

## In This Issue

### Take A Breath

by Lisa Horvay, OTR/L

Ask The OT: Will improving my child's fine motor performance help their academic achievement?

by Yuki Wada, OTR/L

### Sensory Friendly Beach Tips

by Micaela Elshazly, OTR/L



## Contact Us

3665 Kearny Villa Rd.,  
Ste. 300

San Diego, CA 92123  
Phone: 858-966-5829

Fax: 858-966-5859

3605 Vista Way, Ste. 201  
Oceanside, CA 92056

Phone: 760-758-1620

Fax: 760-945-0758

667 San Rodolfo Dr.,  
Suite 126

Solana Beach, CA 92075

Phone: 858-793-9591

Fax: 858-793-1153

333 H Street, Ste. 3010  
Chula Vista, CA 91910

858-966-8707

Fax: 619-476-4464

## Take A Breath

### Take a Breath and Make a Breathing Star!

Deep breathing allows children to calm and center themselves during busy or stressful times. Daily practice of breathing helps children and adults remain focused throughout the day and can decrease negative reactions to stressful events.

A Breathing Star is a calming tool you can use when your child feels upset or overwhelmed. Teach your child to open and close the folder as they take deep breaths in and out. Keep your Breathing Star in a convenient place and encourage your child to use it on their own as the need arises.

#### Materials:

- 1 manila file folder
- Scissors
- Markers
- Tape
- Glue stick
- A printed star template (see QR code below)



#### Directions:

1. Print and cut out the star template.
2. Lay the file folder flat in an open position. Center the star template on the middle fold and trace around it.
3. Close the folder and make a 1-inch cut perpendicular to the center fold, about 1/3 of the way from the bottom.
4. With the folder still in a closed position, make a sharp crease from the farthest edge you just cut to the center fold. The resulting shape will be a triangle.
5. Repeat step 4 with the other side of the cut edge.
6. Unfold the triangles and open the folder.
7. Hold the folder with the star side facing you. Reach around the back of the folder and use your fingers to poke the creased triangles toward you so they look like a beak.
8. Decorate your star with eyes and a nose if you choose.



9. You did it! You made a Breathing Star!

Star Template



Website with instructional video



Activity from [www.ConsciousDiscipline.com](http://www.ConsciousDiscipline.com) trademark of Loving Guidance, Inc.



## Ask The OT:

### Will improving my child's fine motor skills help their academic achievement?

According to recent studies conducted by the researchers in various fields such as psychology, ophthalmology and special education, there may be a correlation between the development of fine motor skills in early childhood and longer-term academic success.

#### How are fine motor skills and academic achievement associated?

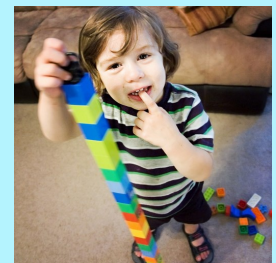
**Neuronal Wiring:** Some areas of the brain, such as the pre-frontal cortex, involve the processing of both motor information and cognitive tasks. The belief is that stronger motor skills early in life strengthen the neural connections that also assist children in academic performance.

**Experience-Dependent Learning:** Well developed motor skills at a young age (not necessarily just fine motor skills) allow children to navigate and manipulate their environments at a higher level. These children therefore gain a greater range of experiences earlier in life, all of which set the stage for greater academics.

**The Direct Classroom Benefit:** Many aspects of early learning involve fine motor skills, such as writing and drawing. Children who are more skilled at doing these tasks have more energy available to focus on classroom lessons.

#### What can I do to help enhance my child's fine motor skills?

Legos	Coloring	Pegs	Drawing
Threading beads	Dressing a doll	Cutting activities	Tearing paper
Wind-up toys	Container play	Puzzles	Stamps



Curby, T. W., & Abby, C. G. (2014, February 5). *Fine Motor Skills and Academic Achievement*. Retrieved February 20, 2016, from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/psyched/201402/fine-motor-skills-and-academic-achievement>



## Sensory Friendly Beach Tips

A trip to the beach has many elements that may be challenging and upsetting for children with sensory sensitivities. The right tools and clothes can reduce sensory overload and help your child have a great day at the beach.

**Sunglasses and sun-protective hats:** The bright sunlight can be overwhelming and a high-quality pair of sunglasses and a wide-brim hat will help. You can use a neoprene strap to help keep them secure during playtime.

**Sunscreen:** Consider a non-greasy, lightweight sunscreen if lotion sunscreen is too heavy or sticky feeling. Apply the sunscreen with deep pressure as this may be more calming for your child.

**Provide shade:** An umbrella or beach cabana provides protection from the sun and provides a place for your child to take a break during your beach trip.

**Bathing suit:** There are many different bathing suit options available. Tight waistbands and ruffles can be bothersome, so consider long-sleeve swim shirts or one-piece wetsuits. Neoprene wetsuits can provide compressive input that can be calming to your child's sensory system.

**Ear protection:** Bring noise reducing headphones if the sound of the waves crashing or groups of people is bothersome for your child.

**Protective shoes:** If walking on grass or sand is uncomfortable for your child, don't insist they walk barefoot. Bring along aqua socks or other comfortable shoes for walking to and from the beach.

