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OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ACCOMMODATIONS FOR THE CLASSROOM

Originally developed by the Ventura County SELPA OT Network and expanded by the Pleasant Valley School District occupational therapists.

2002

INTRODUCTION

This handbook was originally developed for by the Ventura County SELPA OT Network as the Tool Chest and further expanded by the occupational therapists of the Pleasant Valley School District for use by occupational therapists, student study team and IEP team members. It contains list of accomodations which may be used in the classroom to assist both general and special education students who are experiencing difficulties in areas which are sometimes addressed by occupational therapists.

The handbook is organized according to the Occupational Therapy Checklist for Teacher Concerns which is on the following page. Accordingly, it is divided into four major sections : Desktop Activities, Floor/Circle Time, Classroom/School Campus, and Self-Help. Each of these sections is further divided according to specific difficulties within each area.

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OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Checklist For Teacher Concerns

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Referred by: _____ School/Teacher: _____

Please mark specific areas of concern and describe the behavior(s) observed to assist in developing appropriate accommodations.

DESKTOP ACTIVITIES

- _____ Writing/Pre-writing _____
- _____ Organizing materials _____
- _____ Coloring _____
- _____ Cutting/pasting _____
- _____ Copying assignments from board/books _____
- _____ Maintaining upright posture in chair _____

FLOOR/CIRCLE TIME

- _____ Staying seated during circle time _____
- _____ Maintaining upright posture on floor _____

CLASSROOM/SCHOOL CAMPUS

- _____ Learning new motor acts within reasonable time frame for age _____
- _____ Tactile Sensitivity (overreacts to touch, has trouble standing in line, touches people and objects frequently) _____
- _____ Auditory Sensitivity (overly sensitive to noise) _____
- _____ Body space awareness (falls, bumps into people and objects, invades space of others) _____

SELF-HELP

- _____ Dressing _____
- _____ Utensil/container use (for lunch/snack) _____
- _____ Difficulty using backpack/locker _____

Comments _____

Signature

Date

DESKTOP ACTIVITIES

Writing/Pre-writing

I have a student who has difficulty forming letters correctly:

- You demonstrate and have the child imitate you.
- Give the student a letter strip to use at his/her desk and at home. Have parents work on correct letter formation.
- Provide explicit verbal directions as you form the letter and have the students follow along, repeating the directions using the same words as they make the letters.
- Try using a grease pencil when teaching difficult letter formations. This slows the writing process and provides increased sensory input. Chalk on construction paper has a similar effect.
- Using the “Handwriting without Tears” format (wooden pieces and slate chalkboard) re-teach the correct stroke sequence for problem letters. Teach the concept that letters start at the top (either at the corner or at the center).

I have a student who reverses letters and numbers:

- ❑ Choose one reversal per assignment to work on. If the child reverses many numbers, work on them one at a time beginning with the lowest number.
- ❑ When using the slate chalkboard, use the “starting corner (smiley face)” and the child will quickly learn to form the letter the right way.
- ❑ You demonstrate and have the child imitate.
- ❑ For example, teach capitals B,D,F,K,L,P and R start with a big vertical line at the starting corner, then curves and little lines are added.
- ❑ Allow the student to keep a letter strip at his/her desk for quick reference.
- ❑ Some students may benefit from a green (“go”) hand on the upper left hand corner of the desk and a red (“stop”) hand on the upper right corner. This will sometimes clarify directional confusion.
- ❑ Using the “Handwriting without Tears” technique of wooden pieces and slate, master each formation before moving on to another.

I have a student who holds the pencil too lightly:

- ❑ Have the child practice coloring shapes light gray, medium gray, dark gray and black to increase awareness of different degrees of pressure on the pencil.
- ❑ Try a weighted pencil to give the child more awareness of the pencil.
- ❑ Try using pencil grippers. Correcting the pencil grasp can sometimes help the problem.
- ❑ Try using NCR paper.
- ❑ Use a felt pen (or other implement that requires less pressure to write).
- ❑ Do warm up activities before writing.
- ❑ Have the student write on paper over a grainy surface.
- ❑ Try a soft-lead pencil.

I have a student who holds the pencil too tight and writes with too much pressure (example: strokes are too dark):

This may be because the child has poor awareness of finger placement and movement or poor control of the smaller muscles of the hand.

- ❑ Correcting the pencil grasp might help. Experiment with various grips such as the stetro, “pencil grip”, triangular, etc.
- ❑ Increase the child’s awareness of pencil pressure by having the student color shapes in either light gray, medium gray, dark gray or black using a pencil.
- ❑ Have the student write on a soft surface such as blotters, layers of paper, a mouse pad, phone book, or a piece of Styrofoam. (If the student presses too hard he/she will poke holes in their paper).
- ❑ Modify the pen/pencil (ex., thick pencil, pen/pencil that writes easily).
- ❑ Try a mechanical pencil so the student has to learn to control the amount of pressure used.
- ❑ Cue the student to write faster (if legibility is not compromised too much).
- ❑ Utilize warm up activities prior to writing assignments.

I have a student who has difficulty spacing letters and keeping letters on the line:

- ❑ Try Popsicle sticks, or placing a finger down between words.
- ❑ Try using a stamp pad and have the student stamp his/her fingerprint between each word.
- ❑ Try using a small stamp and stamp pad and have student stamp between words.
- ❑ Use the concept of exaggerating the spaces by putting “nothing” between words.
- ❑ Have student place dashes between words.
- ❑ You can also place a small piece of candy or a sticker between the words.
- ❑ Experiment with different kinds of paper such as:
 1. Bi-color
 2. Raised line
 3. Sky-Grass-Earth
 4. Handwriting Without Tears – comes in primary (horizontal) or secondary (vertical) paper
 5. Skip lines (using regular notebook paper)
 6. Highlight or darken baseline
 7. Highlight margins, Green light – Go for left side and red light – Stop for right side.
 8. NCR paper
- ❑ Try teaching the student cursive.
- ❑ Try writing with an instrument that has a different color.

I have a student who has difficulty holding the pencil:

Is the grip functional? Is it legible? You shouldn't worry about a child's pencil grasp unless it is affecting the speed or legibility of their writing or the child is experiencing pain.

- ❑ Pencil grasp: The optimal pencil grasp is known as the “tripod grasp”. This is when the pencil is supported by the thumb, index and middle finger. The ring and little finger are bent and rest comfortably on the table.
- ❑ If the child has developed poor habits, try an adaptive grip to position the fingers. Suggested grips:
 1. “The Pencil Grip”
 2. Stetro Grip
 3. Try wrapping the pencil with silly putty or play dough. This may help relax a tense grip.
- ❑ When modifying the pencil grasp, have the child use the adaptive grip for only short time each day. This will help the child get used to the feel of a new grasp. Too much awkwardness may make the child resist change.
- ❑ Check to see that the hips, knees and ankles are all at 90 degrees for optimal posture. This will place child in upright position with feet flat on the floor.
- ❑ If the child is holding the pencil straight up in the air, he/she may be having a difficult time separating the two sides of the hand. Try using two rubber bands looped together with one loop placed around the child's wrist and one loop around the pencil. The eraser end of the pencil should point towards the child's shoulder.
- ❑ If the child has a difficult time manipulating a large or regular size pencil, try using pencil stubs (approximately 1-2” long). Children do not need to write with large pencils. Adults write with pencils in proportion to their hands so why shouldn't children?

- ❑ If the child moves his/her entire arm when writing, try having the student write on a vertical surface such as a slant board or a large 3 ring binder or use an easel. This helps the child put the wrist in a functional writing position and also works on shoulder stability.
- ❑ If the child writes with an open hand or with the 4th and 5th digits sticking out straight, try placing a small sponge or a marble in the last two fingers. Have the child hold onto this while he/she cuts or writes.
- ❑ If the child holds the pencil too close or too far from the tip, try wrapping a small rubber band around the area where the fingers should be placed. This will remind the child where to hold the pencil. When using a traditional pencil, remind the student to hold the pencil “where the paint ends.”
- ❑ Give the student more time for note taking.
- ❑ Try writing alternatives such as word processing or a tape recorder.
- ❑ Do not give a grade on fine motor performance if it is an area of weakness.
- ❑ Use a peer for note taking.
- ❑ Provide frequent rest breaks.

I have a student who has hand tremors:

- ❑ Use weighted cuff.
- ❑ Use weighted pencil.
- ❑ Use alternative writing techniques.

Warm up Exercises

Try using these exercises before any handwriting or other difficult assignments. Warm up exercises are very useful for children who have a hard time sitting still and staying focused.

Utilize warm-up activities before difficult assignments (this whole list is not meant to be used in one session, pick a few exercises to use before each assignment).

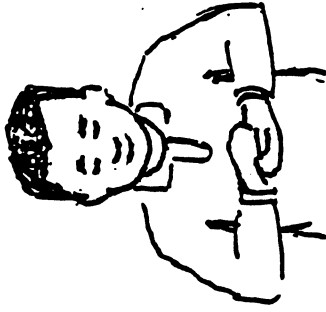
- ❑ Wall or chair push-ups.
- ❑ Isometric exercises like pushing/pulling his/her own hands
- ❑ Shake all body parts in a sequence (ex., hands, arms, shoulders, etc.).
- ❑ Stretch (e.g. neck, shoulders, arms, hands, etc.).
- ❑ Stand-up or sit in chair and stamp feet vigorously.
- ❑ Squeeze a ball.
- ❑ Students place hands palm down on the desk. Ask students to raise fingers one at a time from the desk surface
- ❑ Students place both hands on their desks. Ask students to spread fingers apart and then slide them back together.
- ❑ Students turn both hands palm down, then palm up, in a simultaneous and rapid motion.
- ❑ Students make circles by touching thumbs to finger tips one at a time.
- ❑ Students open hands as wide as possible and then make a fist repeatedly.
- ❑ Students bend wrists up and down repeatedly.
- ❑ Students stand and put palms flat on desk, then bear their body weight on their palms for a count of five.
- ❑ Pretend to hold a pencil and write previously learned letters on the surface of their desk.
- ❑ Try “stacking your blocks” posture preparation on next page.

Posture Preparation

Here's a warm up that's great for posture and a positive attitude.



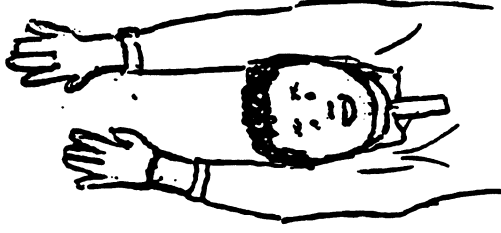
Push palms



Pull hands



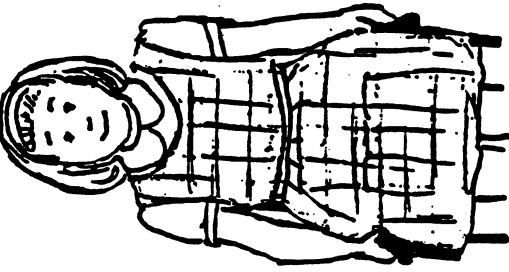
Hug yourself tightly



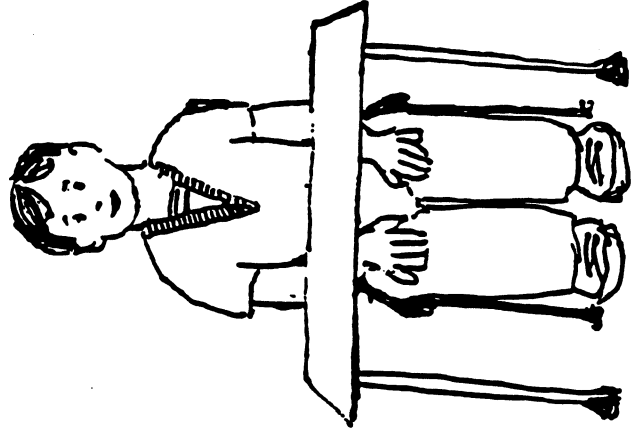
Reach high, one hand, then other

Reach - make circles in the air

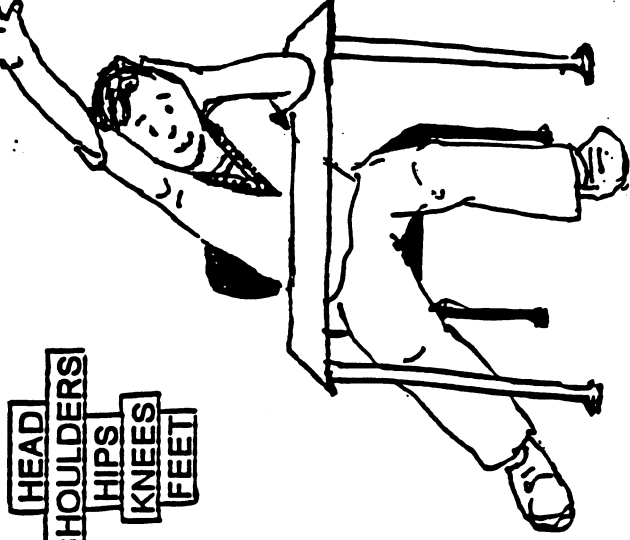
* BLOCKS



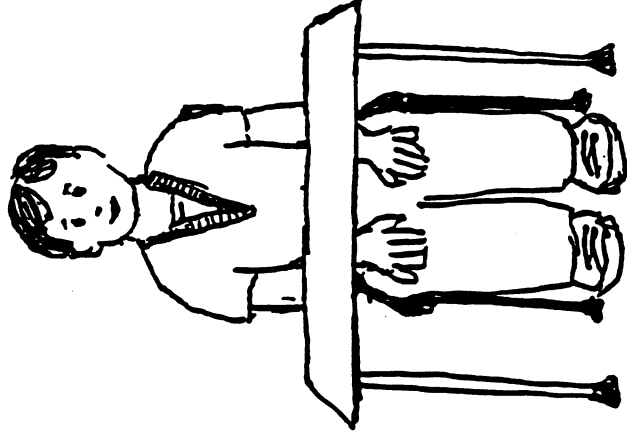
Pull up on chair



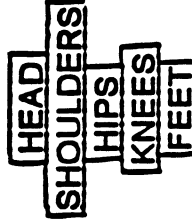
* Stack your blocks



Assume an outrageous posture



Stack your blocks again!



Organizing Materials

Organization of Materials

If the child has difficulty with organizing his/her personal belongings, try:

- ❑ Scheduling a set time each day to organize belongings (including inside of desk and backpack).
- ❑ Consistent and orderly classroom expectations for where to turn in assignments, keep backpacks, trash, etc.
- ❑ Keeping only necessary items on the desk top.
- ❑ Designating a place or container for each belonging.
- ❑ Triangular pencil grips on pencils and crayons to prevent them from rolling off the desk.
- ❑ A clipboard or large clips to keep papers together.
- ❑ Using a color coding file system – folded construction paper of different colors can signify different subjects or incomplete and complete work.
- ❑ Discussing strategies for organizing belongings – ideas include talking about sorting like objects, same and different characteristics of objects.
- ❑ Providing child with daily planner keep track of assignments and due dates.
- ❑ Teaching child to utilize “To Do” lists.
- ❑ Providing child with a daily schedule to follow (may be pictures or words, depending upon age of student).

Coloring

I have a student who has difficulty coloring:

- ❑ Prior to coloring activities, make sure the child's feet are touching the floor and the desk is the appropriate size for your student. Remember the 90-90-90 rule in which ankles, knees and hips are all at 90 degrees.
- ❑ Try breaking the crayons in half to encourage a tripod grasp or use crayon stubs 1" to 2" in length.
- ❑ Try doing coloring activities on an easel or against a chalkboard, slant board, or binder. The vertical surface will help promote wrist extension and proper forearm positioning.
- ❑ Hide a small cotton ball, sponge or Styrofoam packaging peanut under the pinkie and ring finger while coloring to encourage the separation of the sides of the hand necessary for a tripod grasp.
- ❑ Start the student with larger sized patterns or pictures to color, slowly reducing the size as the student gains control. Eventually have the student color in small areas, practicing vertical and circular strokes, which will help refine the smaller muscles in his/her hands and fingers.
- ❑ Outline the area to be colored with a thick black line or try putting a raised border around the boundary of the area to be colored for added tactile awareness. This can be done ahead of time using glue.

Cutting/pasting

I have a student who has difficulty cutting with scissors:

Remember, that developmentally, children are not ready for scissors until approximately five years of age.

- ❑ Introduce the child to scissor skills when he/she shows an interest in the materials and the process. Typically girls will be interested in this fine motor skill earlier than boys.
- ❑ A good indication of readiness for scissor skills is the child's use of a spoon or fork. The tool should be held in the fingers, the wrist should be held up and the forearm rotated as the food is lifted to the mouth.
- ❑ The child should show dominant and assistive hand usage in bilateral hand activities. Try practicing with tools other than scissors such as tweezers or tongs to sort cotton balls, blocks, play dough balls, lentils, etc.
- ❑ Make sure the scissors are the proper size for the child's hand. Fingers should be secure in the handle openings. Tiny oval handles are the easiest for young children to manipulate.
- ❑ For young children, try scissors that have a short blade and make sure the scissor blades are sharp. Success can be expected only if the scissors are fully capable of cutting the material at hand.
- ❑ Check for proper scissor grasp and positioning. The middle finger and thumb should be placed into the loops and the index finger should be held against the handle shaft to aid in closing the blades and supporting the scissor. The scissor should be held in a thumbs up position.

- Initially make the scissors “talking puppets”. The teacher has an identical pair of scissors on his/her hand to model the position and use. Cut nothing, but open and close the blades in a pattern: slow/fast – wide/slight. Play memory games while scissoring a pattern such as slow – fast – slow and have the child make his/her scissors “repeat” what your scissors “said.”
- Introduce cutting materials in the following order: drinking straws, play dough, old playing cards, magazine ad inserts or manila paper. Cutting these materials should be mastered before regular paper is introduced. The flimsier the paper, the more skill will be required of the assisting hand to hold it taut within the blades for cutting without tearing. Cut without demand for precision.
- Begin snipping and then cutting on half-inch wide lines. Line cutting should be straight and within the length of the blades before being lengthened for several cuts. Lines should be gradually curved before specific shapes and circles are introduced.

Copying assignments
from board/books

I have a student who has difficulty copying from the board:

- ❑ Child may need an eye exam to rule out the need for glasses.
- ❑ Try moving the child close to the front of the room directly facing the board.
- ❑ Some children may have a difficult time looking up to a vertical surface and then back down to a horizontal surface. Try having the child work on a vertical/slanted surface using an easel or a slant board (adapt a 3 ring binder).
- ❑ Check for dull or flickering lights.
- ❑ Make sure the blackboard is clean. Yellow chalk is thought to have the best visibility.
- ❑ Use black marker on the whiteboard. (Green and red can be hard to see.)
- ❑ Try writing on an easel with large white paper and thick black marker.
- ❑ Try using an overhead projector so that you can visually isolate different words or sentences.
- ❑ Try writing small amounts on the blackboard at a time.
- ❑ Try alternating blackboard activities with less visually demanding tasks.
- ❑ Try scheduling a few moments to close and relax eyes between tasks.
- ❑ Eliminate art objects hanging from the ceiling. Movement can be distracting and can interfere with the processing of visual information.

- ❑ Eliminate all hanging and posted materials on front wall of classroom.
- ❑ Provide the child with a ditto outline of material to be covered on the blackboard. Until the child is independent in copying, try having portions of blackboard material already on his/her desk written on 3x5 card or post-it note.
- ❑ Reduce the amount of copying expected. The time it takes for some children to copy compromises the time that a child could spend thinking and responding. Provide photocopies of material which would otherwise have to be copied.
- ❑ Teach strategies for remembering whole words, phrases or sentences at one glance. Sometimes copying is done in a tedious letter-by-letter manner.
- ❑ Teach student how to use a blank piece of paper or cardstock to cover up portion of work already completed. This makes it easier for the student to find his/her place on the paper after looking up at the board.

Maintaining upright
posture in chair

I have a student who cannot sit up straight in his chair:

Children need to sit in their chair with their hips, knees and feet at a 90-degree angle. (Also known as the 90-90-90 rule).

- ❑ Check desk and chair heights for the 90-90-90 rule. Old fashioned desks are great for proper positioning. If your children sit at tables, you may need to adjust the height of the table or chair to get an optimal position.
- ❑ If the child's feet do not touch the floor try placing a footstool under the feet to help with stability. (Telephone books wrapped or taped together also work well as foot rests)
- ❑ Provide a slant board or large 3 ring binder if the student leans into the table.
- ❑ Try using an inflatable seat cushion in the chair or a deflated beach ball as a chair to improve sitting posture.
- ❑ Provide activities that require the use of both hands. This will encourage active trunk support because the hands will be in use and cannot be used to support the trunk.
- ❑ Provide activities that are positioned at or above eye level to encourage the desired position.

I have a student who tires very quickly:

- ❑ Check sitting posture. Make sure the child is sitting with hips, knees and ankles at 90 degrees.
- ❑ Try an inflatable seat cushion for a more upright posture.
- ❑ Allow frequent breaks when writing.
- ❑ Have the student shake hands out periodically.
- ❑ Decrease the amount of written work given, looking for quality instead of quantity.
- ❑ Consider keyboarding as an alternative for long assignments. Teach the child keyboarding skills if he/she doesn't already know how.

I have a student who can't sit still:

- ❑ Try using an inflatable seat cushion on his/her chair (or deflated beach ball).
- ❑ Check for proper child-seat-desk ratio. Hips, knees, and ankles should be at a 90-degree angle.
- ❑ Ask the child to sit up straight and give periodic firm pressure on the child's shoulders.
- ❑ Provide movement breaks throughout the day by giving the student "jobs" which allow him/her to get up and move through the classroom. Allow the student to stand while working.
- ❑ Try using a variety of fidget toys such as squeegee balls, pencil toppers, erasers, koosh balls, silly putty, etc.
- ❑ Utilize warm-up activities before difficult assignments (this whole list is not meant to be used in one session, pick a few exercises to use before each assignment.)
 1. Wall or chair push-ups.
 2. Isometric exercises like pushing/pulling his/her own hands.
 3. Shake all body parts in a sequence (ex., hands, arms, shoulders, etc.)
 4. Stretch (ex. neck, shoulders, arms, hands, etc.)
 5. Stand up or sit in chair and stamp feet vigorously
 6. Squeeze a ball
 7. Students place hands palm down on the desk. Ask students to raise fingers one at a time from the desk surface.
 8. Students place both hands on their desks. Ask students to spread fingers apart and then slide them back together.
 9. Students place hands palm down, then palm up, in simultaneous and rapid motion.
 10. Students make circles by touching thumbs to finger tips one at a time.

11. Students open hands as wide as possible and then make a fist repeatedly.
12. Students bend wrists up and down repeatedly.
13. Students stand and put palms flat on desk, then bear their body weight on their palms for a count of five.
14. Students pretend to hold a pencil and write previously learned letters on the surface of their desks.

- Try spacing the child so that he/she is not sitting near enough to touch another child.
- Try using markers (e.g. carpet squares, tape on rug, flat cushions, etc.) to designate personal space when sitting on the floor.
- Help the child identify steps needed to begin and accomplish a task. If possible write down or even draw the steps.
- Give short assignments so the child can feel instant success.
- Try giving one direction at a time.
- If necessary, try helping the child physically through the action.
- Use weighted vest or pressure vest.

***FLOOR/
CIRCLE TIME***

Staying seated during
circle time

I have a student who has difficulty staying seated during circle time:

If the child has difficulty staying seated because he/she is sensitive to touch sensations, try:

- ❑ Spacing children so that they are not sitting near enough to touch one another.
- ❑ Allowing the child to wear his favorite sweater or jacket when he is in a situation where he will be near other children.
- ❑ Using markers such as carpet squares or tires to help designate personal space when sitting on the floor.
- ❑ Allowing the child to wear a weighted vest or bring a beanbag or weighted toy.
- ❑ Warning the child if the teacher or another child is going to touch him.

If the child has difficulty staying seated during circle time because he/she is seeking movement, try:

- ❑ Letting child sit on a pillow, bean bag chair or seat cushion to provide the opportunity for movement without standing up or running around the classroom.
- ❑ Engaging child in heavy work activities before sitting down for circle time. This could include any of the following:
 1. Teaching the child to do wall push-ups or doorway pushes. Do 5-8 before sitting down for circle time.
 2. Setting up an obstacle course that leads to the area for circle time that consists of jumping and crawling.
 3. Asking the child to help in cleaning up after the previous activity by carrying books or toys in a wagon to their appropriate place or delivering something to the office or another part of the room.

4. Singing an action song with a lot of movements like heavy marching, turning, hopping, jumping jacks, imitating animal movements, etc.
5. “Popcorn” activity while seated. Children take turns in popping up like popcorn at different speeds or intervals.
6. Seat walking while sitting on the floor with legs extended.

Maintaining upright
posture on floor

I have a student who has difficulty maintaining upright posture while sitting on the floor:

- ❑ Let the child wear a weighted vest or place beanbags on his/her lap to provide more feedback to the body regarding his/her position.
- ❑ Periodically remind the child to sit up straight and give firm pressure to child's shoulders
- ❑ Provide frequent breaks from sitting in an upright position.
- ❑ Provide activities that require the use of both hands. This will encourage active trunk support because the hands will be in use and can't be used to support the trunk.
- ❑ Allow the child to sit in a cross-legged sitting position as this is more stable than long-sitting or side-sitting and is easier to maintain when using the hands.
- ❑ Have the child sit on a ball or inflatable seat cushion beginning for short periods of time and increasing time as child tolerates it.
- ❑ Alternate sitting activity with movement activity or activity in prone position.

***PLAYGROUND/
SCHOOL CAMPUS***

Learning new motor
acts

I have a student who has difficulty learning new motor tasks within a reasonable time frame for his/her age:

Desk Work

Sensory diet:

- “Handwriting Without Tears” program
- Multi-sensory approach to writing (i.e. writing letters or shapes in the air, sand, rice, shaving cream, on child’s back with your finger) to improve motor planning for writing.

Environmental Modifications:

- Provide grids, graph paper, “Handwriting Without Tears Paper”, “Sky, Grass, Earth” paper.

Physical Education/Classroom Exercises

Sensory diet:

- Play and break activities that provide resistance and heavy work to provide information to where their body is in space.
- Prior to coloring or writing allow class the opportunity to “wake up” their muscles in their upper extremities. Stand up and push hands into desk (pretend you are trying to push desk into the floor)
- Teach children how to do seat push-ups. Do 3-5 seat push-ups prior to tabletop activities.
- Teach children how to do wall push-ups. Do 5-8 prior to tabletop activities.

Environmental Modifications:

- “Hokey Pokey” type activities where child has musical cues guiding body movements.
- Play “Simon Says” and games that require imitation, allow child time to process direction prior to moving on. Begin

with one direction at a time, if successful increase number of directions.

- ❑ Exercise routines to music.
- ❑ Try animal walk activities (bear crawl, donkey kick, crab walk, wheelbarrow walk). Be creative! You may want to introduce a new animal to your class weekly.
- ❑ Implement motor time in classroom instead of outside because there are fewer distractions.
- ❑ Simplify physical education activities and provide physical, visual and auditory cues.

Tactile Sensitivity

I have a student who over reacts to touch, has trouble standing in line, avoids touch, and/or touches people and objects frequently:

Desk Work/Circle Time

Sensory diet:

- ❑ Prior to coloring or writing allow class the opportunity to “wake up” their muscles in their upper extremities. Stand up and push hands into desk (pretend you are trying to push desk into the floor)
- ❑ Teach children how to do seat push-ups. Do 3-5 seat push-ups prior to tabletop activities.
- ❑ Deep pressure input (i.e. weighted vest, backpack, lap tray) finger fidgets, and resistive hand exercises (i.e. cutting, erasing, hole punch).

Environmental modifications:

- ❑ Separate space to prevent incidental touch by others, designate space for circle time (i.e. carpet square, masking tape, chalk), allow child to have a large personal space when participating in group activities, approach the child from the front and warn the child prior to touch, avoid touch to sensitive areas (i.e. hair, face, neck abdomen), use firm touch and avoid light touch, minimize other possible overwhelming environmental stimuli (i.e. use natural lighting, close classroom door, use rubber bottoms or old tennis balls on chair and desk legs, provide curtains, blinds or room dividers, eliminate aromas in the classroom).

Physical Education

Sensory diet:

- ❑ Play and break activities that provide resistance and heavy work.

- ❑ Regular calisthenics (i.e. push ups, sit-ups, jumping jacks, wheelbarrow walks, crab walks) self imposed deep touch and active resistive activities prior to PE.

Environmental modifications:

- ❑ Minimize physical contact with other students engaged in physical education activities.

Arts and Crafts

Sensory diet:

- ❑ Prior to arts and crafts provide opportunity for heavy work activities. Provide a variety of tactile art media.
- ❑ Never force a child to do more than he/she is ready to do.

Environmental modifications:

- ❑ Glue stick instead of glue or paste, paintbrush instead of finger-paints.

Waiting in Line

Sensory diet:

- ❑ Backpack, weighted vest, long sleeved shirt, heavy jacket.

Environmental modifications:

- ❑ Allow child to go first or last in line minimizing potential for tactile contact. Decrease amount of time expected to wait and stand in line. When possible avoid noisy or crowded hallways.

Riding the bus

Sensory diet:

- ❑ Backpack, weighted vest, long sleeved shirt, heavy jacket.

Environmental modifications:

- ❑ Allow child to have his/her own seat, be first or last in line to ride the bus, allow child to wear headphones to filter out extraneous noises on the bus.

Play

Sensory diet:

- DEEP PRESSURE AND RESISTANCE! Rolling up in a blanket to make a hot dog or burrito, rolling a large ball over the child to make a pizza, playing tug-of-war, crawling under bean bag chairs or couch cushions, climbing and hanging on playground equipment.

Environmental modifications:

- Avoid unwanted touch.

In general, think about incorporating heavy work activities into the child's day to provide increased input to the muscles and joints, which helps to diminish tactile defensive responses.

- ❑ Teach children how to do wall push-ups. Do 5-8 prior to table top activities.
- ❑ "Wheelbarrow walk" and "crab walk" activities are great for upper extremity strengthening, motor planning and providing input to the upper extremities prior to writing.
- ❑ Have child run errands incorporating heavy work (deliver books or a box to office or another classroom).
- ❑ Place chairs on desk at the end of the day or remove from desks at the beginning of the day.
- ❑ Allow child to open heavy door for people.
- ❑ Provide chewy candy or crunchy snack breaks to provide heavy work in the mouth (Star burst, licorice, hard pretzels, carrots etc.)

After heavy work activities have been provided allow for opportunities to experiment with various tactile mediums.

- ❑ At center time hide items in a large container of dried rice, beans, kosher or sea salt, or sand and have child find.
- ❑ Craft activities using glue, paint, clay etc.
- ❑ Younger children might enjoy practicing shapes and letter formation with their fingers in shaving cream, sand, whipped cream, finger paint etc.
- ❑ Never force a child to do more than he/she is ready to do.

Auditory Sensitivity

I have a student that is overly sensitive to noise:

- ❑ When possible, give child advanced notice of an activity, which will be noisy (assembly, singing etc.)
- ❑ Provide child with a quiet area to take a break, or allow child to run an errand when classroom noise becomes over stimulating.
- ❑ You may try cotton balls in child's ears, a ski type head band, a hat, or head phones to cover ears and dampen noise (especially for assembly's)

Body space awareness

Body space awareness (student falls, bumps into people and objects, invades space of others)

Sensory diet:

- ❑ Incorporate heavy work activities into the child's day to provide increases input to the muscles and joints to increase awareness as to where the body is in space.
- ❑ Allow class the opportunity to "wake up" their muscles in their upper extremities. Stand up and push hands into desk (pretend you are trying to push desk into the floor)
- ❑ Teach children how to do seat push-ups. Do 3-5 seat push-ups prior to tabletop activities.
- ❑ Teach children how to wall push-ups. Do 5-8 prior to table top activities.
- ❑ "Wheelbarrow walk" and "crab walk" activities are great for upper extremity strengthening, motor planning and providing input to the upper extremities prior to writing.
- ❑ Have child run errands incorporating heavy work (deliver books or a box to office or another classroom).
- ❑ Place chairs on desk at the end of the day or remove from desks at the beginning of the day.
- ❑ Allow child to open heavy door for people.

Environmental modifications:

- ❑ Designate space for circle time (i.e. carpet square, masking tape, chalk), allow child to have a large personal space when participating in group activities, allow child to go first or last in line minimizing potential for bumping into other children, discuss classroom rules pertaining to respecting personal space and keeping hands to ourselves.

SELF-HELP

Dressing

I have a student who has difficulty dressing:

- ❑ Give one direction at a time. After one action is successfully completed, add another direction.
- ❑ Help the child physically move through the action of taking off or putting on clothing such as a jacket.
- ❑ Lay out clothing in order, with labels for cuing and tabs to hold.
- ❑ Talk to the parent. If the child has difficulty with buttoning/unbuttoning buttons on his pants or zipping and unzipping pants, suggest that the student use pants with elastic bands. Bigger buttons or fasteners on shirts and jackets are easier to manipulate too.
- ❑ Put a ring or pull-tab on zipper of pants or jackets.
- ❑ Use Velcro or elastic shoelaces for children having difficulty with shoe tying.
- ❑ Use 2 different colors of shoelaces when teaching shoe tying to provide the child with visual cues.

Utensil/container use

I have a student who has difficulty using utensils and opening containers during lunch or snack time:

- ❑ Give one direction at a time. After one action is successfully completed, add another direction.
- ❑ Help the student physically move through the action of opening or closing containers and using utensils.
- ❑ Use weighted utensils for students with difficulties with body awareness and discrimination of touch sensations.
- ❑ Use zip lock bags, which are easier to manipulate than plastic containers like Tupperware.

Difficulty with
backpack

I have a student who has difficulty using a backpack:

- ❑ If the student has difficulty using a zipper, try attaching a large tab for easier manipulation.
- ❑ Teach the student to use non-dominant hand to stabilize the backpack while pulling the zipper.
- ❑ Suggest that the student reduce the load being carried by bringing only necessary items to and from school.
- ❑ If the student's backpack is too heavy, awkward, or large to carry on their back, suggest to the parents to try a rolling backpack.

Difficulty using locker

I have a student that has difficulty using a locker:

- ❑ If the student has difficulty using a combination lock, try letting him/her use a key lock.
- ❑ Check to see if the locker height is appropriate for the student. If not, assign a locker that he/she can access more easily.
- ❑ If the student's locker is messy and disorganized, allot the student a weekly time to clean and organize belongings.
- ❑ The teacher will initially instruct student on how to organize locker. Methods may include: visual strategies, use of containers or eliminating unnecessary items.