

In This Issue

Winter Craft Fun!

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Happy Healthy Hands: Tips and Tricks for Hand Washing

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Ask The OT: Transitions

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Winter Craft Fun!



Crafts can be an excellent way to engage your child while they are off of school! Crafts promote skill development across many areas including fine motor, coordinating hands together (bilateral coordination), and sequencing skills. Cutting can promote hand strength, bilateral coordination skills, fine motor skills, visual perceptual skills, and visual motor skills. Following instructions to complete craft activities promote cognitive and sequencing skills. Coloring activities encourage and facilitate fine motor coordination, bilateral coordination, and appropriate grasp in a fun and motivating way. Try these activities to help keep your hands and minds busy over the winter months!

Wiggly Worm



Materials:

- * Glue
- * 1 large pom-pom
- * 3 small pom-poms
- * 2 wiggle eyes
- * Ruler
- * Pipe cleaner
- * Construction paper
- * Unsharpened pencil
- * 1/4" hole punch
- * Scissors

Directions:

- Cut a strip of construction paper 12" x 1"
- Use a hole punch to punch holes at 1" intervals down the center of the entire strip
- Weave the pencil through the holes
- To create the antennas, twist the center of the pipe cleaner around the metal piece by the eraser
- Glue a large pom-pom to the eraser to create the head
- Glue wiggle eyes to the pom-pom head
- Glue a small pom-pom for the nose
- Glue small pom-poms to the top of the pipe cleaner antennas

Handprint Fish Puppets

Materials:

- * Glue
- * Scissors
- * Wiggle eyes
- * Popsicle/craft sticks
- * Rhinestones or glitter
- * Construction paper or patterned paper



Directions:




- Trace your child's hand on the construction paper and cut it out
- For the mouth, cut out a small heart shape from different colored construction paper and glue on the base of the hand
- Add wiggle eyes and any other directions you would like
- Glue your fish to a popsicle/craft stick to create the puppet



Happy Healthy Hands: Tips and Tricks for Hand Washing

With cold and flu season upon us, hand hygiene is very important and can be a challenging task for children to complete. Hand washing involves sensory input (tolerating the sound/feel of water and soap), fine motor skills (retrieving soap and turning on/off faucet), and bilateral coordination (scrubbing hands together). In addition, a child is required to sequence the individual steps in order to perform this multi-step task.

Here are some tips and tricks to make hand washing easier for your child. Check out the QR codes for examples!

- Use a social story to teach your child why hand washing is important and when they should wash their hands 
- Sing a song to help your child remember the steps to hand washing, or to make hand washing more fun
- Adjust the water temperature so it is acceptable for your child. Some children with sensory issues may have difficulty determining how warm or cold to make the water 
- Use a visual schedule to show each step in the hand washing sequence
- Use an automatic soap dispenser or water faucet if your child has difficulties with fine motor strength required to push out soap or turn on the faucet
- Use a step stool to help your child reach the faucet, soap, and hand towels
- Show your child a video of how to properly wash their hands such as the "Washy Washy Clean" video on YouTube 
- To help your child coordinate scrubbing their hands together, practice two-handed activities such as stringing beads, catching a ball with both hands, or hand clapping games



Ask The OT: Why is it so hard for my child to shift from one activity to the next?

This is a question caregivers often ask. To figure out the answer, let's first think about what we are asking children to do during a transition.

- First, we'd like for them to stop doing what they are currently doing.
- Next, they need to shift their attention from what they were doing, to this new thing.
- Lastly, they need to refocus on this new activity.



Things can become even more challenging when we ask children to transition from a rewarding activity to a "not so fun" activity, like transitioning from playing with their favorite new toy to going to bed.

Flexibility may come easier to some than others, however for many children transitions can feel like a punishment or as if they don't have control over their environment. Some children may even be fearful of meeting expectations. Understanding what makes transitions difficult can help us approach them with more empathy and patience.

Here are a few strategies you may consider to assist with transitions:

1. Give them time to prepare.

Let the child know how much time they have left before the transition is going to take place. This can be as simple as telling them they have 5 more minutes left. For some, a visual reminder may be helpful. You can also play a familiar song as a countdown, when the song is over it's time to switch gears.



2. Establish a schedule.

Children do well when they understand expectations. Providing a daily or even a weekly schedule can help them prepare. You can use a schedule to talk about what their day or week looks like. This will help them think about what situations may feel more challenging than others or if they have what they need for each transition. For younger children consider using pictures to plan their schedule.

3. Talk about transitions with the child.

Asking children what part of transitions makes them feel sad or mad can help to determine the best way how to approach them. Some children may have a hard time leaving something fun, while others may have difficulty understanding the tasks they are being asked perform.