

Occupational Therapy : Here are some ways to help your child develop organizational skills, visual and graphomotor skills, and enhance sensory processing. _

Organization:

Design a weekly routine for the family - it can be something simple. Routines minimize stress, enhance motor memory, and provide practice and mastery. For example:

Monday bake cookies / **Tuesday** draw or paint/ **Wednesday** write cards/ **Thursday** build e.g. forts, Legos, work on a puzzle / **Friday** game night/ **Saturday** hike/ **Sunday** family read-aloud and/or work on a craft project e.g. (wood working, embroidery, knitting, weave pot-holders, origami, paper airplanes, play dough creations.

Visual Motor Activities:

Play ball - a quick game of catch on a daily basis improves visual tracking and eye-hand coordination. Use a balloon, or koosh ball indoors. Tennis balls or basketballs outside. Bean bag toss into a box or laundry basket is fun too- you can even make your own bean bags! Marbles, Pick-up Sticks, or Jack's, Jenga, Connect Four, Trouble, Mancala, are some other great visual motor games.

Writing: To practice letter formation with young children, (Pre K and Kindergarteners) use a multi-sensory approach. Keep each practice short (5 minutes), trace a letter in sand, salt, shaving cream, then have your child try. Use the words ('My turn, Your turn'). Letters always start from the top, (except for /e/). **Refer to iPad app: Ready to Print** for the correct method. There are many other games on that app, such as simple mazes, practice with shapes, and connect-the-dots, along with pattern and number recognition activities.

To practice writing with children First grade through Fourth, keep it short and sweet! Have them dictate a short note to a loved one. The next day have your child copy it. The day after that, provide a visual for how to address the envelope, so they can complete the task.

Fourth Graders and Beyond -start a 'Book of Knowledge' (a composition book works well)- everyday your child reads for at least 30 minutes and writes down two things they learned. You will be amazed by how much they retain! This will also help develop their graphomotor skills. Be sure to encourage your child to go back to the text to correctly spell new words!

Sensory Processing: Please watch the following TED talk -

https://www.ted.com/talks/angela_hanscom_the_real_reason_children_fidget_and_what_we_can_do_about_it

I am happy to answer any questions and provide additional ideas. I wish you peace and health!
Sharon Kokoefer MS, OTR/L e-mail: skokoefer@richmondconsolidated.org

In addition to websites and apps for your iPad, spend some time together playing board games or going outside to enjoy the nice Spring weather. These are great ways to target speech and language skills including speech sounds (e.g. take a walk and play I spy to find all the words that start with the sound “p”), turn-taking in games, social skills (e.g. practice appropriate conversation skills including tone of voice, appropriate topics, eye contact).