



Your Future in MIND

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Occupational Therapy Tips for Developing Hand Strength

The EIPS Occupational Therapist was in the classroom to provide some strategies and activities related to developing hand strength with all of the Kindergarten students. Sufficient strength is needed in their hand and arm muscles to allow for efficient printing, cutting, and other activities that occur throughout the Kindergarten day. As students transition to grade one and beyond, hand strength is an important foundation skill to ensure students have sufficient endurance for increasing writing demands.

Here are some activity ideas to improve hand strength at home:

- Putting together Lego or other construction blocks
- Pinching clothespins to put around a paper plate or container edge
- Using short crayons (4 - 5 cm long) to colour a picture— this encourages “pinching fingers” for holding a pencil well
- Hide small items like macaroni or mini erasers in play dough and have your child find them
- Practice making cookies, pancakes, snakes, and other creations with play dough
- Use a turkey baster to squeeze and squirt water in the bath or sink
- Use a strawberry huller, tweezers, or tongs to pick up and move small items into a bowl
- Transfer water from one container to another by soaking up water from one container with a sponge or cloth and wringing it out into the second container
- Use a hole punch
- Squeeze a stress ball
- Spray the sidewalk, fence, or snow with water in a spray bottle
- Pop some packing bubbles
- Squeeze glitter glue or puffy paint to make a creation
- Cutting junk mail, fliers, or old catalogues to make a collage or grocery list
- Animal walks on hands: wheelbarrow walks, crab walk, bear walk, etc.
- Helping to stir in the kitchen
- Have kids take turns sitting on a towel and pulling each other on un-carpeted floors (with supervision!).

**PLEASE ASK YOUR CHILD'S
TEACHER IF YOU HAVE ANY
QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS**