

## **Occupational Therapy Service for Children and Young People**

### **Activity Ideas for Children who Tire or Experience Pain During Writing**

1. Plan the classroom activities so that periods of writing are spaced out with other activities.
2. Encourage good posture.
3. Encourage relaxation during writing, do this by reducing time pressures, find a quiet time to write, if possible use soothing music. Use words that give a mental picture of relaxation e.g. make your arms melt or pretend you are a rag doll. Encourage slow rhythmical breathing.
4. To reduce tension - roll head slowly in a circular motion, roll each shoulder, quietly sway from side to side, swing arms freely back and forth at sides, shake limbs like a floppy rag doll and drop.

### **Finger Strengthening / Spreading Activities**

1. Stand at arms distance from wall, lean on wall with hands flat, keep arms straight and use fingers to push away from wall. With improvement, move feet backwards so that there is a greater angle of lean against the wall.



2. Bunny hops: start with feet flat on the floor, bend the knees as much as possible and place two hands on the floor in front of you. To start the movement, put both hands further out on the floor in front of you. Then 'hop' your two feet towards your hands in one motion (like a rabbit hop).



3. From a crouch position with your hands placed on the floor, try to lean forward to touch a ball with forehead. Ball is placed slightly in front of hands. Start with large ball and progress to a smaller ball. This will encourage weight-bearing through the hands.
4. Crouch down with the dominant hand on the ground to the side of the body. The child walks around the spread hand, leaning the weight through the dominant hand.
5. Play with therapeutic putty/play doh.
6. Interlace the fingers and stretch the arms out in front. Push palms forward away from the body. Hold for a few seconds and repeat.
7. Tuck hands palm down under bottom on chair and gently rock from side to side.
8. Check pencil grip and try different moulded grips.
9. Practice squeezing clothes pegs to place onto different objects which are of different thickness e.g. start with putting pegs onto paper, move onto cardboard boxes and then CD boxes. This will require the child to squeeze the pegs with greater force.
10. Tearing thick card or paper.

## **Warm up Hand Activities and Exercises**

1. **Make a Tent:**  
Rest forearm and wrist flat on table.  
  
Make tent shape with hand keeping fingers straight.  
  
Open door - thumb.  
  
Open windows - little finger then middle finger.
2. Walk middle and index finger along table.
3. **Drumming:** Rest forearm and wrist on table.  
Tap each finger in turn, starting with thumb.



4. **Making Circles :** Touch each finger in turn to thumb tip, forming circle. Each hand in turn. Both hands together. Then with eyes closed.
5. **Walking Spiders:** Keep forearm and wrist flat. Use fingers as spider's legs to circle the table.
6. **Inchworm:** Hold hand and forearm flat on table. Slide the wrists up to the fingers, then flatten hand again.
7. **Increase Hand Awareness:** Rub hands together briskly for 20 seconds. Push - ups from chair seat (hold the sides of the chair and push your bottom up off the seat).
8. **Draw Enlarging Circle:** With forearm flat on table make dot with pencil on paper. Keeping arm still draw larger and larger spiral outwards from dot.
9. **Use Crêpe Bandage or Silk Scarf for the following exercises:**
  - a. Stretch bandage (scarf) in front of you. Hold forearm and wrist flat on table and gather bandage/scarf into palm of hand, using fingers only.
  - b) Place bandage/scarf to side. With forearm and wrist flat, gather it into palm of hand using thumb only.
  - c) Place hand in middle of scarf. Gather it all into palm using fingers and thumb.

## Strengthen Wrist

1. Place hands in prayer position. Interlock fingers. Turn fingers towards your body and straighten arms so that palms face away. Push! Bring palms back to touch chest. **Repeat 10 times.**
2. Place hands in prayer position. Bring elbows up as high as possible. Shoot hands up above head until arms are straight. Pull hands back to starting position. **Repeat 10 times.**

