (Encourages children to be creative). For example, I'll say, "I heard on the weather report this morning that there was a slight breeze over the Atlantic. What would that look like?" The children respond by making small waves in the parachute. Other suggestions have been - high winds, storms etc. Once they get the hang of it the possibilities are endless.

See-Saw Pull -- From a sitting position, have the children pull the chute back and forth in a see- sawing motion.

Make Waves -- While gripping the parachute, everyone moves their arms up and down to make small and large waves.

Ball Roll -- Have the children try to roll balls into the hole in the center of the parachute.

Chute Lift -- Ask the children to lift the parachute high over their heads and down again. Talk about the soft sounds and breezes that are created. Move the parachute faster and notice the different effects.

Mushroom -- From a standing position, lift the parachute from the ground to waist height, counting one (lift) and two (lift). On three (lift), have everyone raise the parachute high over their heads and then crouch down, pulling the parachute tightly behind them. A mushroom effect is created as the parachute settles.

Parachute Tag -- Lift the parachute high overhead. Call one child's name and have her run (skip, hop, twirl or crawl) to the other side before the parachute comes down and tags her.

One Hand Run -- Have each child hold the parachute with one hand, extending the opposite arm out for balance. Run around in one direction, then change and run around in the other direction. A variation would be to use music as the cue for changing direction (i.e. direction can be changed every time the music stops).

Parachute Run -- Have the children take turns running on the parachute as it lies on the ground, while the other children make waves. See how long the children can maneuver on the waves before falling down.

Sock Ball -- Use a rolled up pair of socks to make a great beginner's ball with which he/she can practice throwing. To build sense of confidence first ask child

to toss (as in underhanded) the ball to you. This is an easiest way for young children to throw with accuracy. Start by asking the child to toss it to the wall, big box, square on floor - something large so child will have confidence to try smaller targets.

Hula Hoop Toss -- Use either sock ball or other soft ball and throw thru a hula hoop hanging from ceiling or teacher, while sitting on floor, can hold over her head. It is important for the hoop to be at child's eye level. Later, as coordination improves move the hoop from side- to- side to increase the challenge.

Kick Ball -- Balancing on one foot and kicking the ball with the other is not easy, and this exercise is to help improve that balance. At first the child can start by holding one foot up and seeing how long they can balance. Make a game out of it by singing this song while the children hold their foot up. As an added skill have them hold their foot with the same hand while balancing)

Tune; Wheels On the Bus

I can balance on just one foot, just one foot, just one foot.

I can balance on just one foot - as still as a statue

As balancing improves then have them hop on one foot, then progress to hopping on one foot while holding the other foot.

Now have them kick a ball.

The Tortoise --To create a giant tortoise several children get on their hands and knees while you cover them with a shell made from a blanket or large sheet of cardboard. Suggest that the tortoise take a little walk. Do not be surprised if it loses it's shell the first few tries. The children will need to practice and use team work to move as one and keep their "home" on their backs. Once they start operating as a team set up a simple obstacle path, put a chair in path that they have to turn to avoid, blocks that must be climbed over.

Caterpillar Crawl --Line up kids on hands and knees and link together by having each child hold on to the person's ankles in front of them and have a slithery excursion across grass as a caterpillar! Surmounting cushions placed in their path or following a prescribed route around several chairs can add challenge to the fun.

Tip: FOLDING TOWELS

An older child will benefit in many ways by folding towels on laundry day. It takes co-ordination. (And co-operation too!) This builds large muscle development of the arms.

Tip: SANDBOX

Add to the sandbox. Scoops and buckets provide the child with upper arm movement. They will also gain some co-ordination with this activity.

Tip: OBSTACLE COURSE

This obstacle course provides experience for a wide variety of gross motor movements and skills. Select a number of things the kids can do in any order, and make an obstacle course in your yard.

1. Make a balance beam with a 2x4 piece of wood.
2. Climb up on a chair and jump off.
3. Jump through a hula hoop, feet together.
4. Crawl under a table.
5. Swing on a rope and jump off. (Best if done Outdoors)
6. Jump over a box onto a mat. (Be sure the mat grips the floor and will not slip.)
7. Crawl through a tunnel or under a chair on your tummy.

Tip: THE MIRROR GAME

Children should be 3-4 years of age for this game. Have two children face each other. One child is the leader and slowly performs a movement. (They can cross their arms, touch their nose or hop.) The other child imitates the leader's movements as closely as he can, just like a mirror.

Tip: CAR WASH

An activity that children can never get enough of is the "car wash". Simply supply buckets of mild dishwater, sponges, brushes and rags and the children's riding toys. Sit back and let them at it. It's a good idea to have the kids in their swimsuits. Getting wet seems to be the big attraction here. Supply them with other outdoor toys that may need a "bath" too. Make sure they have their sunscreen on.

Tip: SIMPLE SAFE EXERCISE

Make sure you have enough floor space for the free movement of arms and legs. Here are simple exercises kids can do that are fun.

- From a sitting position, sit up as tall as possible then relax. Repeat.
- Place hands on the floor and crawl forward with legs held in a stiff manner.
- Walk on all fours slowly, like a turtle.
- Lie on the floor with hands above the head. Raise right leg then raise left leg. Lower right leg, lower left leg.

-Lie on the floor. Rise up to a sitting position, lean over and touch your right toe with the left hand. Return to a reclining position. Repeat with the right hand.

Tip: HAMMER AND NAILS

Children love to pretend that they are building. Hammers, nails, and a block of Styrofoam or soft block of wood can be wonderful tools for gross motor skills. This is an activity that should be very closely supervised. It is fun to create a wood working area in your daycare.

Tip: TRAMPOLINE

With the supervision of an adult, children build leg muscle and balance and co-ordination on a trampoline.