

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

School Strategies and Equipment Resources



This pack has been modified with permission from the Paediatric Occupational Therapy team in Buckinghamshire and the North Surrey Locality

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Tactile Strategies

The child with tactile sensitivity may have difficulty screening out touch sensations that most people are barely aware of, for example, the feel of a label in their clothes. They may subsequently have difficulty shifting their attention to other sensations like the sound of a human voice, because they are so overwhelmed by messages about touch.

- Allow child to be first or last in line so they are not “bumped”.
- Assign child a special task, i.e. going ahead to ensure area is ready or staying behind to make sure lights are turned off or gate is shut etc.
- Approach child from within their visual field.
- Tell the child when you are going to touch them. Always touch firmly and without moving your hands.
- Define child’s space during carpet time/assembly by using carpet square or hoop.
- Prepare child for activity by providing a visual cue.
- Before activities, provide deep pressure into the palms of the hands, such as firm clapping or “high fives”.
- Provide daily access to dry weighted sensory play materials (rice, sand, beans). Hide preferred toys/objects in sensory play materials. “Squish” hands before and during.
- Use messy materials that provide resistance, e.g. dough mixtures, putty, etc.
- Consider use of a tool, e.g. paintbrush, rather than finger paint, or wearing gloves during messy activities to enable the child to participate more fully.

Auditory Strategies

The child with auditory sensitivity may have difficulty screening out noises from the next classroom and tolerating background noise such as a fan. This child is likely to react emotionally to unexpected and loud noises such as the school bell or an aeroplane and be fearful of appliances such as a vacuum cleaner. They may subsequently have difficulty attending during lessons, because they are so overwhelmed by other auditory information.

- In situations where the child experiences a lot of loud noises, headphones/ear defenders or earplugs may be helpful to buffer some of the noise e.g. in assembly or a dance class.
- Whenever possible, alert or prepare the child before an offending noise occurs, i.e. school bell, fire alarm. Avoid using appliances or equipment at times when you would like the child to maintain their focus.
- Keep auditory distractions to a minimum.
- Limit extraneous auditory input from the hallway by closing the classroom door.
- Seat the child away from open windows and doors.
- Prepare the child in advance for distractions such as visitors or announcements. A visual support is helpful.
- Consider setting up barriers or “cubicles” for deskwork that other children can also access.
- Provide headphones or earplugs for the child to wear during tests or deskwork, after verbal instructions have been given.
- Make sure that quiet occurs before instructions are given.
- Ask the child to repeat back what has been said to check for understanding and accuracy.
- Use gestures and/or visual supports to supplement verbal directions.
- Consider seating in a quiet, distraction free area. The area around the teacher’s desk is often the busiest in the classroom.

Calming Strategies

These activities can help any child who is anxious, but are particularly useful for children who are sensory defensive. They help to relax the nervous system and can reduce exaggerated responses to sensory input.

- During carpet time allow child to lie on tummy, or sit against a body pillow whilst listening to story, etc.
- Place hands on child's shoulders and apply deep pressure through them.
- Encourage self-imposed hugs or hugging a pillow tightly when anxious/upset or prior to an uncomfortable event.
- Body pressure – teach child to sit on the floor with knees bent up to chest, arms around knees and then squeeze themselves very tightly. The same thing can be done sitting on a chair.
- “Time out” space, ideally enclosed quiet space (large box/pop-up tent) with beanbag chair inside is good escape from too much stimulation – child may enjoy lying over or under beanbag more than sitting on it.
- Slow rocking or swaying (rhythmic motion), i.e. have a rocking chair available in the classroom.
- Listen to soft and rhythmic music. Mozart and Vivaldi are thought to be calming and conducive to learning.
- Reduce noise and light levels.
- Provide hand squeeze, e.g. ball.
- Counting down – teach child to count themselves down from 10 – 1 before moving on to the next activity. Again the counting should be done fairly slowly and with eyes closed.

Organising and Alerting Strategies

Organising and alerting activities can help any child who is either over or under-active become focussed and attentive. These activities are particularly useful during transitions in the school day and a lot of them are great as a whole class activity!

Deep Pressure Touch:

- Vibration – use vibrating wiggle pen (see equipment list)
- Place hands on the child's shoulders or head (in neutral position) with safe, firm pressure.
- Child sits on own hands.

Heavy Work:

- Magic room - with arms extended and palms flat push the walls of the room to “make the room ‘bigger’”.
- Chair push ups - sitting on standard class chair, hold onto sides of chair and lift bottom off chair. Hold position and count. This is a great whole class activity.
- Stand in door frame and “push out” the sides.
- Monkey bars – hanging and swinging from bars is great.
- Push open heavy doors.
- Carry books against body hugging to chest, i.e. carry books/objects to office/from class to class.
- Place chairs on desk at end of day.
- Erase or wash chalkboard/wipe board/desk.
- Help move gym mats in P.E.

Movement:

- Take movement breaks to stand up and stretch between classroom activities.

Rhythm:

- Marching from one room to another.
- Marching and clapping to music.

EQUIPMENT LIST

Postural Equipment

PERSPEX WRITING SLOPE £23

Product code WSMD

Advance Seating Designs

0808 100 60 80 <http://www.asd.co.uk/>



Midi Perspex slope - A lightweight, easily transportable slope for confined spaces. Space to store work/pencil case underneath. Ideal for older children.

POSTURE PACK

www.backinaction.co.uk

020 7930 8309



AFTER - with posture pack



BEFORE

Price List (inc VAT)

Posture Pack Complete set:
seat wedge, writing slope
and storage case

£49.70

Posture Pack seat wedge

£19.80

Posture Pack writing slope with
storage case

£29.90

The Posture Pack has two parts:

The **Writing Slope** tilts papers and books to the correct angle for reading and writing. It's strong yet light and has a built in carrying handle. It stores both loose and punched papers, and has a removable A4 wallet to transport papers to and from school. The tilted surface improves vision too. It allows the eyes to focus on the whole page at once, something children normally achieve by curling over the desk, creating the habit of writing and reading with their face very close to the page. (Remember, a young child's focal length is naturally short, so its inevitable they will get their eyes close to the paper, the answer is to get the paper closer to them!)

The **Seat Wedge** tilts the seat forward to a more comfortable angle for working, making it easier to lean forward to work without slouching. The Seat Wedge fits cleverly inside the Writing Slope to provide a complete portable solution.

WRITE ANGLE DESK TOP £29.95

Philip & Tacey 01264 332171



Most classrooms have flat writing surfaces and although that's standard today, it can result in postural and motor problems, especially for pupils with special needs. The **Write Angle** is a unique piece of apparatus and the result of an extensive research project undertaken in conjunction with handwriting specialists at the Institute of Education, London. Write Angle is a highly regarded desktop writing aid. Used worldwide by teachers and occupational therapists.

MAKE-IT-YOURSELF WRITING BOARD

To make a writing board out of wood, use the following dimensions –

(H) 16cm

(D) 46cm

(W) 47cm

Fix a strip of wood on the bottom at the front to act as a lip to stop it sliding. Dycem or the Write Mat (£5.20) from Philip & Tacey (01264 332171) will help to stop the paper sliding.

HEIGHT ADJUSTABLE BATH STEP (FOR FEET!)

Nottingham Rehab 0845 1204522

Homecraft

08702 423305

<http://www.homecraft-rolyan.com/>



This step is designed as an adjustable height bath step, however is a great foot support. The step comprises four layers which join together allowing the height to be adjusted to suit the individual user. Height of step 100mm (4"), in 25mm (1") increments. Step size 457 x 356mm (18 x 14"). Weight 3.4kg.

Pens & Pencils

Egg Chalks

www.childrensscrapstore.co.uk

FABER-CASTELL GRIP PENCILS

Waitrose

PC World

www.anythingleft-handed.co.uk



Various options available –all are triangular in shape with rubber "soft-grip" dots to help a correct and comfortable grip. Dispense the need for pencil grip.

Grip 2001 Set - includes 1 triangular pencil, 1 matching eraser and a pencil sharpener for all pencil shapes – standard and jumbo (£2.99)

Tri-Grip jumbo pencils (2) - jumbo size therefore suitable for younger children (£1.70).

Tri-Grip colouring pencils regular (6) - regular size therefore suitable for any age (£2.99).

Tri-Grip regular pencils (6) – regular size lead pencils therefore suitable for any age (£2.99).

HAND HUGGERS

WHSmith

Early Learning Centre

www.anythingleft-handed.co.uk

www.berol.co.uk (to buy in bulk)



Various options available – all have oversized triangular body to help develop a comfortable and correct grip for little hands.

Hand Huggers lead pencils (2) £1.79

Hand Hugger colouring pencils (12) £7.95

Hand Hugger colouring pens (6) £4.25

Hand Hugger writing pen - chunky, hard-wearing nib gives slight resistance to the paper so that it gives greater control when first learning to write.

LIGHT-UP PEN £2.49

www.thedyslexiashop.co.uk

0131 672 1552



Ideal way to experiment with heavy versus light pressure. Used correctly the light will come on and off with slight variations in writing pressure. Too much tension and constant pressure when writing will cause the pen to light up!

STABILO'S MOVE EASY ROLLERBALL PEN £4.99

WHSmith
Woolworths
Sainsburys
www.anythingleft-handed.co.uk



The funky, freaky pen that looks the part, writes like a dream and is great fun to use. Unusually, the pen has been made with a special left handed version with the grip moulded for a comfortable fit in the left hand. Stabilo's Move Easy glides perfectly over the paper and it can be erased with a fountain pen eraser just like normal fountain pen ink. Supplied with 3 spare refills.

VIBRATING PENS

Vibrating pens improve awareness of kinaesthetic feedback from letter formation, i.e. using a vibrating pen provides tactile and proprioceptive input to the hand, reinforcing learning of correct letter formation.

Fun to use as part of a handwriting group!



Squiggle Wiggle Writer From £4.95

www.spacecraft.co.uk
www.homecraft-rolyan.com

The pen comes with five colour cartridges red, blue, green, purple and black. Requires 1 x AA battery (not included).

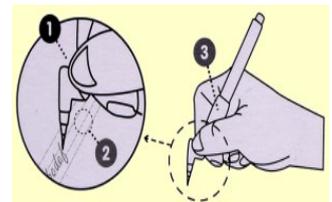


Multi Writer Vibrating Pen \$5 www.pdppro.com

This pen will hold most pens, pencils, and crayons! Requires one AA battery.

YOROPEN BALLPOINT PEN OR PENCIL £2.99 each MINI PENCIL SET (2) £2.99

WHSmith
www.anythingleft-handed.co.uk
A revolutionary design that makes writing easier.



What are the benefits?

- 1. FINGER SUPPORT:** Prevents fingers from slipping down towards the pen tip. The change of angle allows comfortable and natural writing. It also presents the nib at a better angle for smooth ink flow. It requires very little pressure and reduces writing strain.
- 2. VISUAL SPACE:** It is easier to see what you are writing because your fingers do not obstruct your field of vision. This is of particular benefit to left-handed writers.
- 3. ADJUSTABLE GRIP:** The tripod grip can be rotated to the user's preferred writing position. Left-handers should simply rotate the grip to the left.

Pencil Grips

GRIPPIT £4.96 (Pack of 6)

Homecraft
08702 423305



<http://www.homecraft-rolyan.com/>

The Grippit's simple design enables those with poor grip to control and hold a range of implements - pens, pencils, razors, toothbrushes, knives, forks, etc. The larger ring is placed on the thumb or finger and the item to be gripped is slotted into the smaller ring. Suitable for both left or right handed use. The design ensures that it is impossible for the user to drop the implement. Supplied in packs of 6. Available in small (children), medium (ladies) and large (gents)

THE PENCIL GRIP (SOFT)

Homecraft
08702 423305
www.homecraft-rolyan.com



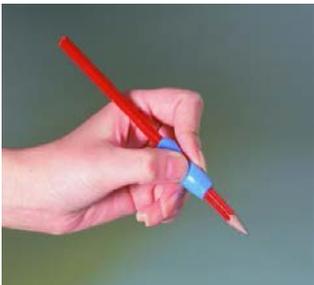
Encourages writing with full hand/arm action. Pear shaped design promotes correct gripping and prevents finger cramping and user discomfort. Fits any standard pen or pencil. For right or left handed use.

The Pencil Grip: Pack of 3 £6.34
The Pencil Grip: Pack of 12 £19.62

Other sizes available to fit larger implements.

TRI-GO GRIP £8.95 (Pack of 10)

Homecraft
08702 423305
www.homecraft-rolyan.com



A clever design that allows the fingers to actually touch the writing implement whilst making gripping easier. The grip supports the fingers, reducing muscle fatigue whilst ensuring the writing implement can be gripped comfortably. Suitable for both left and right handed use. Supplied in packs of 10.

TRIANGULAR PEN/PENCIL GRIPS £6.75 (Pack of 25)

Homecraft
08702 423305
www.homecraft-rolvan.com



Soft grips slip easily onto standard round or hexagonal pencils and most ballpoint pens. Grips form a cushion for the fingers, providing a comfortable, natural hold. Assorted colours.

THE CLAW PENCIL GRIP £8.49 (Pack of 5)

<http://www.cheapdisabilityaids.co.uk/claw-pencil-grip-pack-of-5-6210-p.asp>
www.amazon.co.uk



Three fingered grip which helps children in the early stages to develop a tripod grasp.

Paper

RAISED LINE WRITING PAPER ASSORTMENT

Homecraft 08702

423305

www.homecraft-rolyan.com



Paper with slightly raised lines to provide tactile as well as visual feedback for children who have difficulty staying on the lines. Reinforces the concept of directionality and alignment to improve formation of letters and numbers. Assortment includes 25 sheets of each:

- *Narrow Line* (ruled every 9mm (3/8"))
- *Wide Line* (ruled every 16mm (5/8") with dotted line in between)
- *Stop-Go* (primary paper with Red lines every 25mm (1") with two Green guidelines in between).

Pack of 75 sheets

Rulers

MY FIRST RULER £2.94

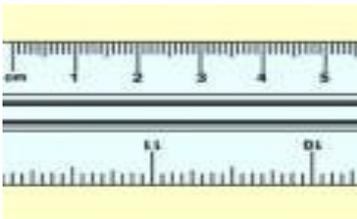
www.thedyslexiashop.co.uk



Developed especially for small hands and children with co-ordination difficulties. The large, comfortable handle enables children to measure and draw lines with confidence. Includes simple 1cm markings and also

FINGERGRIP RULER 12"/30cm £0.99

www.thedyslexiashop.co.uk



A 12" / 30cm plastic ruler with a raised finger grip along its length that makes the ruler easier to manipulate.

LEFT-HANDED RULERS

www.anythingleft-handed.co.uk



A real asset for drawing precise measurements, because these rulers are scaled from right to left, which is the direction left-handers have to draw a line, so the nib doesn't jar on the paper and hands doesn't cover the measurements.

Ruler 6in / 15cm, clear Perspex £0.95

Ruler 12in / 30cm, clear Perspex £1.95

Scissors

Easi-Grip® Scissors £5.95

www.peta-uk.com



- Lightweight and easy to use.
- Continuous loop plastic handle automatically reopens the scissor when pressure is released.
- Operated by squeezing gently using thumb and fingers, or fingers and palm of the hand.
- Blade guard supplied for safety when the scissors are not in use.
- Options include round-ended or pointed blade and left and right-handed scissors.
- Key Stage 2

Mini-Easi-Grip® Scissors £3.75

www.peta-uk.com



- Two thirds of the size of standard Easi-Grip® Scissors
- 30mm round-ended stainless steel blade
- In most cases can be used in either left or right hand
- Reception & Key Stage 1

Self-Opening Scissors £5.95

www.peta-uk.com



- Look like conventional style scissors, but have been fitted with a spring so that the scissor automatically reopens after pressure is released.
- Options include round-ended left and right-handed scissors.

Long Loop Scissors £5.15

www.peta-uk.com



- Long loop handle allows the strength of middle, ring finger to be used whilst the index finger is placed outside the loop and used for guidance.
- Superb control of cutting action

Attention

MOVE 'N' SIT

Epsan Sports & Therapy
- 01299 829213
www.backinaction.co.uk
www.norlite.co.uk



The Move 'n' Sit is an air-filled seat wedge that is similar to sitting on a Gym Ball (or balloon). Used when sitting in a chair, the wedge shape and unevenness of the cushion adds an element of instability, keeping your body in motion and enhancing stomach and back muscles. It is designed to promote active sitting. For the “sensory seeking” child, this cushion will help provide the extra sensory input required to help attention to tasks in hand, reducing fidgetiness.

The Move 'n' Sit Air Cushion is made of tough, durable, latex-free PVC vinyl that is almost indestructible! !

Available in 2 sizes:

Junior (26x26cm) – up to
8yrs. £13.60 - £15.95

Senior (36x36cm) – 8yrs +
£17.95 +

SIT FIT CUSHION /AIR CUSHION £24.95

<http://www.backinaction.co.uk/sitfit>
www.amazon.co.uk



As above, but is flat and can be used on the floor as well as in the chair

Feeding

JUNIOR CARING CUTLERY Knife, Fork and Spoon £4.12 each

www.benefitsnowshop.co.uk



A range of knife, fork and spoon designed primarily for children. With small utensil heads, these are easy to clean and dishwasher safe. Stainless steel cutlery. Length of handle 102mm (4"). The knife and spoon weigh 24g. The fork weighs 22g. Suitable for Infant age children.

ADULT CARING CUTLERY £11.56 per set

www.benefitsnowshop.co.uk/shop (search for caring cutlery)



A range of knife, fork and spoon designed primarily for children. With small utensil heads, these are easy to clean and dishwasher safe.

Suitable for Junior age children

Multipurpose

DYCEM

Homecraft
08702 423305
www.homecraft-rolyan.com



Dycem Mat

Dycem has been developed to produce the most effective non-slip material available. It is not sticky, but it grips dry, slippery surfaces e.g. worktops, trays, floors and tables to prevent movement. It may also be used to enhance grip on jars, handles, etc. It can be cleaned in soft, soapy water to retain its properties but is not effective when wet.

Round 14cm £4.68
Round 19cm £5.93
Rectangular 25cm x 18cm £7.99
Rectangular 35cm x 25cm £11.81
Rectangular 38cm x 45cm £19.82



Dycem Reels

Dycem reels come in various sizes and can be cut to size and shape.

1m x 20cm £10.04 2m x 40cm £24.24
1m x 40cm £14.06 9m x 20cm £52.87
2m x 20cm £ 15.21 9m x 40cm £84.84

Therapeutic Putty

www.benefitsnowshop.co.uk/shop (search for therapeutic putty)



Use soft and medium for infant age for junior age an increase to firm is an option.

This company sell putty in different quantities