

Dear _____, Date _____

Welcome to TheraPlay! This set of activities and games has been specially selected to promote _____'s motor development. These activities are intended to be fun and not to be seen as exercise or work. Ideally, they can be incorporated into your child's normal playtime and daily routine. Or, you might prefer to set aside a special time of day to try the activities together. The activities are designed to be challenging, yet provide a successful experience. Some special considerations and precautions will make TheraPlay most enjoyable and safe.

- ★ Adult guidance and participation are suggested on all activities to provide encouragement and assistance, and assure safety. Most importantly, you will want to share the moments of triumph as your child learns new skills.
- ★ Comfortable clothing is recommended for the gross motor activities. Loose-fitting sweat-pants, t-shirts or sweatshirts and proper fitting tennis shoes are a good choice.
- ★ Make sure that toys used are safe and sturdy. Watch out for sharp edges and remember that balloons and toys with small pieces are a potential choking hazard.
- ★ A safety helmet should be worn at all times when riding a bicycle and skating. For added protection, knee and elbow pads are strongly recommended when roller skating.

TheraPlay offers only a sample of appropriate activities for your child. Think of other games and toys your child may enjoy. Often the best toys have no set use, but give your child an opportunity to be imaginative and creative. Many non-breakable household objects such as empty cardboard boxes and cartons, empty plastic bottles, pots and pans, measuring cups and spoons, or pieces of foam make good toys.

You are now ready to try some of the TheraPlay activities with your child.
Have fun!

If you have any questions regarding the TheraPlay activities, contact

_____ at _____

Sincerely,

(child's therapist)





GM-4-EHC

Gross Motor Eye-Hand Coordination

Throw and catch starting with a large ball (10" diameter). Decrease the size of the ball as your child's skill improves. Also increase the distance and throw more off center to encourage use of both hands.

Play basketball games together by throwing a ball or bean bag into a box, wastepaper basket, or through a hoop. A nerf ball could be used inside the house. Encourage reaching the target as closely as possible. As your child becomes more proficient, gradually increase the distance from the target.

Practice throwing a medium sized rubber ball against the wall. Let it bounce and then catch it.

Play "bowling" by rolling a ball to knock down empty plastic bottles or milk cartons.

Have your child bat at balloons using a rolled up newspaper or a badminton racket.

Play "fishing" using a dowel with string and a magnet on the end to "catch" cardboard or paper "fish" with magnets attached.

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GM-4-S

Gross Motor Strength

Encourage your child to climb a rope ladder, monkey bars, and other playground equipment. (Note: your child will have a stronger grasp when fingers are on the top of the bar and thumb below the bar).

While hanging from monkey bars, encourage your child to bring knees up to chin or bend at the hips with knees straight.

Play kickball and soccer type games with your child or encourage playing such games with other children.

Have your child sit or lie on a scooter board (wheeled board) and move between obstacles. Encourage your child to try propelling with only feet, only hands, and both hands and feet.

Help your child wheelbarrow walk around obstacles in a room. As your child builds strength, increase the length of the course. Also try doing the wheelbarrow walk outside up an inclined grassy hill.

Try preschool tumbling classes available in the community.

Hold a ball or balloon in the air and have your child jump up to touch it. Gradually increase the distance beyond reach.

You can begin to teach your child to do sit-ups. Have your child lie on back with knees bent. Instruct your child to raise head and reach for knees. Help as needed by holding legs.

Position your child and yourself on knees opposite one another and gently try to push each other off balance. Pretend to be a statue and don't move.



GM-4-BC

Gross Motor Bilateral Coordination

(Use of both sides of body together)

Teach your child to bounce and dribble a ball using both hands.

Play "basketball" games together. With both hands, throw a large ball into a box or wastepaper basket.

Watch your child bounce on a hoppity-hop ball around various obstacles. Try bouncing forward, backward and sideways.

Have your child skip rhythmically, between two objects or around in circles while music plays.

Practice "angels-in-the-snow" on a smooth floor or in sand. Arms and legs should move out to the side and then back together. Practice arms separately and legs separately.

Urge your child to swing independently by pumping legs together.

Try to crabwalk in a sitting position with knees bent and hips up, using arms and legs together to propel. A beanbag or toy placed on the stomach may encourage keeping hips off the floor.

Do a bunny hop forward and backward along a rope or tape line on the floor.

Your child can pretend to be a skier. Jump side to side with feet together in repetitive cycles.

Have your child assume hands and knees position. Ask your child to raise one arm or one leg at a time, then an arm and leg together. Begin by tapping the hand or foot to cue, then use the words "left" hand/foot and "right" hand/foot to cue.

Practice turning jumps with your child. Place feet together and jump in place while turning to face the opposite side of the room.

Try modified jumping jacks. Start by moving only the legs apart and together. Then add clapping of hands in front and overhead if able.



GM-4-B

Gross Motor Balance

Teach your child to ride a bicycle with training wheels. Riding on a scooter is also a good activity for developing balance, particularly in preparation for removing training wheels on a bicycle. Remember to wear a protective helmet for safety.

Have your child walk heel-to-toe. Make it a game by walking to an object, pick up the object and toss it to a target and walk back.

Place a bean bag on your child's head or shoulder. Have your child walk to a designated place trying not to let the bean bag fall off.

Have your child pretend to be a tree blowing in the wind. Shift weight from one foot to the other. Try this standing on one foot also.

Bounce on a hoppity-hop ball around an obstacle course made of chairs and boxes. Vary the spacing of the obstacles for added variety.

Place a board on the floor and encourage your child to walk on it without stepping off. Start with a 6" wide board and as skill increases, use narrower boards.

Try a hopping race. Begin with two feet and then try one footed races. Remember to alternate feet.

Carry a marble, potato or a small object on a spoon and walk to a target. Walk at a faster speed as skill improves.

Place a tape line or string on the floor and see if your child can tip-toe the length of it without stepping off while pretending to be a tight rope walker in the circus. Try this with different arm positions (hands on head, hands on hips, hands in the air, etc.). Make the lines straight, curved, or zigzag for variety.

Roller skates with wheels that can be locked to prevent spinning backward (Fisher Price) are a good first skate to be introduced at this age. Remember safety helmet, knee and elbow pads.



FM-4-EHC

Fine Motor Eye-Hand Coordination

Supervise your child hammer nails and use a screwdriver to turn screws.

Let your child cut out pictures from a simple coloring book or old magazine using child-safe scissors and then glue them onto paper to make a picture. This can then be cut into a simple puzzle.

Copy pegboards or block designs.

Have your child sew lacing cards or sewing cards. These can be purchased or made from cardboard with pictures pasted on and then holes punched. Use yarn or shoelaces to lace the pictures.

Complete dot-to-dot pictures and other preschool activity books.

Find some different sized containers with lids and have your child screw or place lids on the correct container.

Have your child "drive" a toy car along a tape road on the floor. Use straight, zigzag, and curved roads.

Let your child pour from one container to another starting with sand, rice or beans and progressing to water.

Dribble glue in a design on paper and let your child carefully place or drop glitter, paper scraps, colored rice, or beans to make a colorful picture.

Many preschool computer software programs offer matching games and beginning sequencing which provide practice in eye-hand coordination.

Create pictures with a Magna Doodle toy.

Draw a simple shape with a marker on a piece of burlap (about 4" square). Assist your child to use a plastic needle with yarn to stitch on top of the shape.



FM-4-P&D

Fine Motor Prehension and Dexterity:

Encourage your child to cut out shapes and pictures using child-safe scissors.

Play card games such as "Old Maid" or "Go Fish."

Play with toys that come apart and must be put together such as Tinker Toys, Legos, Lincoln Logs, and Bristle Blocks.

Play with an Etch-A-Sketch game.

Sort various small objects such as paper clips, rubber bands, buttons, or coins into small boxes or into an empty egg carton or a muffin pan.

Play marbles or jacks with your child.

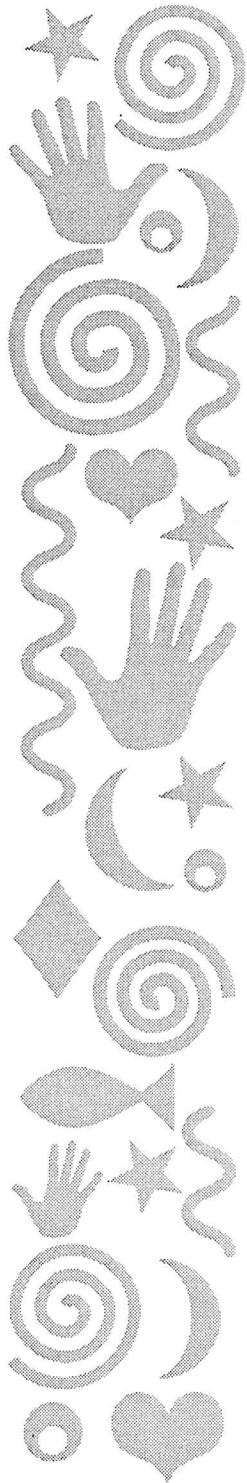
Watch your child make sculptures with modeling clay, playdough or silly putty.

Allow your child to pour from one container to another. Sand, rice or beans are good to start with and progress to water.

Assist your child make a snack involving small ingredients such as placing raisins on peanut butter and celery or decorating frosted cookies with raisins, marshmallows, nuts or coconut.

Supervise your child hammer nails and use a screwdriver to turn screws.

Play dress-up and have your child put on and take off oversized gloves as part of the costume.



FM-4-BC

Fine Motor Bilateral Coordination

(Use of both hands together)

Use a rolling pin to flatten a ball of clay, Playdough, or Silly Putty.

Encourage your child to play with an Etch-A-Sketch making diagonal lines by turning the knobs with both hands at the same time.

Wring out a washcloth or sponge when bathing or during water play.

Supervise your child in using a rotary type egg beater to mix eggs, pudding, or sudsy water.

At a blackboard or easel, use both arms to draw large circles at the same time.

Copy clapping patterns using hands together, tapping knees, or a combination.



FM-4-S

Fine Motor Strength

Have your child place modeling clay onto the top of a large plastic lid and pat it smooth. Encourage your child to draw with a stick or pencil on the clay. Make a trail and draw through it again. Specific directions may be given to incorporate the learning of shapes, letters and numbers. Smooth the clay and draw again.

Play with modeling clay, Playdough, or Silly Putty, twisting, pulling, tearing, pinching it, and rolling it flat with a rolling pin.

Encourage your child to ring out a wet washcloth or sponge while bathing or playing in water.

Squeeze a paper punch to make holes in construction paper or lightweight cardboard.

Squeeze a nerf ball to the beat of music.

Crumple paper and toss to a target. An empty wastebasket, cardboard box or picture on the wall make good targets.



GM-4-F

Gross Motor Flexibility

Slowly demonstrate simple postures. Have your child imitate your posture. You can bend, twist and stretch.

Encourage your child to climb on jungle gyms, monkey bars, and ladders at a playground.

Move over, under, and between objects that you have set up as an obstacle course.

Encourage your child to pretend to be an animal: 1) clasp hands together to form an elephant's trunk; bend at the waist and walk, 2) squat and waddle like a duck, 3) walk on hands and feet with stomach up towards the ceiling like a crab, 4) place hands and feet on the floor, walk forward moving right hand/foot together then left hand/foot together like a bear.

Try preschool tumbling and movement classes available in the community.

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