

Kids Master Skills™

Skill-Building Posters

Foundations for Fine Motor Skills . . .

Tripod Grasp:

When the tips of the thumb and first two fingers meet to hold and manipulate an object.

Bilateral Coordination:

To efficiently use our hands, one hand holds or stabilizes and the other hand works.

Hand Strength:

Hand Strengthening Ideas . . .

Hand Strengthening:

Improve hand strength through squeezing, pushing, and pulling activities.



Games with Elastics:

- Play with geoboards.
- Place elastic on fingers. Open/close hand.
- Make a rubber band.

Tactile Perception Ideas . . .

Tactile Perception:

Children may be over- or under- reactive to the feel of objects. Kids learn through touching.



Feely Games:

- Hide objects in a box or under a blanket. Ask kids how they feel. What are they?
- Pass objects around a circle. Children describe how each object feels.



Tripod Grasp Ideas . . .

Tripod Grasp:

When the tips of the thumb and first two fingers meet to hold and manipulate an object.

Use Tongs or

- Spread pom-poms about and pick them up.
- Count by 1's or 2's, or the tongs or tweezers.

Play with Play-Doh

- Make a snake. Pinch and make balls.
- Make Play-doh pancakes.
- Hide items in Play-doh.

String Them

- String beads, Cheerios, etc.

Bilateral (Two-Handed) Coordination

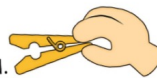
Bilateral Coordination:

To efficiently use our hands, one hand holds or stabilizes and the other hand works.



Clipping Activities:

- Write letters or numbers on clothespins. Put them in order on a piece of cardboard.
- Link Paper clips together.
- Link plastic "links" together.



Cutting Activities:

- Roll putty into a snake. Snip pieces.
- Snip strips of construction paper.
- Cut out shapes. Cut out pictures.

Two Handed Activities:

The 3 T's: Rules for Using Scissors

1- **TUCK!**

TUCK your elbow by your side



Shoulder Stability & Core Strength

Shoulder Stability/Core:

A solid, strong core and shoulders enable children to develop good fine motor skills.



Work on a Vertical Surface:

- Color on a chalkboard or dry erase board.
- Draw rainbows, rain, snowstorms, sun rays.
- Do worksheets taped on a wall.
- Place stickers on a mounted page.



Welcome to Kids Master Skills!



Thank you for downloading this resource!

These *Skill-Building Posters* offer quick, go-to information and ideas for busy teachers, parents, and occupational therapists.

Fine motor skills are key to developing competence in academics and daily life. Research shows that mastery of fine motor skills in kindergarten is a predictor of reading and math achievement during elementary school (Grissmer et al. 2010). Also, good fine motor skills help children gain confidence and increase independence.

Hang these posters on a wall at home, in a classroom, or in a therapy space. The first poster reviews the five foundations of fine motor skill development. The next posters offer activities to help children master these skills. The fine motor foundations include:

- 1- Tripod (or 3-Jaw Chuck) Grasp
 - 2- Bilateral (Two-Handed) Coordination
 - 3- Hand Strength
 - 4- Tactile Perception
 - 5- Shoulder Stability & Core Strength
- Bonus: *The 3 T's: Rules for Using Scissors*

Feel welcome to share these posters with teachers, parents, and OTs. Reach me with questions or comments at KidsMasterSkills@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Lisa Marnell MS, OTR/L (Occupational Therapist)

All About Fine Motor Skills!

Current Research on Fine Motor Skills



Recent research suggests that children today may be lagging in fine motor skills acquisition. A study completed at Dublin City University's School of Health showed that 36% of children tested did not meet expected fine motor milestones (Issartel et al., 2017).

Also, an article published in the journal, *Physical & Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics*, studied fine motor skills in preschoolers (Lin et al., 2017). Researchers reported that children who engaged in greater than 60 minutes of weekly touch-screen play had weaker fine motor coordination when compared to children who engaged in less screen time. These results suggest that increased use of technology may be negatively impacting fine motor development in kids.

1- Tripod (or 3 Jaw Chuck) Grasp



The thumb and first two fingers form a tripod grasp. This enables kids to easily straighten and bend fingers. A mature tripod grasp takes time to develop. At home and in school, use short (1-inch) crayon pieces to promote this grasp in young children. Also, encourage the use of tongs, tearing, and pegboard activities to build a tripod grasp.

2- Bilateral Coordination



Using two hands together is important for many daily tasks that kids must master, like shoe tying, buttoning, and zipping. It is also necessary for in-class activities like putting worksheets in a folder or holding a paper with one hand while writing. Difficulty with bilateral skills can translate into difficulty with school and with classroom tasks.

All About Fine Motor Skills! (cont)

3- Hand Strength



Did you know that the “pinky” side of the hand and the “thumb” side of the hand play different roles? The “pinky” or “ulnar” side provides strength. (Can you feel that large muscle on the outside of the hand?) The “thumb” side or “radial” side specializes in dexterity. Developing hand strength goes hand in hand with the final category below, “Shoulder Stability and Core Strength”. Think of a tree. It has a solid trunk (this is the core), strong branches (these are the shoulders), and leaves that must hang on tightly (these are the hands).

4- Tactile Perception



Children develop hand skills through interacting with objects in their environments. Many fine motor and craft activities offer tactile experiences with glue, finger paint, sand, or chalk. Tactile over-reactivity (when a child cannot tolerate a feeling, such as with sticky, wet, goopy input) can stop a child from taking part in messy activities. Gentle encouragement works best: Allow a child to take breaks as needed. Tactile feedback also teaches children how to use their hands well, how hard to push down on their pencils, for instance.

5- Shoulder Stability and Core Strength



In order to have good fine motor control, the core must be strong, the shoulders must be stable, and a child must have adequate upper body strength. If a child has inadequate strength to sit up straight for long periods, or if he cannot hold his shoulder and arm still, then he cannot cut carefully on a line, accurately color within the lines, or orient a button correctly in a button hole. Activities to build shoulder stability and core strength are key to helping children develop good fine motor skills.

Foundations for Fine Motor Skills . . .

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Bilateral Coordination:

To efficiently use our hands, one hand holds or stabilizes and the other hand works.



Hand Strength:

Improve hand strength through squeezing, pushing, and pulling activities.



Tactile Perception:

Children may be over- or under-reactive to the feel of objects. Kids learn through touching.



Shoulder Stability/Core:

A solid, strong core and shoulders enable children to develop good fine motor skills.



Tripod Grasp Ideas . . .

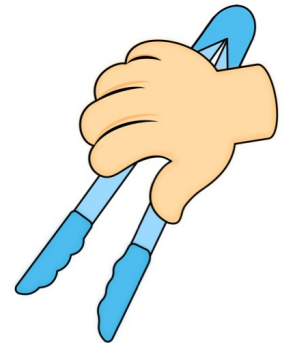
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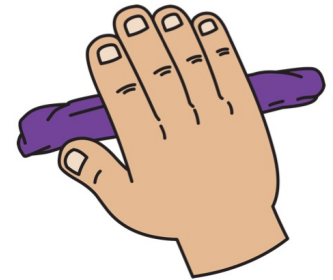
Use Tongs or Tweezers:

- Spread pompoms or tiny pieces about then pick them up.
- Count by 1's or 2's, opening and closing the tongs or tweezers in a rhythm.



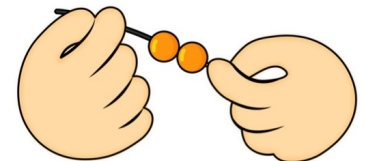
Play with Play-doh:

- Make a snake. Pinch off small pieces and make baby snakes.
- Make Play-doh pancakes, pies, snowballs.
- Hide items in Play-doh then find them.



String Things:

- String beads, Cheerios, Fruit Loops, pieces of cut straws, macaroni, rotini.
- Weave pipe cleaners in and out of a colander.



Bilateral Coordination . . .

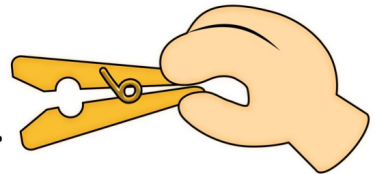
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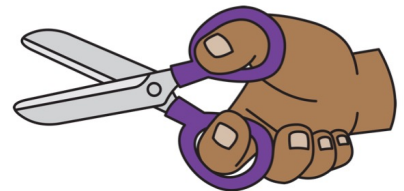
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 - Link plastic “links” together .



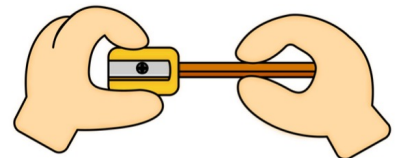
Cutting Activities:

- Roll putty into a snake. Snip pieces off.
 - Snip strips of construction paper.
 - Cut out shapes. Cut out pictures.



Two Handed Activities:

- Play with stickers; string beads; lace lacing cards; open and close plastic bottles and containers; use a hole punch.



Hand Strengthening Ideas . . .

Hand Strengthening:
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Games with Elastics:

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- Place elastic on fingers. Open/close hand.
 - Make a rubber band ball.



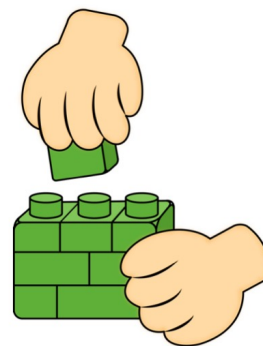
Squeezing and Pushing Games:

- Squeeze glue, therapy ball, or sponges.
- Push pegs, pennies, or beads into putty.
 - Roll Play-doh with a rolling pin.
 - Use a hole punch or stapler.



Pulling Activities:

- Place tape on a table. Tear it off.
- Separate Velcro that is stuck together.
- Play with pop tubes, Lego, snap cubes.
- Tear paper into tiny pieces. Make a picture.



Tactile Perception Ideas . . .

Tactile Perception:

Children may be over- or under-reactive to the feel of objects.

Kids learn through touching.



Feely Games:

- Hide objects in a box or under a blanket. Ask kids how they feel. Identify them.
- Pass objects around a circle. Children describe how each object feels.



Science Time:

- Collect items in the classroom or outside. Are they wet/dry, hard/soft, fuzzy/smooth?
- Mix water with sand. How does it feel? Who likes this feeling? Who doesn't?



Play Detective:

- Ask children to search in the classroom or outside and find things that are hard.
- Repeat this game for soft, fuzzy, smooth, prickly, wet, and dry objects.



Shoulder Stability & Core Strength . . .

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Work on a Vertical Surface:

- Color on a chalkboard or dry erase board.
- Draw rainbows, rain, snowstorms, sun rays.
 - Do worksheets taped on a wall.
 - Place stickers on a mounted page.



Do Animal Walks:

- Walk like a bear, a crab, a snake, a frog, an elephant, a turtle.
 - Kick like a donkey.
- Try wheelbarrow walking.



Play Overhead Gross Motor Games:

- Play balloon volleyball.
- Do throwing and catching games.
- Play freeze dance with great big arm movements, reaching up and to the sides.



The 3 T's: Rules for Using Scissors



1- **TUCK!**

TUCK your elbow
by your side



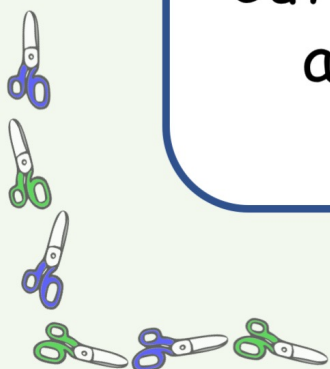
2- **TOP!**

Keep your thumb
on **TOP**



3- **TABLE!**

Cut toward the **TABLE**
and away from you

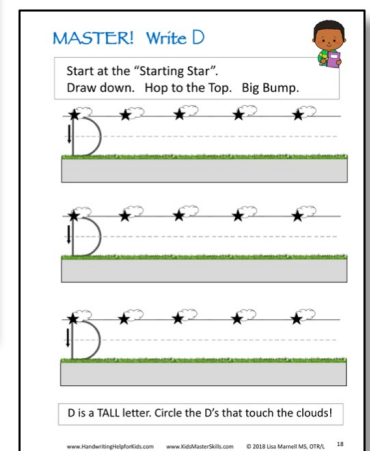
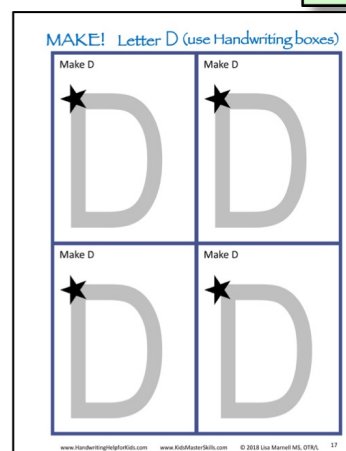
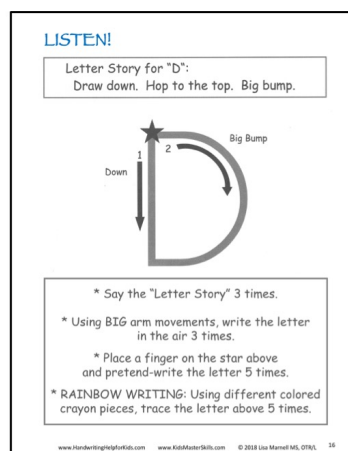
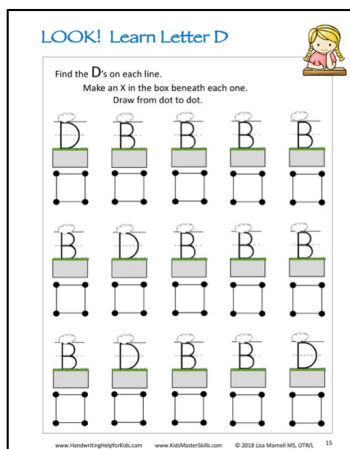


More Resources from Kids Master Skills:

My Kindergarten Handwriting program teaches upper and lower case letters. This hands-on, novel approach uses the sequence called, "LOOK" "LISTEN" "MAKE" "MASTER" to guide children. It includes two workbooks, each 145 pages long.

What is "LOOK" "LISTEN" "MAKE" "MASTER"?

- 1- **"LOOK"**: In this first step children recognize specific letters and identify their visual details. Children improve visual perceptual skills. They compare letters and learn to notice differences between them. Is a letter short or tall? Does it dip below the line? Does it have diagonal or straight lines? This helps build letter familiarity.
- 2- **"LISTEN"**: Children learn a simple "Letter Story" for how to form letters. Auditory skills help kids remember proper letter formation.
- 3- **"MAKE"**: Hands-on, multi-sensory practice reinforces the kinesthetic "feel" for letters. This step also provides fine motor practice, so important for handwriting. Using "letter cards" that an adult cuts out, kids make the letter they are learning. There are 4 options for hands-on activities, helping kids gain visual motor skills.
- 4- **"MASTER"**: Once a child has completed the three steps above, he or she is ready to try learn handwriting!
 - * Practice writing the new letter on this page.
 - * Follow directions at the bottom of the page to master differences between TALL, SMALL, and FALL letters.



AVAILABLE at
www.KidsMasterSkills.com

About the Author/Contact

Find Lisa Marnell & *Kids Master Skills* Online!

Websites: www.KidsMasterSkills.com and www.HandwritingHelpforKids.com

"Today's Foundation is Tomorrow's Success!"

Our website is building a wealth of information and activities to help kids master skills.

Follow our blog to keep updated on the latest research in education and child development.

On Social Media: Follow *Kids Master Skills* on these platforms!



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Teachers Pay Teachers



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About the Author: Lisa Marnell MS, OTR/L

KidsMasterSkills@gmail.com



In 1997 I graduated from Tufts University with a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy. Prior to that, I completed an MBA at McGill University in Montreal. I am beyond happy that I became an OTR and that I have had the opportunity to work with so many wonderful kids and teachers. I am excited to start the next leg of my OT journey as I begin my doctorate at Boston University.

My philosophy in regard to helping kids master skills is simple, but important: Children should be engaged and motivated by therapeutic and/or teaching activities. In other words, Learning should be fun!

Thank you for purchasing this resource. I sincerely hope that it has proven useful in supporting and promoting your students' skills. Please let me know!

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Please enjoy!

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