



Sarah Hill
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Fine Motor Skills Newsletter

School Approach

Sensory OT is embedding a fine motor skills programme across the School and College. This allows for skills to be developed and mastered including tactile discrimination, finger isolation, hand strength, bilateral integration (using 2 hands at once), and scissor skills. Students are assessed using a flow diagram (see below) which breaks fine motor skills into 4 levels. Students then follow a program of the respective level (this is based on where there is a skill that a student cannot currently do), and therefore provides a suitable challenge for developing skill set. The aim of the program is to be completed at least 3 times a week, completing 3 activities, which is approximately 15 minutes in total.

Prior to completing the program, students need to complete a warm up of gross motor skills. In order to be successful with fine motor skills, individuals need to have good gross motor skills, shoulder stability and postural control. Without good core, we are unable to sit up, without relying on our hands/arms for support. This would make fine motor skill activities very difficult – if not impossible!

Warm Ups (examples – select as appropriate for your child)



- 1) Hook fingers on to both hands and pull in opposite directions
- 2) With palms together, straight fingers, press hands together for 10-20 seconds. Then shake hands out and relax.
- 3) With hands separated, preferred hand first, ask the child to touch their thumb with each finger tip in turn, beginning with index finger and thumb. When mastered separately, carry out with both hands at the same time.
- 4) Squash and squeezing playdough



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Level 1



Objective: The child can find a small marble or similar sized item in the box, without looking, using their dominant hand.

Skill: Tactile discrimination.

- 1) Bury items in the box.
- 2) Search for items with their dominant hand and remove.
- 3) Repeat activity with their non dominant hand.
- 4) To make the activity harder, if the child will allow to be blindfolded or cover the box with a towel.

Level 2



Objective: Can roll a 2cm thick snake, using both hands together, rolling with their arms only.

Skill: Bilateral integration

- 1) Start with playdough I a ball.
- 2) Using both hands, the child needs to roll the ball into a cylinder shape.
- 3) Encourage the child to use their hands and not use their whole body.

Level 3



Objective: The child can put a 1cm wide or smaller nut and bolt together and then take it apart.

Skill: Grips, hand strength

Nuts and bolts of various sizes (not large ones). These could be plastic, meccano or regular building bolts. Small jars/bottles can also be used.

- 1) Using their dominant hand, the child needs to use their fingertips of their thumb, index (plus middle) fingers to open and then close up the nuts and bolts.

Level 4



Objective: The child can hold 16 playing cards and deal them into 2 piles without dropping cards as they go.

Skill: Bilateral integration

- 1) The child needs to hold the pack of cards in their non dominant hand.
- 2) Deal out one card at a time, using their thumb, index and timestimes middles finger.
- 3) Deal out a miniumum of 2 piles.



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GriffinOT Fine Motor Skill Development Programme

Choosing the right level for your child

At GriffinOT we know that parents and educators want to help children as much as they can. We also know that if children are given activities that are too difficult, they won't be able to do their best. This chart has been developed to help adults decide the best starting point in our programmes for each child.

Please begin in section A and go through the questions in order. Before moving to the next section you must be able to answer 'YES' for all of the questions the current section. If you think 'sometimes,' or 'maybe,' rather than 'YES' for any question, please treat that as a 'NO.' Starting at the right level for a child is the best way to help improve their skills and confidence.

If you aren't sure what some of the questions mean, please watch the videos that follow. We have not included demonstrations for personal independence skills.

If you are not currently in the 'Where to do I start?' course, please visit our website www.GriffinOT.com/FMSP. Here you will find more information.

Remember, there are videos demonstrating the activities marked with an asterisk*.



Begin here:

- 1 Is the child 18 months old?
Or, if the child has developmental delays or was more than 8 weeks premature, are they at a cognitive age of 18 months?
- 2 Can the child sit up independently?
For children with neurological conditions, such as cerebral palsy, the programme may be suitable if they are able to sit upright in supported seating and provided they have independent control over their arms and hands.
- 3 Can the child easily pick up a 2x2 square Duplo brick?
- 4 Can the child independently drop a 2x2 square Duplo brick into a container?
- 5 Is the child showing an interest in fine motor activities?

If the answer to any of these questions is NO, then the programmes will be too challenging for the child.

Nevertheless, the GriffinOT website provides play ideas that will help to prepare the child for Level 1 of the programme. It is recommended that children continue with these activities until they can easily complete the above skills.

If the answer to questions 1-5 was YES, please move on to question 6 in section B.

- 6 Can the child stack three wooden 2cm cubes?
- 7 Can the child twist a large nut and bolt, or screw cap bottle at least two turns?*
- 8 Can the child put two pieces of Duplo together?
- 9 Can the child thread a large (2cm) bead onto a string?
- 10 Can the child pull up and down the zipper on their coat and/or trousers/shorts?

If answered 'No' to one of these we recommend starting at Level 1. If all 'Yes' continue to section C.

- 11 Can the child trace around their own hand using a marker?
- 12 Can the child thread ten small (½ cm) beads?
- 13 Can the child fold a piece of paper in half? (the edges don't need to be aligned)
- 14 Can the child cut a piece of 10cm wide card/paper in half?
- 15 Can the child pour themselves a drink without spilling?

If answered 'No' to one of these we recommend starting at Level 2. If all 'Yes' continue to section D.



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D

YOU NOW HAVE 3 OPTIONS

1

Do you want to focus on improving the child's pencil grasp?

Supporting Pencil Grasp Development

2

Do you want to continue with general fine motor skills?

- 16 Can the child translate five items from their finger to their palm on both hands?*
- 17 Can the child lace a card using running stitch?*
- 18 Can the child open and close large buttons (e.g. on a coat or cardigan)?
- 19 Can the child butter bread to make a sandwich with verbal prompting only?
- 20 Can the child cut up soft food (e.g. sausage, potato) using their knife and fork together, with their index finger positioned on the top of the fork?

If answered 'No' to any of these we recommend starting at Level 3.
If all 'Yes' continue.

- 21 Can the child translate five items from their palm to their fingers on both hands?*
- 22 Can the child fold a small origami pattern with at least four folds accurately (e.g. paper plane)?*
- 23 Can the child sew together a small craft item (with help to tie and cut off only)?
- 24 Can the child deal and fan out playing cards for card games?
- 25 Can the child do up small buttons (e.g. on their school shirt)?

If answered 'No' to one of these we recommend starting at Level 4.
If all 'Yes' read below.

Our programmes will be too simple for your child and we would not recommend them. You can visit our website for further ideas on developing fine motor skills, but it is likely your child doesn't need extra support with developing their fine motor skills.

3

Do you want to focus on the child's scissor skills?

Using regular scissors:

- Can the child cut along 10cm long 0.5cm wide line cut?
- Can the child cut out a circle staying on a 1cm wide line?
- Do they show a good interest in cutting with scissors?

If answered 'No' to any of these we recommend starting at Level 1 Scissor Skills.

If all 'Yes' start at Level 2 Scissor Skills.