

# Toolkit For School Success



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Occupational Therapy Department

Fulton County School System

This resource guide is designed to provide teachers with strategies and interventions for students with observed deficits in fine motor and/or self-help skills. Tier 2 strategies require no specialized materials or equipment. Most of the interventions in Tier 3 also utilize typical classroom tools or inexpensive materials easily obtained from discount stores. Those interventions in **bold type** can be purchased from specialty stores and catalogues listed below.

### Retail Stores

Dollar Store

Hobby Lobby

JoAnn's Fabrics

Michaels Craft Stores

Office Depot

Office Max

Staples

Target

Walmart

### Specialty Stores/Catalogues

Abilitations ([www.schoolspecialty.com](http://www.schoolspecialty.com))

Onion Mountain ([www.onionmountaintech.com](http://www.onionmountaintech.com))

Pocket Full of Therapy ([www.pfot.com](http://www.pfot.com))

Really Good Stuff ([www.reallygoodstuff.com](http://www.reallygoodstuff.com))

School Box ([www.schoolbox.com](http://www.schoolbox.com))

Therapro ([www.therapro.com](http://www.therapro.com))

## COLORING/DRAWING/PRE-WRITING

TEACHER REPORTS	Tier 2 INTERVENTIONS/STRATEGIES	Tier 3 INTERVENTIONS/STRATEGIES
Breaks crayons when coloring	Place sandpaper under paper  Use crayons ½ inch or less  Use thick crayons  Use a marker  Use a mechanical colored pencil	Use twistable crayons
Heavy pressure when coloring or writing	Provide mechanical pencils  Place cardboard under paper  Place paper on mat  Practice drawing on balloons or Styrofoam cups	Place dycem or shelf liner under paper
Light pressure when coloring or writing	Use softer lead pencil (#4)  Place paper on soft surface (magazine)  Provide markers  Write on vertical surface (place paper on 3 inch binder)	Use charcoal sketch pencil  Provide weighted pencil  Provide oil based crayons  Use carbon paper
Does not color within age appropriate boundaries	Mark boundaries with Elmer's glue  Have student trace borders first  Highlight borders	Mark boundaries with Wikki Stix  Mark boundaries with puffy paint
Can not imitate - , l, O	Trace  Practice in shaving cream  Practice with rhyme/song  Practice in sand  Use water/brush on sidewalk  Play tic tac toe	Tracing application/software

## COLORING/DRAWING/PRE-WRITING

Can not draw simple shape (circle, square, triangle)	Trace  Highlight corners and have student 'connect dots'	Tracing application/software
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# HANDWRITING

Pre-requisite: check for optimal desk and chair positioning. A stable base is very important when writing. Desk/table top should be 2" above student's bent elbow. A duct-taped phone book can make a good footrest. Students in wheelchairs should have feet resting on footrest.

TEACHER REPORTS	Tier 2 STRATEGIES/INTERVENTIONS	Tier 3 STRATEGIES/INTERVENTIONS
Fisted/unusual pencil grasp	<p>Use a golf-size pencil</p> <p>Break crayons/pencils in half</p> <p>Mark finger placement on pencil with tape.</p> <p>Write while on hands and knees</p> <p>Use 3 ring binder to elevate work</p> <p>Write on vertical surface</p> <p>Place rubber band near tip of pencil</p> <p>Place drop of liquid paper or sticker on pencil and have them cover it with their thumb when writing</p>	<p>Wrap pencil/crayon with a small piece of dycem, drawer liner or other non-slip material. Hot glue or attach at top and bottom to the pencil/crayon.</p> <p>Place a small ball/eraser/makeup sponge in hand to hold with baby finger and ring finger to promote 3 finger grasp</p> <p>Use pencil grip: Grotto, Start Right, Jumbo or Stettro Grip</p> <p>Pipsqueak markers</p>
<p>Poor letter formation (e.g. bottom to top)</p> <p>(Note: first teach concepts: top/bottom/middle)</p>	<p>Practice writing 10-15 minutes per day. Brief but quality instruction and practice pays off (at home and at school).</p> <p>Practice by tracing with fingers</p> <p>Practice on vertical surface (easel/slant board/binder cover)</p> <p>Lay on back, turn out lights and write the letters on the ceiling with a flashlight</p> <p>Write on white paper with white crayon then paint over the top</p> <p>Use of tape or clip to stabilize</p>	<p>Handwriting Without Tears song "Where Do You Begin Letters"</p> <p>Alphabet Beats DVD</p> <p>Keyboarding</p>

## HANDWRITING

	<p>paper.</p> <p>Rainbow writing – trace over a letter or number with 3-5 colors. Then have the student write the letter or number independently.</p> <p>Make letters with cooked spaghetti, shaving cream, finger paint with pudding, write on windows with Vis-à-vis markers</p>	
<p>Words all run together (no spaces)</p> <p>(Note: first teach concept 'space')</p>	<p>Initially overemphasize large spacing. It is easier to help a student decrease large spaces than it is to teach a student to use spacing.</p> <p>Use Popsicle stick to mark in between words while writing. Paint the tip of it with Whiteout to reinforce the concept of a blank space.</p> <p>Use extra pencil to mark in between words while writing</p> <p>Use finger to mark in between words while writing</p> <p>Use coin or Bingo chip to mark in between word while writing</p> <p>Put dashes in between words Practice writing words in boxes</p> <p>Turn lined paper 90* and use columns with raised line edges to help students space properly between letters (also can use with math problems to keep columns straight).</p>	<p>Use Readiness-space paper</p> <p>Keyboarding</p>
<p>Writes with reversals (e.g. b/d, p/q)</p>	<p>Alphabet strip on desk</p> <p>March in place, touching opposite hand to leg to encourage crossing of midline</p>	<p>Use Handwriting Without Tears "Magic C" strategies</p> <p>Keyboarding</p>

# HANDWRITING

	Teach 'bed' strategy	
<p>Large letters</p> <p>Does not write on line</p> <p>(Note: first teach concept 'on')</p> <p>Does not write within defined space</p>	<p>Highlight the line (green/yellow/red)</p> <p>Write on strips of paper</p> <p>Write in boxes (hand draw or create using Word)</p> <p>Use of tape or clip to stabilize paper</p>	<p>Use Wikki Stix to mark top/bottom lines</p> <p>HiWrite paper</p> <p>Raised line paper</p> <p>Write in graph paper</p> <p>Donnayoung.org(highlight paper)</p>
Writes R to left	<p>Place sticker/green dot on left side of the paper</p> <p>Play Simon Says game to increase body awareness</p> <p>Place paper off center</p>	<p>Readi-space paper</p> <p>Meade paper</p>
Gets tired writing/writes slowly	<p>Use mechanical pencil</p> <p>Write on slanted surface (3 ring binder cover)</p> <p>Shorten assignment</p> <p>Have student place both hands palm down on desk and spread their fingers apart then slide them back together.</p> <p>Have students bend their wrists up and down several times with both fisted and open hands.</p> <p>Have student stand and place both hands palm down on their desks. Keeping elbows straight, ask them to push down on their desks for count of 5. Repeat several times.</p>	<p>Increase hand strength by playing with Leggos, snap blocks, (see list of hand games in Appendix)</p> <p>Playdough</p> <p>Introduce to keyboarding</p> <p>Use Pipsqueak markers</p> <p>Ergo-Sof PenAgain</p> <p>Evo-pen</p> <p>Word prediction software with auditory feedback (this is on the FCSS network)</p>

## HANDWRITING

	<p>Increase hand strength by cutting thick paper</p> <p>Take a break during writing by doing jumping jacks, or standing to turn in a circle before resuming.</p>	
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## SCISSOR SKILLS

TEACHER REPORTS	Tier 2 STRATEGIES/INTERVENTIONS	Tier 3 STRATEGIES/INTERVENTIONS
Resists cutting activities	<p>Practice first without doing any cutting; pretend scissors are 'talking' to each other, first slow/then fast.</p> <p>Practice cutting play dough</p> <p>Practice cutting licorice/then eat</p> <p>Practice cutting drinking straws</p> <p>Use rhyme/song to engage</p>	Use loop scissors
Cuts slowly or fatigues quickly	Precut part of project	Increase strength for cutting by engaging in activities with spray bottles
Unable to open scissors or scissors get stuck in closed position	Put rubber band around handle so does not completely close	Self- opening (spring loaded) scissors
Unable to cut across paper	<p>Practice with smaller pieces of paper</p> <p>Precut part of project</p> <p>Use sturdier paper (construction/craft paper)</p>	Increase hand strength through games using tweezers or tongs
Unable to cut on line	<p>Bold/highlight the line</p> <p>Start with straight edges</p> <p>Widen line with marker</p>	Outline the shape with hot glue to form a border to cut on.
Unable to cut simple shapes	<p>Place stickers on corners</p> <p>Place dots on corners; connect dots with scissors</p> <p>Trim edges of shapes</p>	
Unable to rotate paper for	Use song/rhyme	

## SCISSOR SKILLS

cutting	<p>Use visual cues on transition points (e.g. stickers on corners)</p> <p>Teach student to cut to the edge of the paper to remove any excess paper and then come back with a straight cut instead of turning at a corner.</p> <p>Right handed students should cut counter clockwise. Left handed student should cut clockwise.</p>	
<p>Choppy cutting pattern</p> <p>(Note: this may not be a problem)</p>	Practice having scissors 'talk to each other' without cutting.	Tweezers/tong games
Holds scissors upside down	<p>Establish cue 'thumbs up'</p> <p>Place colored tape/sticker on thumb hole</p>	

## SELF HELP SKILLS

TEACHER REPORTS/OBSERVES	TIER 2 STRATEGIES/INTERVENTIONS	TIER 23STRATEGIES/INTERVENTIONS
Difficulty donning on/off jacket	<p>Lay on ground, put arms in and flip over head</p> <p>Put weaker/non-dominant arm in first</p> <p>Color code sleeve, put colored sticker/dot on each hand and match to sleeve</p>	<p>Provide visual sequence with pictures or video tape</p> <p>Provide dress up box in centers</p>
Difficulty with buttoning	<p>Push/pull quarters/tokens/poker chips through slit in plastic lid</p> <p>Practice with clothing off body</p>	<p>Dressing vest</p> <p>Enlarge button holes/large buttons</p> <p>Provide dress up box in centers</p> <p>Strengthen hands with pinching tasks (e.g. Playdough or Theraputty)</p>
Difficulty tying shoes	<p>Practice with pipe cleaners</p> <p>Practice with jump rope</p>	<p>Red Lace/Yellow Lace book</p> <p>Replace laces with 2 different colors</p> <p>Practice with wired ribbon</p> <p>Elastic laces</p> <p>Video modeling</p>
Difficulty zipping	<p>Paint ends of zipper with nail polish/Whiteout</p> <p>Attach string/pipe cleaner/key chain/safety pin or bread tie to end as a pull</p> <p>Make sure jacket is not too small/use a larger jacket.</p>	<p>Dressing vest</p>
Difficulty scooping food	<p>Use real spoon (not spork)</p> <p>Practice scooping beans of</p>	<p>Use scoop plate/bowl</p> <p>Toy hammering games/activities</p>

## SELF HELP SKILLS

	different sizes Bend spoon	Place <b>Dycem</b> or drawer liner under plate  Weighted spoons
Difficulty drinking from straw	Blow bubbles for practice  Cut straw shorter  Squeeze juice box to help facilitate suction  Make sure head is in normal position	Use larger diameter straw  Use piece of tubing  One way valve straws
Difficulty drinking from open cup	Use medicine cup from clinic  Practice /m/ sound  Use Styrofoam cup with cut out  Practice with thick liquids  Practice with colored water  Use only small amount of liquid (2 T) in cup	Use 3 oz Dixie cup  Nosey cup
Difficulty carrying lunch tray	Practice first with empty tray  Make sure items are evenly distributed on tray  Carry milk separately	Place tray in basket  Use solid plastic tray rather than foam
Needs to stabilize containers on body to open  (Note: this may be a functional accommodation for some students that does not need to be addressed)  Difficulty opening containers at lunch	Practice opening containers while standing up.  Practice with empty containers first  Strengthen hands by tearing/ripping different thicknesses of paper	Place item on non-slip shelf liner or <b>Dycem</b>  Finger strengthening activities using spring type clothes pins

## SELF HELP SKILLS

Difficulty managing food smells	<p>Put a pleasant odor on wrist and train student to smell his wrist when in the presence of offending odors</p> <p>Have student sit at end of lunch table</p> <p>Gradually increase time spent in café</p>	<p>Apply flavored/scented Chapstick or Blistex on lips before entering café.</p> <p>Take a small container of a pleasant smelling lotion in to the café.</p> <p>Provide peppermints or gum</p> <p>Provide cut lime/lemon/orange</p>
Difficulty managing noise in cafeteria or bathroom.	Provide cotton balls from clinic	<p>Allow headphones or MP3 players</p> <p>Provide ear plugs</p>
Avoids messy media	<p>Offer plastic gloves to protect hands</p> <p>Offer a tool instead of direct contact (e.g. stick, paint brush)</p> <p>Pair with a child who enjoys messy media</p> <p>Offer praise for participation but NEVER force the student to participate.</p> <p>Provide wet towel during activity</p>	Social Stories

## TRANSITIONS/PERSONAL SPACE/SENSORY PROCESSING

TEACHER REPORTS	Tier 2 INTERVENTIONS/STRATEGIES	Tier 3 INTERVENTIONS/STRATEGIES
<p>Sits on feet</p> <p>Sits on knees to do work</p> <p>Leans on elbows to do work</p> <p>Falls out of chair</p>	<p>Allow for alternative seating – tape paper to wall or white board and let student work on vertical plane.</p>	<p>Use Theraband on chair legs (can make one with pantyhose or bungee cord)</p> <p>Move n Sit Cushion</p>
<p>Does not maintain space on carpet</p>	<p>Outline space on carpet with tape</p> <p>Seat on outside of circle or in last row</p> <p>Allow to lean on something</p> <p>Provide a fidget</p>	<p>Make a mat out of newspaper and cover it with plastic or cloth (so ink doesn't transfer). Movement on paper provides auditory feedback.</p>
<p>Touches others or materials without permission</p>	<p>Provide a fidget</p>	<p>Social Stories</p>
<p>Does not walk in line in hallway</p>	<p>Have students pretend to be sharks and clasp hand in front of themselves for more core stability.</p> <p>Give student something to carry in hallway</p>	
<p>Does not tolerate noises</p>	<p>See Toolkit.SELF HELP</p>	
<p>Does not tolerate sounds</p>	<p>See Toolkit.SELF HELP</p>	
<p>Low level of alertness (falls</p>	<p>Provide midmorning snack</p>	<p>Hard sour candy</p>

## TRANSITIONS/PERSONAL SPACE/SENSORY PROCESSING

asleep, sluggish, slow mover)	Have student run an errand in the building or get a drink  Give movement break  Provide break for heavy work	Allow student to chew gum  Have student sit on <b>Move N Sit</b> or <b>Disco Sit</b> or underinflated beach ball
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# VISUAL SKILLS

TEACHER REPORTS	Tier2 INTERVENTIONS/STRATEGIES	Tier 3 INTERVENTIONS/STRATEGIES
Difficulty scanning L to R	<p>Place stickers on corners</p> <p>Place green dot on L and red dot on R corners</p> <p>Place marker on L side and move to right as reads</p> <p>Use finger to guide eye</p> <p>Use ReadOutloud software highlighting text</p> <p>Create a template or reading guide from a file folder. Cut a window in the folder and slip paper in so that all other areas are occluded on the page.</p>	<p>Use red or yellow overlays (commercial or report covers purchased from office supply store).</p> <p>Easy Reader</p>
Difficulty tracing	<p>Place dots on corners/transition points and 'connect the dots'</p> <p>Highlight borders</p> <p>Make lines wider</p> <p>Enlarge design to be traced</p> <p>First trace with finger then utensil</p>	<p>Tracing application/software</p> <p>Use Changeables markers</p>
Difficulty copying from board	<p>Seat away from distractions</p> <p>Read the word/sentence and then copy</p> <p>Erase all unnecessary items from the board</p> <p>Provide information in list format</p> <p>Use alternating color of</p>	<p>Provide desk copy</p> <p>Provide copy of notes from teacher or peer</p>



## VISUAL SKILLS

	markers/chalk on board	
Perseverates on visual stimuli (e.g. spinning objects)	<p>Provide vestibular input followed by heavy work (see Appendix)</p> <p>Provide opportunities in day to engage in favorite visual activities</p>	Study carrel (commercial or made out of 3 pieces of cardboard duct-taped together)
Loses place while reading	<p>Use index card, construction paper or ruler as reading guide</p> <p>Make a reading guide by cutting a window in a file folder and slipping paper in folder</p> <p>Use finger as a guide</p> <p>Use small penlight or flashlight to track</p>	<p><b>Easy Readers</b></p> <p>Yellow highlighter strips</p> <p>Colored overlays/colored binder dividers or report covers (try yellow or blue)</p> <p><b>Nitewriter Pen</b></p>