

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY RTI HANDBOOK

Response to intervention (RTI) now mandates interventions to be tried before requesting additional support of related services, such as occupational therapy. The questions that need to be answered before requesting the additional support are:

- *What interventions have been tried and what was the impact of these interventions on student performance?*

The purpose of this binder is to provide regular education teachers with strategies and interventions that can be put in place for students who are having difficulty participating in their schoolwork and routines.

The binder is designed so that the teacher can describe a problem and then attempt any of the interventions listed *before requesting* involvement of a therapist. These generic, easy to use, and universally designed interventions can be put in place within the classroom/school in the beginning. These strategies can be used by your entire class but will be especially useful for a student who is struggling.

A very important component of RTI is data collection. Data has to be collected to support whether those interventions are effective. If those interventions are unsuccessful, further information will be needed to determine the student's abilities and what other interventions or strategies could be put in place.

SCHOOL-BASED VS MEDICAL-BASED THERAPY SERVICES

It can be confusing trying to determine what is educational-based versus medical-based occupational therapy.

Educational therapy focuses on interventions to improve the student's ability to learn, participate, and function in their educational setting.

School-based therapy only works on skills necessary for a student to function in school independently. These services are more of a "top down", outcome-based, approach. Rather than rehabilitate a deficit, the therapist facilitates *access* to curricular and extracurricular activities through support. The OT may adapt and modify the environment or offer the teacher strategies to implement on a daily basis.

According to ISBE:

- Must contribute to the development, improvement, or maintenance of student's functional level within the educational environment
- School-based involves "teaming" and recommendations and decisions are made based on input from the team
- If a student needs occupational therapy to address problems but the problems do not prevent student from benefitting from the educational program, school-based therapy should not be provided.

Conversely, medical-based therapy focuses on *treatment* to alleviate or cure underlying medical issues. Therapists identify the underlying deficits of a problem and then address them through rehabilitative activities. The medical model is more of a "bottom up", remedial, approach. The therapist identifies the building blocks and attempts to repair the deficits for improved function.

Some children may qualify for therapy in a medical/rehabilitative setting but if their disability is not impeding school function, they do not require OT services.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY TIER/REFERRAL PROCESS

When a student has been identified by teacher as having a FM/handwriting concern:

1. Complete FM and/or handwriting screener (see appendix of this binder). OTR will assist and train teachers how to administer.
2. This student should be part of the intervention/tier 2 team discussions within your building.
3. Students targeted will participate in FM/handwriting interventions within the classroom
 - Examples: Establish a FM/handwriting center, FM/handwriting morning work stations/baskets
 - OTR will provide ideas/suggestions for activities to incorporate into tier 2 interventions. Ideas will be in binder provided to each building and teachers will be sent an electronic copy of the binder.
 - Recommend that targeted students participate in these activities/interventions a minimum of 30 minutes weekly, though increased daily participation is encouraged.
4. Data will need to be collected regarding center activity and “attendance” in the activity. Recommend using the student “sign in” sheet as attendance tracker which will also provide 1 method of progress monitoring.
5. Teachers should also monitor progress using screener and/or other quick checks of deficit skills. OTR can assist teacher in determining best method for progress monitoring dependent on skill(s) being targeted.
6. OTR will check in with each building monthly during the first semester (September-December). Check-ins will occur quarterly during second semester (January-May).
 - Check ins will either be during team/grade level meetings and/or observation time scheduled with the teacher.
7. Progress should be discussed at tier 2/intervention team meetings within your buildings. Please contact OTR to attend these meetings.
8. If student is not making adequate progress with reasonable amount of time in the interventions, next steps can be discussed with team including OTR during the tier 2/intervention team meetings. Data/documentation should be provided to OTR and a team decision will be made on next steps (either additional observations or blue form completion to generate a formal OT evaluation).

MASTERY OF FINE MOTOR SKILLS BY AGE

5 YEARS

- Imitates simple block designs (i.e.: steps, train, bridge)
- Copies an O, +, X
- Prints a few letters on paper
- Maintains scissor position with scissors pointing away from body and using helping hand to support and turn paper
- Cuts with scissors on curved line
- Cuts out a circle
- Laces cards alternately in one hole, out the other
- Hold pencil with tripod grasp
- Draws a person with at least 3 parts

5 ½ YEARS

- Hand dominance established
- Draws a simple house with doors, windows, and a roof
- Prints numbers 1-5
- Copies triangle and square
- Imitates folding paper
- Buttons
- Draws a person with at least 6 parts

6-8 YEARS

- Disassembles nut and bolts
- Ties shoelaces
- Clips papers together using paper clips
- Opens and closes a safety pin
- Snaps fingers

Teach Pencil Grasp

Finger Family Driving in the Car

Each finger is a member of the family (see figure 1)

- Thumb=Dad
- Index Finger=Mom
- Middle/Tall Finger=Big Brother
- Ring & Pinky Fingers= Younger Sister & Baby Brother



Figure 1

Your family is going for a drive in the car. Who drives? Dad drives! If dad is driving, who is sitting in frontseat? Mom! Where do the kids sit in the car? In the backseat! Dad and mom get into the car (pencil) on different sides with car (pencil) in the middle. (Figure 2). And the kids all sit safely in the backseat.

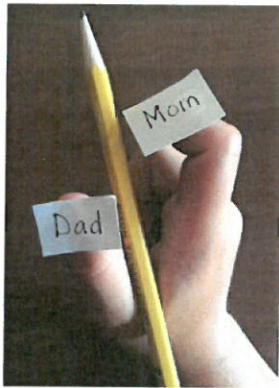


Figure 2

Remember, it is not safe for mom to sit on dad's lap (figure 3) or dad to sit on mom's lap (figure 4) while he is driving. It's also not safe for big brother to sit in the front seat (figure 5).



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

Pencil Grasps

How a writing instrument is grasped can have a significant impact on control. To control a pencil efficiently, the student will need to be able to:

1. Make small movements of the finger joints.
2. Hold the pencil firmly enough to control it, but not so tightly as to restrict movement.
3. Hold the pencil angled toward to shoulder.

Functional Grasps



Tripod Grasp



Quadruped Grasp



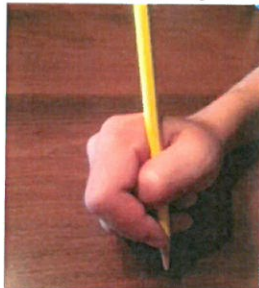
Adapted Tripod

These grasps are considered functional. Unless your student is having a specific problem with handwriting there is no need to suggest change. Remember, "You don't need to fix what isn't broken."

Dysfunctional/Immature Grasps



Thumb Wrap



Thumb Tuck



Palmar



Digital

CENTER ACTIVITY IDEAS

SCISSORS

1. Cutting playdough
 - Child sized scissors
 - Playdough
2. Cut paper with fancy scissors
 - Fancy scissors with various patterns
 - Assorted color paper
3. Cutting straws with scissors
 - Traditional child sized scissors
 - Plastic straws
4. Cutting paint swatches
 - Traditional child sized scissors
 - Paint swatches
5. Cutting on lines
 - Traditional scissors
 - Cutting sheets

PLASTIC LINK ACTIVITIES (bilateral coordination, midline, strengthening, manipulation)

1. Linking clips together
 - Plastic links
2. Linking clips together to measure items in class or picture cards
 - Plastic links
 - Classroom items and/or picture cards
3. Use links to string together letters in name
 - Plastic links
 - Hole punched letters cards
4. Use links to string together numbers
 - Plastic links
 - Hole punched number cards
5. Use links to string together letters of alphabet
 - Plastic links
 - Hole punched letters of alphabet

HOLE PUNCH ACTIVITIES (strengthening, bilateral coordination, midline, pre-scissor)

1. Punching holes with hole punch
 - Hole punch tool
 - Strips of paper
2. Use hole punch to punch numbers indicated in number book
 - Hole punch
 - Hole punch number book
3. Use hole punch to punch out specified letters/letter sounds
 - Hole punch
 - Letter strips

DOUGH ACTIVITIES (bilateral coordination, strengthening, hand dominance, pre-letter formation, midline)

1. Use the dough to make letters
 - Play-doh or homemade dough
 - Laminated letter mats
2. Use dough to make the letters in my name
 - Play-doh
 - Laminated name cards

NUTS and BOLTS ACTIVITY (strengthening, bilateral coordination, hand dominance, midline)

1. Sort and match nuts to bolts. Twist the matching sets
 - Various sized nuts/bolts

POP BEAD ACTIVITIES (strengthening, bilateral coordination, midline, visual perceptual)

1. Connect the pop beads in a long string
 - Pop beads
2. Connect pop beads and measure objects around the room
 - Pop beads
 - Items from the room to measure or laminated measuring cards
3. Connect the beads to make a pattern
 - Pop beads
 - Self-correcting laminated pattern cards
 - Clothes pins (optional)

PUSH PIN ACTIVITIES (strengthening, grasp, hand dominance, midline)

Instructions: Staple a white copy of the push pin sheet to the front of a colored piece of paper. Once student has completed "poking" remove top sheet and hold up the colored one to see the design.

1. Use push pins to follow lines on picture
 - Colored paper
 - Push pin picture sheets
 - Push pins
 - Eraser
2. Use push pins to follow the lines of the letters in your name
 - Colored paper
 - Push pin name sheets (Elise can assist with getting this if needed)
 - Push pins
 - Eraser
3. Use push pins to follow the lines of the letters on the letter sheet
 - Colored paper
 - Push pin letter sheets
 - Push pins
 - Eraser

PUTTY ACTIVITIES

1. Find the hidden items in the putty

- Putty
 - Small objects to hide inside the putty
2. Find the items in putty and sort by shape
 - Putty
 - Small jewel shapes
 - Sorting dishes
 - Shape labels
 - Velcro or tape for attaching label
 3. Find the items hidden in putty and sort by color
 - Putty
 - Small various colored items to hide
 - Sorting dishes
 - Colored labels
 - Velcro or tape for attaching label

TONG/TWEEZE ACTIVITIES (strengthening, grasp, midline, bilateral coordination)

1. Roll the dice and use tongs to move the frogs to the lily pad. If the frog falls in the transporting, it must be returned to the container. When all frogs are gone, students count up the frogs on their lily pads to see who has the most. (Other animals/objects can be used)
 - 1 dice
 - Small plastic frogs or other small manipulative object
 - 2 tongs
 - 2 lily pads or other landing spot
2. Use tongs to sort colored pompoms into labeled containers
 - Pompoms in various colors
 - Sorting dish
 - Color labels
3. Use tongs to move small items onto letter mats
 - Tongs for each student in group
 - Small objects
 - Name mats (Elise can assist in getting this if needed)

MONSTER BALL (strengthening, bilateral coordination, midline, hand dominance)

1. Feed "monster ball". Start with same number of items ("food") in tray. Roll dice and feed monster the number of food pieces to monster and see who can be the first to feed all of their food to the monster.
 - Monster ball (see appendix on how to make Monster ball)
 - Dice
 - Small objects for feeding (pompoms, erasers, coins, plastic discs).

MORE NAME ACTIVITIES (grasping, pre-writing, midline, hand dominance)

1. Use cotton swab to trace name
 - Name sheet
 - Cotton swabs
 - Washable paint
2. Use stickers to trace the letters of name

- Name sheet
- Small stickers

Midline Skills

Crossing midline means that a body part is able to spontaneously move over to the other side of the body to work there. Crossing midline is important on a physical level and a brain level. At the brain level, the ability to cross midline indicates that the right and left side of the brain are communicating effectively with each other. At the physical level, when students spontaneously cross midline with the dominant hand, then the dominant hand practices and is able to develop good fine motor skills. If your student avoids crossing midline, then both hands will tend to get equal practice at developing skills and true handedness may be delayed. This means that learning to write will be much more difficult as they will have two less skilled hands rather than one stronger, more skilled hand.

Signs your student has difficulty crossing midline:

- Continues switching hands during writing, coloring, drawing tasks
- Transfers objects hand to hand frequently
- Uses left hand for activities on the left side of body and right hand for activities on right side.
- Has poor pencil skills
- Difficulty looking/scanning in multiple places. Leads to difficulty visual tracking for reading and copying in school
- Difficulty throwing/catching a ball

Activities to Encourage Crossing Midline:

1. Position activities strategically - Set up games, objects so that the student has to reach across body to obtain the piece/item.
2. Standing at chalkboard/white board or use a slant board at table
 - Draw train tracks, roads, maze paths
 - Horizontal figure 8 – trace and re-trace
 - Drawing multi-color rainbow
3. Drive car on curvy “road” using one hand at a time
4. Scoop sand into a bucket using one hand to hold the bucket and the other to scoop and reach across
5. Draw a large circle, oval, horizontal line or any picture that requires a left to right reach. Position your child in the center. Have your child place stickers or a stamper along the lines of the picture using the same hand.
6. Stringing beads
7. Stickers
8. Work on vertical surface
9. Deal cards to a group using one hand to hold the deck and the other to deal to everyone around the table.
10. Simple relays – have several children sit side by side and pass objects down the line. Important that the student passes and receives using both hands together.
11. Clean up – wipe dry erase board/table using only one hand and keeping body in one spot
12. Any game set-up where student has to reach across body to obtain or move pieces
13. Simon Says

HAND DOMINANCE

Hand dominance simply refers to the fact that most children gravitate toward one hand or the other as their “strong” hand that is better at performing complex tasks like handwriting, picking up small objects, or using a utensils. Children generally start showing a hand preference between 3-5 years of age. Parents and teachers should be cautioned about thinking of a child as ambidextrous if they have not established a hand dominance by age 5. Being ambidextrous is extremely rare and there is typically a reason that kids aren’t finding their own dominant hand. Decreased strength and/or difficulty crossing midline are often causes for delayed development of hand dominance. We do not force children to use a specific hand.

Activities to Encourage Hand Dominance

- During any activity, place items (i.e. crayons, pencils, eating utensils, puzzle pieces, toys...) in front at the middle of the student’s body and let them choose which hand to use. Once your student initiates an activity with that hand, he/she must **complete** that activity with the chosen hand. If he/she chooses the other hand for the **next** activity, that is fine. We are not forcing a hand dominance, but we are encouraging development of strength and endurance within his/her chosen hand.
- Activities that require 2 hands to work together. One hand holds (stabilizes) the piece and the other hand manipulates (“works”) the toy/object.
 - Stirring, pouring, scooping, coloring, cutting, lacing activities, peeling off stickers, clip or clothespins.
- Screwing lids on/off jars/bottles. Use different sizes to strengthen larger muscles in the hand and fingers.
- Play with toys that require 2 hands (ie: wind up toys, jack in the box).
- Practice/play with household tools. Use tongs, tweezers, strawberry hullers, clothespins, or pickle fork to pick up objects.
- Play dough – roll it, flatten it. Also, can use tools such as cookie cutters, safety scissors, utensils, etc... with play dough.
- Mr. Potato Head. One hand must stabilize the “potato” while the more skilled hand will place the pieces into the holes.

Fixing Grasp – Thumb Wrap/Thumb Tuck



Thumb Wrap



Thumb Tuck

Thumb is wrapped over top of index finger or tucked under index finger creating a closed web space. A student does this in attempts to increase stability of the pencil. Difficulties that arise from using a closed web space grasp include:

- Decreased writing speed
- Premature fatigue
- Apply heavy pressure to paper
- Difficulty keeping writing instrument where they want it on the paper (decreased control)

Strengthening Activities for Open Web Space in Classroom/Centers

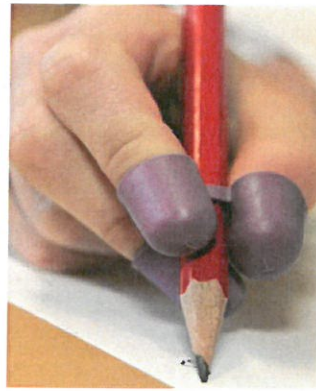
1. Tennis ball “mouth” to pick up manipulatives (see appendix)
2. Clothespins – monitor for correct positioning and maintenance of open webspace (See Appendix)
3. Tweezers/Tongs/Strawberry Huller – same activities as “clothespins” will work. Student has to maintain “pinch” to hold manipulative.
4. Eye Dropper - Make colorful designs on coffee filter using food coloring and water mixture
5. Turkey Baster/Baby Nasal Aspirator -Squeeze bulb to “pass” a ping pong ball or cotton ball back and forth using air
6. Cutting
7. Tearing paper (tissue paper, construction paper, copy paper)
8. Hole Punch
 - Make holes on paper that correspond to number on card
 - Use “punch out” pieces to decorate paper/art work
9. Playdoh
 - Use rolling pin with both hands
 - Pinch and roll pieces between finger and thumb
 - Push small pegs, coins, legos, cookie cutters inside...
 - Hide/find small objects hidden inside playdoh/clay
10. Pickle Fork/3-point Grabber/Spinners
11. Put coins into piggy bank
12. Pop bubble wrap with fingers
13. Don't Spill the Beans
14. Operation
15. Ants in the Pants
16. Any board game with pieces to grasp with fingertips and move (Sorry, Candy Land, Chutes & Ladders...)
17. Shake dice – cup hands together forming empty space between palms



Adapted Grips

Writing CLAW Grasp

- Writing instrument slides through middle hole
- Place fingers inside "hats". "Hats" are label T=thumb, index and middle finger fall into place
- 3 sizes
 - Small typically fits PreK- 2nd grade
 - Medium typically fits 3rd – 6th grade
 - Large typically fits 7th-Adult



Purchase/Order:

www.therapysshoppe.com

Cross-Over Grasp

- Pencil fits through middle hole of grip
- "Wings" at the top prevent fingers from crossing over assisting in maintaining open web space.
- 1 size fits all



Purchase/Order:

www.therapysshoppe.com

Stetro Grasp

- Pencil fits though middle hole of grip
- Smaller, less obtrusive grip aide.
- Can be used as a transitional aide

Purchase/Order:

www.therapysshoppe.com



Fixing Grasp – Digital/Palmar Grasp



Palmar grasp is the most immature pencil grasp, typically seen in development of 1-1½ year olds. This grasp is immature for school-age students and noted by the decreased finger isolation or dynamic finger movements. This grasp is inefficient as it does not allow for small isolated strokes. Difficulties that arise from using a palmar include:

- Decreased control
- Decreased speed
- Increased pressure through pencil
- Premature fatigue

Activities to Develop Finger Manipulation

1. Manipulate small coins/discs
 - Hold a few coins/discs in hand and transfer to fingertips to place into slot (ie: piggy bank, slot can be cut into lid of container)
 - Use coins/discs as bingo markers
2. Push pins into bulletin board
3. Stringing beads
 - Thread increasingly small beads onto string, yarn, pipecleaner ...
 - Increase demands on in-hand manipulation: pick up several beads and hold in hand while transferring beads *individually* to finger tip in order to string without dropping remaining beads
4. Lite Brite
5. Use short/broken crayons, chalk, pencils. Avoid larger diameter pencils, chalk, crayons, markers.
6. Buttoning/unbuttoning; snapping/unsnapping
7. Clothespin activities – ensure proper positioning (see Appendix)
8. Playdoh
 - Pinch and roll small pieces into little balls using finger tips
 - Hide/find small objects inside playdoh. Once object (coin, peg, bead) is found make sure all playdoh is removed using fingertips.
9. Stamps – best set up on vertical surface to encourage proper wrist position.
 - Use small stamps to decorate paper in art center
 - Stamp within a parameter ie: through maze path, inside or around shape boundary
 - If using a stamp pad, set pad up on opposite side of body to encourage reaching across midline.
10. Put coins into piggy bank using finger tips
11. Pop bubble wrap with fingers
12. Ants in the Pants
13. Any board game with pieces to grasp with fingertips and move (Sorry, Candy Land, Chutes & Ladders, Connect Four...)

Adapted Grips:

- Use short pieces of chalk, pencils, or crayon for writing and drawing. This will force the student to use his fingertips for increased control.
- Place small object into student's hand and instruct them to "hide" this object under ring finger and pinky finger while writing. This will give these fingers a "job" and less likely to sneak back onto the pencil.



Writing CLAW Grasp

- Writing instrument slides through middle hole
- Place fingers inside "hats". "Hats" are label T=thumb, index and middle finger fall into place
- 3 sizes
 - Small typically fits PreK- 2nd grade
 - Medium typically fits 3rd – 6th grade
 - Large typically fits 7th-Adult
- Purchase/Order: www.therapysshoppe.com

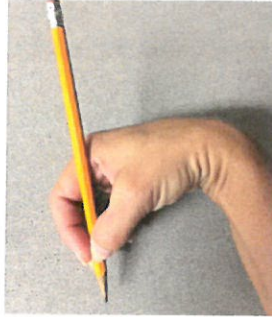


Handi-Writer

- A two-piece banding system that holds the pencil back in the web space while promoting a better grip.
- Purchase/Order: www.therapysshoppe.com



Fixing Grasp – Hook Grasp



Hook Grasp

Wrist is bent forward (flexion). When positioning your wrist in this flexion position, fingers feel “stiff” and are hard to control and move. (TRY IT!) Extending the wrist means the muscles operating the fingers can work freely. Students often use this “hook” grasp because:

- Poor fine motor skills
- Low muscle tone
- Left hand dominant

Accommodations

- Proper body and paper positioning can facilitate wrist extension. Refer to *Getting Ready to Write* handout earlier in this binder.
- Use binder turned sideways to create slanted position for writing. This encourages wrist extension. If a binder does not provide enough angle, then a slant board can be tried.

Wrist Extension Activities

1. Restaurant game – have student carry a tray on outstretched hand with palm up. As the student gets stronger, you can increase the amount of “things” that carry on the tray (pretend food, dishes...)
2. Weight bearing activities
 - Push ups on floor or wall (wall pushups are easier and less strain on weaker wrist)
 - Crab walk, crawling, bear walk...
 - Lean on hand flat on floor while playing board games, completing floor puzzle, drawing/coloring with sidewalk chalk
3. Work on vertical surface – Use an easel, blackboard, slantboard, paper on window or wall. Student can do anything in this position; painting, simple coloring, drawing, sticker/stamp art, mazes, dot-to-dot, rubbing plates
4. Lite Brite
5. Color form or felt boards

Scissor/Cutting Skills

Ideal scissor position:

- Thumb through one hole and the middle finger through the other hole, and the index finger resting on the outside of the scissors.
- Positioning index finger outside the scissor loop allows more control during cutting.



Activities to Promote Use of Scissors:

1. Tearing paper – encourages bilateral hand use
 - Tear pieces of paper to create picture
 - Tear paper into correct number of pieces for math paper
2. Tong/tweezer activities
3. Use turkey baster, nasal aspirator, squirt toys, and eye droppers
4. Use individual hole punches
5. Clothespin activities
6. Wind up toys
7. In sensory tables, scoop and dump activities. Encourage scooping with one hand while holding a bucket (vary size) to dump into or dump into hand and see how much the student can “catch”. This encourages supination position.

Teach Cutting:

- Draw a smiley face on thumb nail (or use sticker) to remind student to keep thumb on top of paper. Do this on both hands, it is important for scissor hand to be positioned with thumb on top, but also for the hand managing the paper!
- Instruct student to cut “away” from body.

Practice Cutting:

1. Practice snipping variety of mediums where only 1 snip/cut is required for success: playdoh, straws, narrow strip of construction paper to make confetti, fringe end of paper to make “grass” for picture.
 - Add lines onto straws, strips of paper to build in visual reference and prepare for cutting on lines.
2. Cutting across: paint chip samples (natural built in lines separating the colors, index cards, playdoh “pancake”)
3. Cutting across increasingly larger pieces of paper
4. Add lines to cut on:
 - Start with thick lines which each new cutting skill
 - Start with straight line →c-curve line→s-curve line→circle→angles (r)→square
5. Any game with “tweezers/tongs” (ie: Bed Bugs, Operation, Wok & Roll...)

Visual Motor Skills/Eye Hand Coordination

Coordinated use of the eyes and hands together is often referred to as visual motor skills. Eye hand coordination affects our ability to color, draw basic strokes and pictures, solve mazes and dot-to-dot pictures, write by hand, catch a ball, bat a ball, create art, put a puzzle together, tie our shoes, build with blocks, thread a needle and use scissors to name a few.

Activities to encourage visual motor development:

1. Draw straight vertical, horizontal strokes at a vertical surface (easel, whiteboard). Remember good formation patterns (top-down, left-right)
 - Start/stop strokes at the correct spots (no over/under shooting the target)
2. Connect pictures, letters. Draw strings on kites or balloons
3. Build, imitate simple shapes on board (o, +, □, /, \, x, Δ...)
 - Build shapes using toothpicks, popsicle sticks, Wikki Stix ...
 - Draw with a hi-lighter for the student to trace over with a crayon or pencil.
4. With partner, student “draws” line, shape, number, letter on partner's back using index finger. Partner has to draw that shape on paper/whiteboard.
5. Dot-to-dot – start/stop **on** dot, no over/under-shooting target dot
6. Mazes – don't slip outside of boundaries. Increase difficulty by narrower path with more changes of directions
7. Create simple drawings by putting 2-3 shapes together to make a common object. (ie: circle and stick to make a flower or lollipop, a triangle and a square to make a house, series of circles with short lines off end circle to make a caterpillar)
8. Putting puzzles together
9. Lacing cards
10. Stringing beads – copy a pattern or create repeating pattern
11. Geo-boards – copy shapes and letters using rubber bands on geoboards
12. Draw around stencils. Use rulers to draw “straight” lines
13. Copy Litebrite or peg board designs
14. Letter/Word finds – cue students to work left-right, top-bottom. Initially start with finding and hi-lighting or circling certain letter(s). Then advance to finding hidden words.
15. Games - Connect 4, Jenga, Pick up Stix, Kerplunk, Perfection, Checkers, Tic-Tac-Toe, I-spy games

Motor Planning

Motor planning is the ability to plan, organize, and carry-out a motor action. Once a skill has been learned, it no longer requires conscious motor planning; it is then considered part of the child's motor memory. A child with motor planning difficulties often has to plan a task over and over because it doesn't "sink in" and become spontaneous (never moving into motor memory). The ability to motor plan is required to learn and remember any motor task.

Children with difficulty motor planning appear:

- Clumsy, uncoordinated
- Slow with motor activities
- Messy or accident prone
- Difficulty or decreased interest in physical activities
- Unable to generalize movements to a novel task

Tips for use in the classroom/playground:

- Simplify motor sequences/assignments into manageable "chunks". Give 1-2 steps at a time and have student repeat directions.
- Use imitation and visual models, especially when a new motor task is presented or a variation is required.
- Allow extra time
- Verbal prompts and physical help can be used. Fade these as soon as possible.
- On the playground, encourage use of large or moving equipment such as monkey bars, barrels, swings, crawling through tunnels, slides, kicking balls, etc... Encourage new and different ways to move and use the equipment. Follow the leader!

Center/Classroom Activities:

1. Provide a variety of sensory experiences. Use sand, macaroni, rice, fabric, water, brushes, bean bags etc... Encourage students to explore and use these materials freely
2. Working in pairs or small groups, have students position their body into letters/numbers.
3. Funny animal walks. Crab, bear, snake, duck, elephant, rabbit, etc...
4. Imitate hand clapping rhythms
5. Play "Simon Says"
6. Twister
7. Throwing ball/beanbag to self or to others. Increase difficulty after they can toss and catch by having them clap 1, 2, 3+ times after toss before they catch.
8. Follow the leader games – students can imitate a leader at front of class/ group. i.e.: raise one hand, place hand behind head, arms out to side, bend elbows, rub tummy...
9. Student bowling – use empty 2-liters as bowling pins; student is the "ball". Student must roll down a lane and see how many pins they can knock down.
10. Obstacle courses

Legibility/Letter Formation

Difficulty with letter formation can often be a result of the student learning letter formation by inventive or unsupervised copying rather than by coordinated movement patterns. This may occur when students start writing before they are developmentally ready for this complicated visual and motor task. A student who copies a letter, without careful supervision, will often draw lines in small segments. This inhibits the more successful patterns in which the hand moves in one fluid motion to complete a letter. Early unsupervised copying also allows the student to reproduce a letter using inappropriate movement sequences (i.e., students learn the "O" by starting from the bottom and going up as opposed to starting at the top and going around counter clockwise). This is a difficult habit to break once the student has repeatedly practiced the wrong approach and can lead to a multitude of writing problems. Orientation of writing should be top to bottom, left to right, counter-clockwise.

Other possible reasons for poor letter formation are visual motor delays, difficulties with motor planning skills, weak visual perceptual, weak fine motor manipulative skills, poor memory. Often children who have not memorized patterns are copying letters; they are not storing formation into long-term motor memory and then cannot recall it quickly during other writing tasks in the classroom.

Activities to assist with letter formation skills:

1. Form letters using whole arm. Write letters large on chalkboard/whiteboard or in the air.
2. Construct letters with play-doh, wiki sticks, pipecleaners, yarn etc. Once letters are constructed, student should "trace" over top with pointer finger using mature strokes (bottom-top, left-right, counter-clockwise strokes)
3. Provide consistent visual models throughout your classroom. Provide writing strip in the curriculum you are teaching on the student's desk, up around the room, and a copy home to parents. Consistency is imperative!
4. Multi-sensory practice using a variety of tactile media. Rice, cornmeal, shaving cream, sand, finger paints ... Place tactile medium on/in cookie sheet, small Tupperware tub, pencil box and have student write letter using proper formation. Students can use finger, pencil, paint brush... Just be sure that they are using proper formation patterns.
5. Use green "go" dots where student should start letters. Arrows are also helpful to cue students on formation direction.
6. Wet-dry trials – on small chalkboard student writes letter (using proper formation). Use small damp sponge to "erase" over the letter. Then use a dry sponge to "dry" the letter. Repeat
7. Rainbow writing – student use multi-colored chalk to draw and re-draw letter/numbers.
8. When ready, provide lined paper. If the student is having trouble paying attention to lines, you can bring more attention to this by hi-lighting/darkening lines (increase visual contrast) or place Wiki Stick on writing line (increase visual and tactile stimuli).
9. Teach very different motor patterns for letters that are frequently reversed.
 - b – start at the top, big line down, up to fence, dive over, connect at the bottom
 - d – start with "magic c", climb all the way to sky, then slide down to grass

Tips for Lefties

This world is made for righties! Notebooks and binders are designed for right handed students. The rings of a binder or spiral of a notebook are all on the left side of the book. The left handed writer must learn to navigate around and through these obstacles.

General Strategies/Things to Consider:

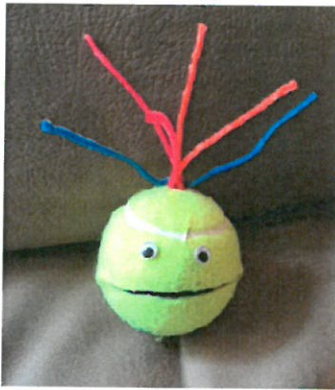
1. Paper position is imperative for lefties to ensure proper mechanics, wrist position, and clear visual field. See *Getting to Write* handout earlier in binder.
2. Teach left handed writers to place their paper to the left of their body. This will help them to see what they are writing. When they finish writing across an entire line, their hand should either be slightly to the left of their midline or just in front of it. This allows them to move more naturally as they keep their wrist straight (rather than hooked), minimize smudging while writing, and see what they are writing.
3. Provide lefties the model letter/word above or to the right of writing line so they can actually see it. Since most worksheets place the model on the left side of the paper, you may need to provide an additional model than is pre-printed.
4. Letter formation is generally the same for lefties as it is for righties. Be sure to teach your child to write the letter "o" in the same direction as righties, which is in the counter-clockwise direction. This will help him with his overall speed and fluency of writing later on down the road. **The only real difference in formation is that lefties can "pull" their little lines backward to cross their letters (like for lowercase "f" and "t" and for capital "A" "E" "F" "H" "J" "T") by going from right to left rather than "pushing" from left to right.**
5. Have your lefties sit to on the left side of other students in seating chart or group, so she doesn't bump elbows with her neighbor.
6. Allow lefties to tear papers out of workbooks, spirals before they start writing. This way they can avoid the binding or spiral which gets in their way.

Tennis Ball Friend

Here's what you do...

Take an old tennis ball and CAREFULLY cut a slit across the ball with an Exacto knife or similar sharp blade. The longer you cut the line, the less resistive and easier to squeeze the ball will be. Try it out and cut it until it is about as difficult as you want it. Now put on eyes, hair, whatever. You can just use a permanent marker, or fabric paint, yarn or feather for hair, whatever.

Now place your thumb on the "cheeks" (one side of the mouth) and your index and middle finger on the other side. Squeeze to make the tennis ball mouth open/close. Make your new friend talk, eat, bite.



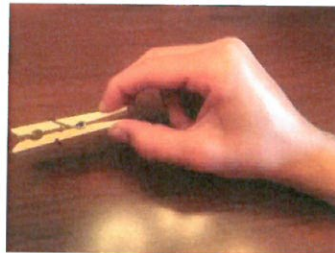
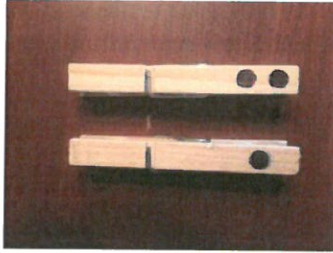
Available for Purchase:

- Munchy Ball – Vinyl ball \$9.95
- Therapy Fun Zone
- therapyfunzone.net



Clothespins: Strengthening, separation of hand, develop hand arches

Encourage proper grasp on clothespins. Draw single dot on 1 side of clothespin and 2 dots on opposite side. This will provide a visual for kids so they know where to place fingers.



Activities:

- Pick up pompoms, cottonballs, manipulatives to count or sort
- Write letters/numbers on clothespins for matching, spelling
- Use multicolored clothespins to complete patterns
- Pick up cottonballs and dip in paint to create picture
- Pass a manipulative (pompom, cottonball, popsicle stick...) between multiple students using clothespins
- Pinterest is loaded with many activities that you can incorporate into center activities

Student's Name: _____ Teacher: _____ Date: _____

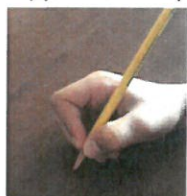
Rainbow

Draw left to right using dominant/preferred hand with 6 different colors within bands of the rainbow. In top box note R/L hand. In bottom box, mark +/- based on crossing midline. Mark + if they do cross midline (no hand switching), mark - if student does not cross midline (switches hands)

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Comments: _____

Typical Grasps



Tripod



Quadruped



Thumb Wrap



Thumb Tuck



Palmar



Digital

Atypical Grasps

Copying Shapes

(3)		□ (4)	
— (3)		X (5)	
O (3)		Δ (5)	
+	(4)		

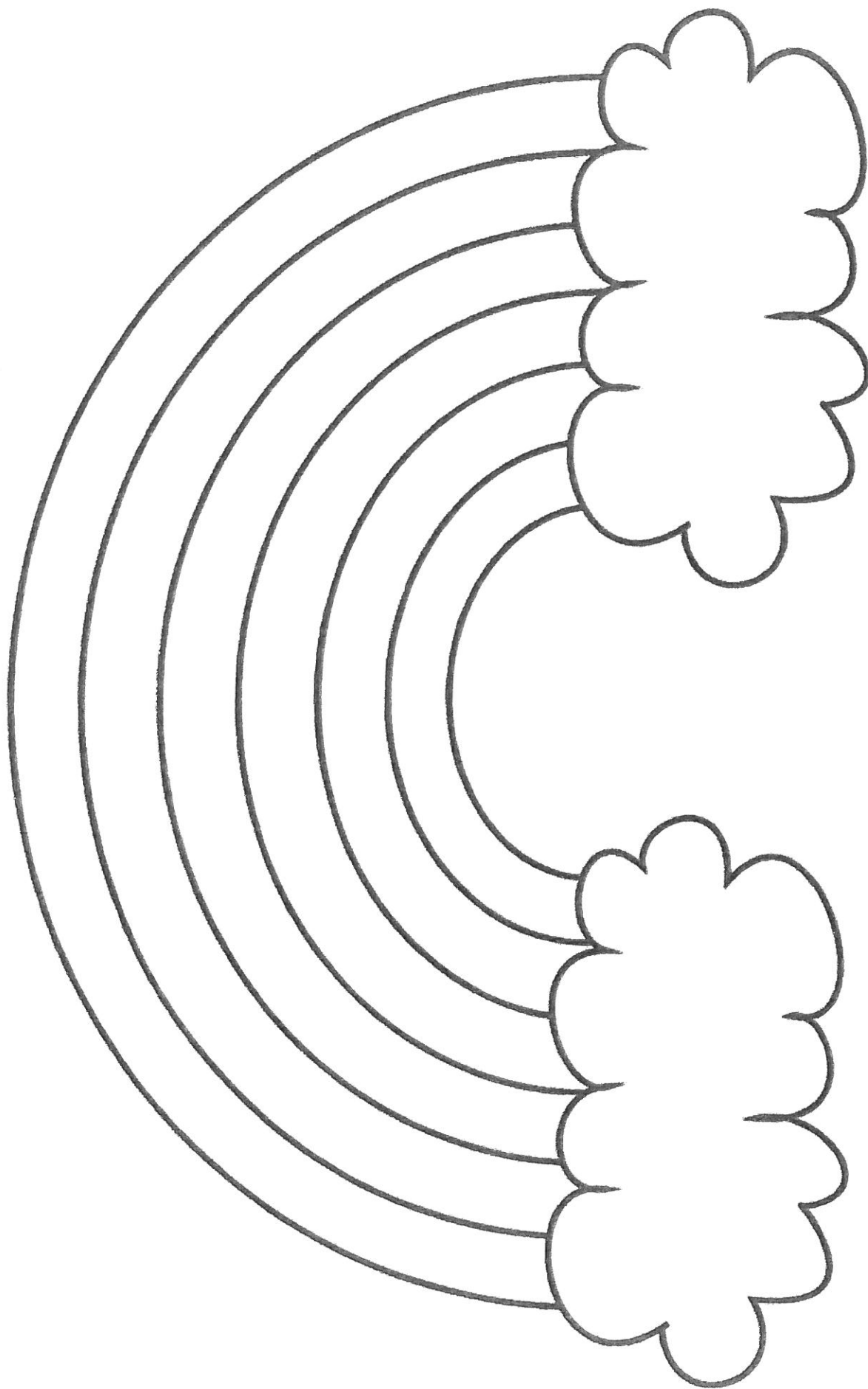
Draw a Person (circle parts included). 5 year olds should draw ≥ 6 body parts

Head	Eyes	Nose	Mouth	Ears	Mouth	Other
Body	Legs	Arms	Hands	Feet	Fingers	Toes

Other/Comments: _____

Cutting: R L Thumb Down Thumb Up

Straight Line Y N Crooked Line Y N Curved Line Y N

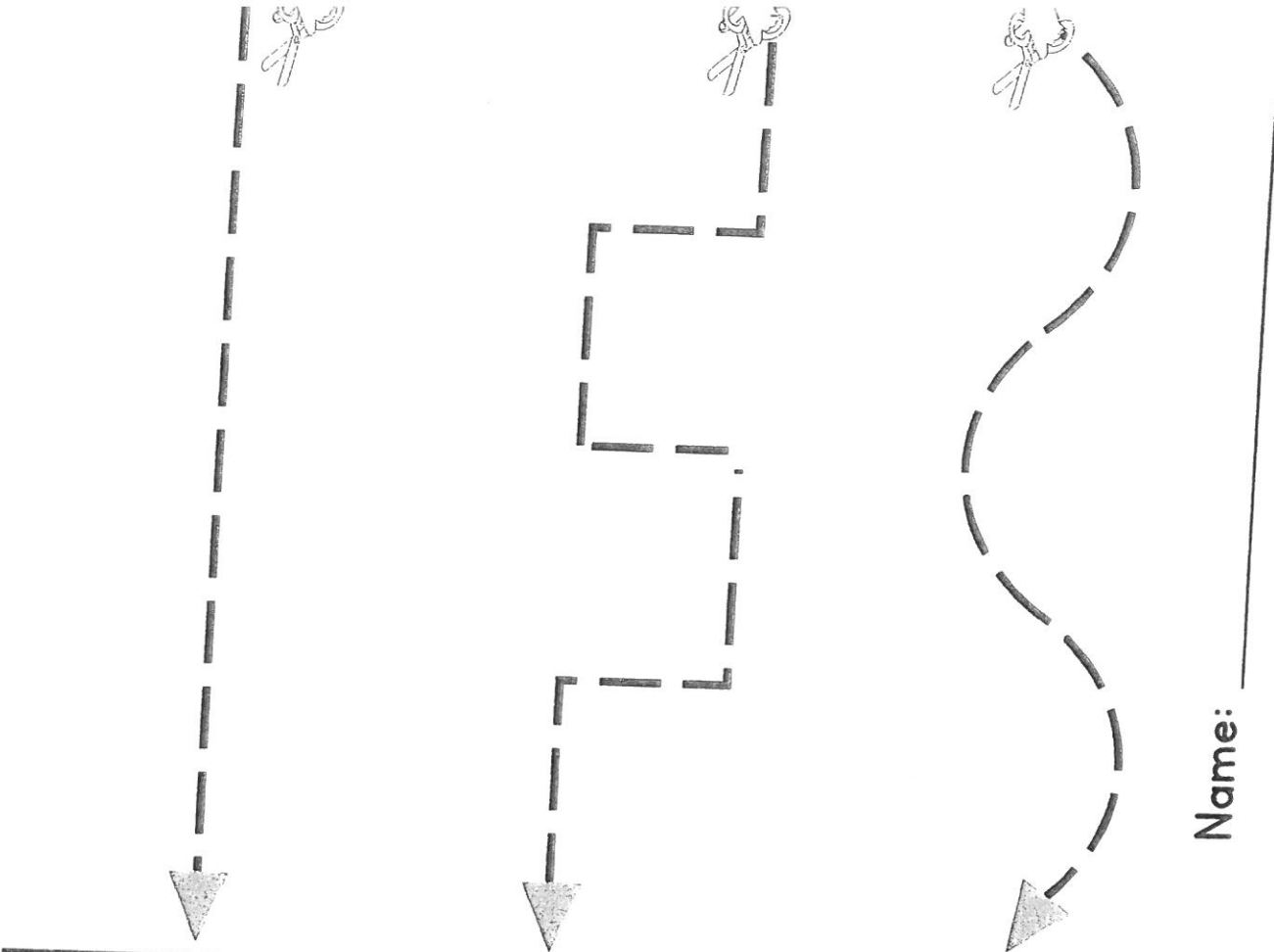


Name: _____

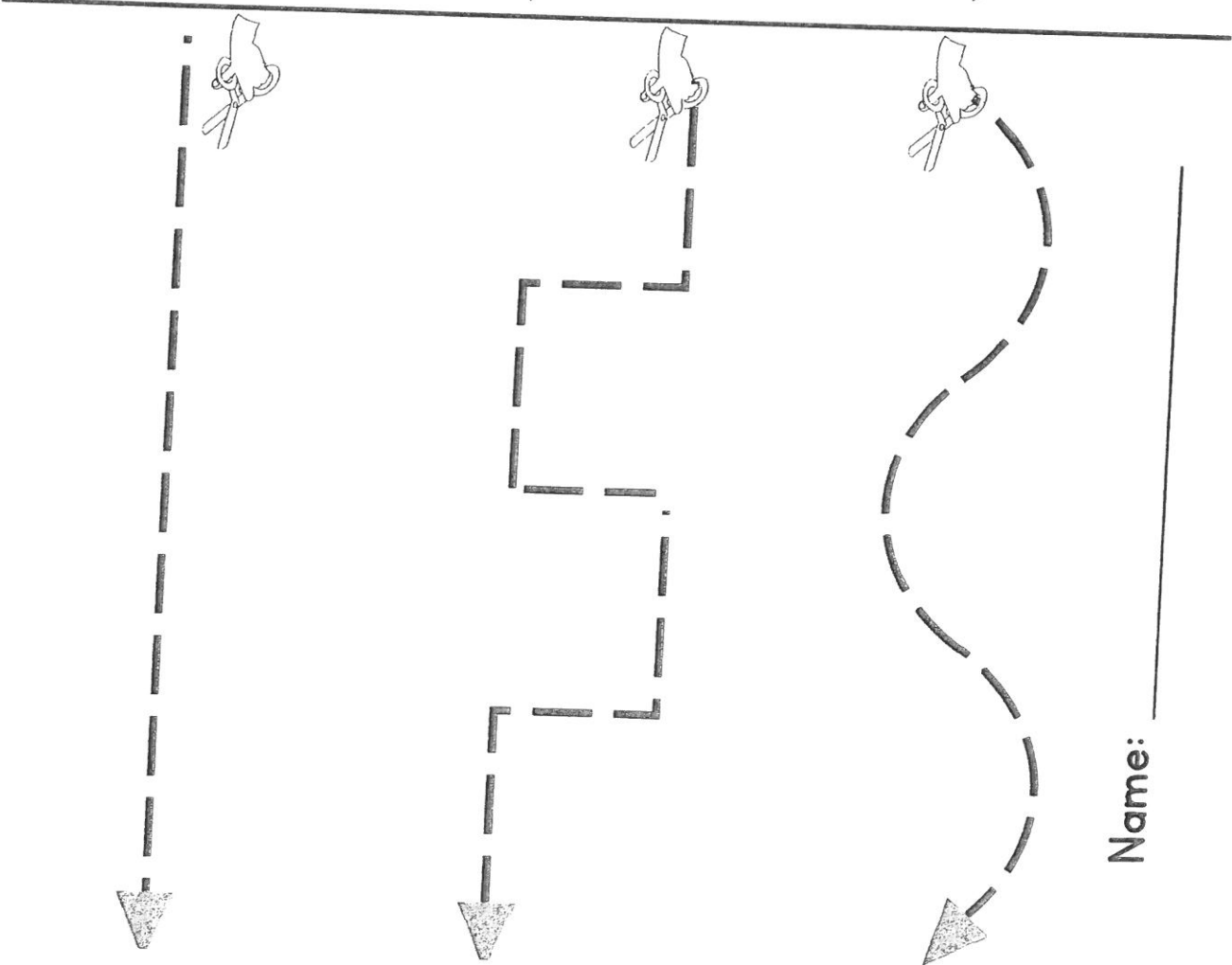
		□	
—		×	
○		△	
+			

Person

--



Name: _____



Name: _____



(student writes their name)

capitals



I

O

F

W

B

S

K

N

R

numbers

1

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9



lowercase



r

e

n

a

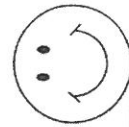
d

h

g

y

p



He can hop.

HOW TO ADMINISTER

Get Started - Read the directions to the class. Continue the directions, following the pattern for the next letters or numbers.
Do not give students additional verbal cues or visual models.

Say: I will ask you to write some letters and numbers.
Do not write anything until I ask you to.
At the top, write your name beside the smiley face.
(Wait until after the screening to fill in the date.)

Capital Letters

Say: Point to the turtle on the top line. *(Check students.)*
Do you see capital letter **T** under the turtle?
I want you to write a capital letter under every picture.
I will say the picture and the letter. Wait for me to say the letter.
Do you see the owl? Write the capital **O** on the line below.

Continue: Fish - F Wagon - W Banana - B Snail - S Key - K
Nose - N Rake - R

Numbers

Say: Find the line with the boxes.
Point to number **1** under the first box. *(Check students.)*
I want you to write a number under every set of boxes.
I will say the number. Wait for me to say the number.
Do you see the two boxes? Write **2** on the line below.

Continue: 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Lowercase Letters

Say: Point to the line with the rabbit. *(Check students.)*
Do you see the lowercase **r** under the rabbit?
I want you to write a lowercase letter under every picture.
I will say the picture and the letter. Wait for me to say the letter.
Do you see the eagle? Write a lowercase **e** on the line below.

Continue: nail - n ant - a dog - d hat - h goat - g
yarn - y plane - p

Sentence - Sentence writing is not an entry level expectation.
Wait until mid-year to assess.

Say: I want you to write a sentence on the bottom line next to the smiley face. There are three words. Wait for me to spell the words. *(Do not give capital, spacing, or punctuation clues.)*

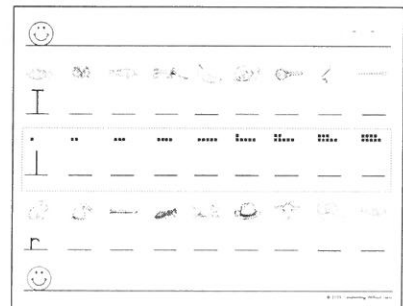
The 1st word is he Write he, h - e
The 2nd word is can Write can, c - a - n
The last word is hop Write hop, h - o - p
This is the end of the sentence.

When finished, say: Now, turn over your paper.

Collect papers; mark the Student Sheet to indicate screening date.

Tips for Screening:

- ☐ Administer in a room with no letter displays or turn desks away from letter displays.
- ☐ Use privacy folders to prevent copying.
- ☐ Guide students as needed by pointing.
- ☐ Keep students on track: wait for responses to "Do you see. . ." questions.
- ☐ Use pencils only.
- ☐ If time allows, administer in smaller groups.

A handwriting practice sheet for kindergarten students. It features a smiley face at the top left for a name line. Below are two rows of pictures: the first row includes a turtle, fish, wagon, banana, snail, key, nose, and rake; the second row includes a rabbit, dog, hat, goat, and plane. Each picture is followed by a set of boxes for writing practice. The first row has boxes for capital letters (T, O, F, W, B, S, K, N, R) and the second row has boxes for lowercase letters (r, e, n, a, d, h, g, y, p). At the bottom, there is a line for a sentence, starting with a smiley face and followed by the words 'He can hop'.

Kindergarten Student Sheet

A handwriting practice sheet for kindergarten students, identical to the Student Sheet but with the correct answers filled in. The capital letters are T, O, F, W, B, S, K, N, R. The lowercase letters are r, e, n, a, d, h, g, y, p. The sentence is 'He can hop'.

Kindergarten Answer Key

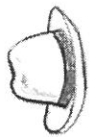
What's next?

- ☐ Download the Scoring Packet from hwt tears.com/screener.



I





r



Teacher:

[illegible]