

TOOLS TO GROW at home

WHAT TO KNOW & HOW TO DEVELOP skills

- »» Fine Motor
- »» Gross Motor
- »» Speech Language

PRESCHOOL - SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

TOOLS TO GROW *at home*

WHAT TO KNOW & HOW TO DEVELOP GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

»» PRESCHOOL – SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

BALANCE, COORDINATION, & STRENGTH

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW:

- Balance refers to your child's ability to remain upright and steady.
- Coordination refers to your child's ability to use different parts of their body together in a smooth manner.
- Strength refers to the amount of force your child's muscles can make. This helps them to hold their body in challenging positions and lift heavy objects.
- Today's children spend much more time indoors engaged in sedentary activities. Without regular exercise that promote balance, strength, and coordination, a child is at risk for weight gain and poor endurance. This means he/she may easily tire.

TRY THIS!

- Help your child monitor time spent on sedentary activities such as watching TV and video games. Spend as much time being active!
- Walk on a "balance beam". Make a pretend beam using a rope, line drawn with chalk on sidewalk/driveway, or tape on the floor
- Take a long walk
- Jump on a trampoline
- Ride a bicycle
- Use a scooter
- Swim
- Yoga
- Play catch & throw with a ball
- Kick a ball back & forth
- Play on swings & a slide
- Run around an athletic field, backyard, or park
- Play in the snow
- Roll in the grass
- Jump rope
- Use a Pogo Stick
- Touch your toes
- Put on music & dance

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WHAT TO KNOW & HOW TO DEVELOP GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

»» PRESCHOOL – SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

GROSS MOTOR PLANNING

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW:

- Motor planning refers to the ability to conceive (think of) and perform unfamiliar and complex body movements in a coordinated manner. Children should be able to see the possibilities in their environment for movement.
- Motor planning also includes the ability to organize and sequence (put in order) the actions correctly.
- One aspect of motor planning involves a child's ability to imitate (copy what you do).

TRY THIS!

- “Encourage your child to use their words to explain their ideas about how they want to start (initiate) the movement activity and then gently guide them as needed
- Play Simon Says
- Roll like a caterpillar
- Jump like a frog
- Spin like a top
- Fly like a butterfly
- Use a log to “walk the plank”
- Build a fort outdoors
- Play hop-scotch
- Jumping Jacks
- Yoga
- Make an obstacle course in the backyard (jump over a log, walk backwards on a rope, step into/out of a box, etc.)
- Some commercially available games that help with gross motor planning are: Twister, Red Rover, Wiggle & Giggle, I Can Do That (Cat in the Hat), and Hullabaloo

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WHAT TO KNOW & HOW TO DEVELOP FINE MOTOR SKILLS

>>> PRESCHOOL – SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

ARCHES OF THE HAND

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW:

- There are three arches in the hand.
- These structures allow the hand to flatten, cup, and adjust to the shape & size of the object it is holding.
- Well developed hand arches allow the hand to be powerful, yet skillful when needed.
- Intact hand arches are important for individual and isolated finger movements.
- Children at risk have very flat hands with little arch formation.

TRY THIS!

- Remove lids from jars
- Bath time - squeeze sponges & wash cloths
- Use Legos, Duplo, or similar building blocks
- Large or small pop beads-assemble & pull apart
- Folding paper or Origami for older children
- Ripping paper into small pieces for crafts
- Paper Scrunch - squeeze paper into balls and use to throw at a target
- Shake dice in the palms of the hand
- Play dough - roll small “meatballs” & “snakes”
- Playing cards - flip over and stack
- Cubes - stack and build

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BILATERAL HAND USE: USING BOTH HANDS TOGETHER

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW:

- Bilateral refers to the use of both hands, and both sides of the body.
- The use of both hands together in a smooth manner is very important for feeding one's self, dressing, playing, and school tasks.
- Bilateral hand use includes using both arms/hands at the same time for the same action, such as using a rolling pin.
- It also includes using the same action at alternate times, such as dribbling a ball with one hand, then the other hand.
- Finally, it includes the ability to use different sides of the body for different movements, such as holding the paper down when writing.

TRY THIS!

- Scissors – some children will snip, others cut on lines, and others will cut around shapes
- Tear pictures out of a magazine to make a collage
- Tear small pieces of colored construction paper and paste onto another picture to “add color”
- Use both hands to pull apart construction toys (Duplo, Lego)
- Pull apart and put together pop beads of different sizes
- Pull – use both hands to pull a wagon or pillow case full of toys
- Push – use both hands to push a box full of toys
- Ball Games – play catch with both hands, bounce a large ball with both hands, throw a ball with both hands, bounce a ball with alternate hands, throw the ball at the wall-bounce-then catch
- Sharpen crayons or pencils

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BILATERAL HAND USE: USING BOTH HANDS TOGETHER

TRY THIS!

- Jump Rope
- Play Dough - use both hands to roll dough with a rolling pin. Use a “garlic press” to squeeze out dough, use a plastic knife to cut the dough
- Stand up to Color - child stands at wall or easel and uses one hand to hold paper up and other hand to color/print/paint
- Stencils - trace within and outside of their borders
- Lacing Cards - one hand holds the lacing card and the other laces through the holes. Determine the lacing pattern such as up the hole, and then down the hole, repeat
- Stitching - older children can perform simple hand stitching or sewing of buttons
- Pouring - water, sand, or dry rice from one container to another
- Tying knots & bows
- Folding laundry - fold towels, wash cloths, socks, etc.
- Washing dishes - even young children can wash child safe dishes with supervision
- Folding Paper - Older children can try origami crafts

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WHAT TO KNOW & HOW TO DEVELOP FINE MOTOR SKILLS

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FINGER ISOLATION

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW:

- The ability to move each finger individually, or one at a time, is important for precise and careful use of each hand.
- Well developed controlled finger movements are needed for tasks such as using a pencil, typing, using musical instruments, and tying of shoelaces.

TRY THIS!

- Flicking Games - use index finger to flick a marble, cotton balls, small pom-poms, coins, or balls of paper at a target. Use your imagination!
- Bubbles - pop with your index or pointer finger
- “I Spy” - use index or pointer finger to point at objects or pictures in a book
- Tracing - use one finger to trace large shapes, letters, & numbers. Consider using a sand or shaving cream tray to do so
- Finger Puppets-use one or several at a time
- Finger Snapping-give it a try!
- Finger Paint-use only your index or thumb to paint
- Poke - try to use one finger at a time to pop bubble wrap
- Place a different picture sticker on the pad of each of four fingers. Child uses his/her thumb to touch the sticker (and finger) that is specified by the parent
- Play dough - push individual fingers into dough one at a time
- Hand lotion - child holds one finger out at a time to have lotion applied
- Got It - child places his/her hand palm down & flat on a table. Parent touches a single finger; the child tries to lift up only that finger
- Finger Games - “Itsy Bitsy Spider” & “Thumbkin”

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WHAT TO KNOW & HOW TO DEVELOP FINE MOTOR SKILLS

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FINGER & HAND STRENGTH

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW:

- Adequate hand and finger strength is required to exert enough force to match the qualities of the object to be grasped and manipulated.
- Without adequate strength, child will not be able to use tools and/or operate objects as required.
- The child may fatigue before the task is completed.

TRY THIS!

- Squeeze - sponges in the sink/tub, stress balls, paper into balls, play dough, or clay
- Resistive tools - given help as needed, children enjoy using a hole punch, basting tool, garlic press, and eye dropper
- Spray Bottle - fill a small plastic bottle with water & encourage your child to use his/her fingers to squeeze the lever to spray. Great for outdoors and bath tub.
- Flicking Games - use index finger to flick a marble, cotton balls, small pom-poms, coins, or balls of paper at a target. Use your imagination!
- Hammering - Use a toy hammer to pound golf tees into foam blocks
- Use Legos, Duplo, K'Nex, Tinker toys, or similar building blocks
- Clothespins - squeeze onto the edge of a can or clothesline
- Play dough & Clay - mold, squeeze, roll, tear, and pinch

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WHAT TO KNOW & HOW TO DEVELOP FINE MOTOR SKILLS

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UPPER BODY & ARM STRENGTH

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW:

- Adequate hand and finger strength is required to exert enough force to match the qualities of the object to be grasped and manipulated.
- Without adequate strength, child will not be able to use tools and/or operate objects as required.
- The child may fatigue before the task is completed.

TRY THIS!

- Push Ups
- Wall Push Ups - child stands facing the wall about an arm's length away. He/she places both hands on the wall at shoulder height. The child slowly bends elbows to bring his/her upper body toward & then away from the wall. His/her feet remain stationary. Repeat many times.
- Outdoor Painting - provide a large paint brush and bucket of water. Allow your child to "paint" outdoor walls, fences, railing, etc.
- Bounce on a Hippy Hop Ball
- Animal Walk - see your Occupational Therapist
- Playground Equipment - use arms to climb up rope ladders and the jungle gym
- Pull - a wagon or pillow case full of heavy toys or other objects
- Push - box full of heavy toys or other objects
- Household Chores - carry bags of groceries & put objects away on shelves
- Blocks & Cups - try to stack as high as you can
- Ball Play - throw and catch
- Pound a ball toy
- Dig in sand & soil
- Swimming - great exercise to build strength and endurance while having fun!
- On the Wall - use an easel or hang paper on the wall for your child to decorate. Use crayons, pencils, paint, makers, or chalk to color or produce works of art!
- On the Floor - while on his/her belly, child can color, write, watch television, do puzzles, etc.

TOOLS TO GROW *at home*

WHAT TO KNOW & HOW TO DEVELOP FINE MOTOR SKILLS

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PRONATION & SUPINATION: FOREARM ROTATION

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW:

- Supination is the movement of the forearm that brings the palm of the hand upward.
- Being able to move into and maintain some degree of supination is very important for hand function.
- Pronation is the movement of the forearm that brings the palm of the hand downward.

TRY THIS!

- Pouring – pour water from one container to another
- Scoop - use a large spoon to scoop water, sand, dry rice, dry beans; turn forearm over to pour contents into another container
- On belly - while bearing weight on both forearms, encourage your child to turn his forearm “up” so that his thumb is facing the ceiling
- Coin Flipping - line up a row of large coins. Your child is encouraged to use one hand to grasp, then flip the coin over
- Bingo Dabbers—use these to decorate paper while trying to keep his/her forearm turned so that the thumb is facing “up” toward the ceiling
- Turn door knobs
- Spoon use - encourage child to grasp a spoon to feed himself
- Placing large pegs into a board with “thumbs up”
- Surprise - while the child’s eyes are closed, the parent places a small object inside child’s hand, the child is encouraged to rotate his forearm (palm up) and open his palm to see the surprise

TOOLS TO GROW *at home*

WHAT TO KNOW & HOW TO DEVELOP LANGUAGE SKILLS

»» PRESCHOOL – SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

LISTENING & SPEAKING

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW:

- Listening Skills refers to your child's ability to have joint attention and understand direction words like “top” and “bottom.”
- Listening also includes following directions like “Find your coat” or “Go wash your hands.”
- Listening also includes recognizing words that rhyme and responding to sounds in the environment.
- Speaking Skills refers to your child’s ability to name objects and people in their environment, request or ask for something (Can I have a drink?), and respond to yes/no, who, what, and where questions.
- This includes singing familiar songs and reciting nursery rhymes. Speaking also includes using verb tenses (running, singing, eating), as well as pronouns “I”, “you”, and “me.”

TRY THIS!

- Listen & Talk- Take time each day to listen and talk to your child. Model good listening behavior and eye contact during daily routines such as dressing, eating, and pretend play.
- Play Games- Encourage listening, following directions, turn taking, and sharing of materials. Try the following: Go Fish, Simon Says, I Spy, Scavenger Hunt, Red Light-Green Light, Freeze Dance, Do 3 Things, and the Guessing Game.
- Books- Read aloud and frequently stop to check for understanding by asking yes/no and wh-questions. Name objects and people that you see in the pictures. Talk about the sequence of the story using words like first, next, and last.
- Sing songs- Happy and You Know It, Old McDonald, Wheels on the Bus, Five Little Ducks, Jack and Jill, Twinkle Twinkle, I’m a Little Tea Pot
- Nursery Rhymes- Recite to encourage rhyming and memory skills. Try Itsy Bitsy Spider, Humpty Dumpty, Baa Baa Black Sheep, Little Miss Muffet

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LISTENING & SPEAKING

TRY THIS!

- Dance Or Be a Super Hero- Talk about all the actions your child can perform such as fly, jump, shake, hop, run, wiggle, spin, and stomp.
- Pretend Play- a great way to encourage language
- Pet Shop- Gather stuffed animals and pretend you own a pet shop. Name the animals you could have in your shop (dogs, cats, fish, and turtles). Talk about how you would take care of them. What names would you give them? Describe how the animals look.
- Restaurant or Ice Cream Shop- Talk all about all the items you could serve there, how much they would cost, gather the tools to make the pretend food.
- Categorize & Describe- How things are the same and how they are different
 - Put things into categories (big, little, yellow things, bugs, animals with four legs)
 - Name three things you could do at a playground, on the beach or in the winter.
 - Talk about the weather (sunny, windy, snowy, rainy, hot, cold)
- Arts & Crafts- Use words to describe the materials and process as it unfolds. Encourage your child to use his/her imagination using things that are found throughout your home. This may include string, yarn, paper, crayons, markers, tape, buttons, cotton balls, paint, glue, magazine pictures, and ribbon.
- Cooking- Builds your child's vocabulary, listening skills, and ability to recall and implement a sequence. Ask your child to listen and then find the ingredients, recall the order in which steps are to be completed, and describe the features of the ingredients and tools.
- Give Choices- Present your child a choice of items and expect him/her to use words to make a selection, as opposed to using gestures and/or sounds.
- Hold Back - Rather than immediately presenting your child's desired object, gently encourage him/her to use a word or phrase to ask for the item.

TOOLS TO GROW *at home*

WHAT TO KNOW & HOW TO DEVELOP LANGUAGE SKILLS

>>> PRESCHOOL – SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

SPEECH PRODUCTION & SOUND DEVELOPMENT

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW:

- Speech Sound Development refers to the child's ability to produce clear speech sounds. This is a gradual process that begins in infancy and continues to about the child's eighth year. These speech sounds typically develop in a sequential order, but each child develops speech sounds at a different rate.
- Sometimes children may substitute one sound for another sound. For example, 'b' is substituted for 'f', so that 'fish' sounds like 'bish.'
- Sometimes children omit a sound in a word, for example 'yummy ake' for 'yummy cake.'
- Sometimes children distort a sound or make it in an unfamiliar way. An example of this would be a lisp.
- Sometimes children make a speech sound addition. This means that the child adds an extra sound within a word.

TRY THIS!

- Show Interest- Always show your child that you are more interested in what he/she has to say, instead of how your child says it.
- Repeat - Help your child say difficult sounds by repeating the words using the correct sounds in a supportive manner. For example, if your child says "wabbit", you can say "The rabbit did hop away."
- Repeat- When mispronounced, restate the child's sentence using correct sounds as naturally as possible. For example if your child says "bish", you can say, "Yes, it was a green fish."
- Face To Face- Try to get face to face with your child so that they watch how you say your words.
- Talk Often- Keep engaged with your child. Talk to them often throughout the day to model how to properly pronounce words.

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WHAT TO KNOW & HOW TO DEVELOP LANGUAGE SKILLS

>>> PRESCHOOL – SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

SPEECH PRODUCTION & SOUND DEVELOPMENT

TRY THIS!

- ❑ Songs & Nursery Rhymes- Sing and recite nursery rhymes. This helps with the prosody; the tone, timing, and rhythm of speech.
- ❑ Environmental Sounds- Complete puzzles or read stories with vehicles and animals to work on environmental sounds. Start by having your child imitate the sounds that you model (ex: woof, vroom). Next move to making the sounds and naming the object (woof, woof says the dog).
- ❑ Play with sounds- Try “shhh” for baby, “sss” says the snake, “u-e, u-e” for the firetruck, “brm, brm” goes the car, “ch ch ch” goes the train, and “baa” goes the sheep.
- ❑ Picture Cards- Find pictures in a magazine to make a set of picture cards with target sounds. Once the child looks at the picture, encourage him/her to label the image on the picture using proper speech sounds. You can use the picture cards by hiding them around the room and then having your child use a flashlight to find them. Or, bury the cards in a tub of dry rice for the child to discover.
- ❑ Read- Model clear and proper speech sounds by reading aloud to your child.
- ❑ Naming or Labeling- While with your child, state the name of things in the child’s environment and encourage him/her to repeat the word(s). Do this while getting dressed, taking a bath, eating meals, playing in the yard, while shopping, and playing with his/her toys.
- ❑ Mirror Play- Encourage your child to copy facial expressions while looking in the mirror. Copy movements of the cheeks, lips, and tongue as well.

TOOLS TO GROW *at home*

GET OUT OF THAT CHAIR!

ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO ASSUME DIFFERENT POSITIONS

www.ToolsToGrowOT.com
www.ToolsToGrowTherapy.com



PRONE ON FOREARMS

Prone on forearms builds strength through a child's neck, back, and shoulders.



«« 1/2 KNEEL

1/2 Kneel increases core strength and improves hip stability. Also prepares body for single limb stance.



«« SQUAT

Playing in a squatted position works on balance and stretches a child's heel cord musculature.



LONG LEG SITTING

Long sit stretches a child's hamstring musculature and works on balance

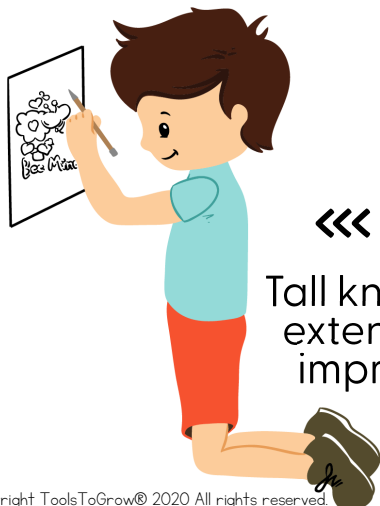
SIDE SIT »»

Side sit encourages rotation through the trunk, weight shifting, and crossing midline.



«« TALL KNEEL

Tall kneel strengthens hip extensors and works to improve core stability.



2-POINT QUADRUPED

Hands and knees or 2-point quadruped works on core strength, hip and shoulder stability, weight shifting, and balance