



Getting ready for kindergarten

Occupational Therapy presentation

Tips and Tricks for Starting School

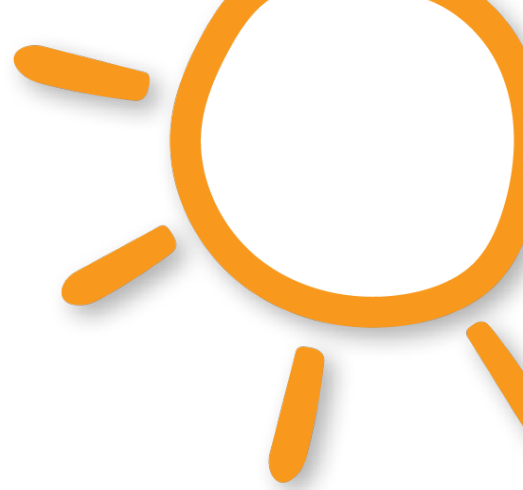
There are many new skills children need to learn when getting ready for Kindergarten. This presentation is going to cover some tips and tricks in a variety of areas that will help your child feel prepared, including:

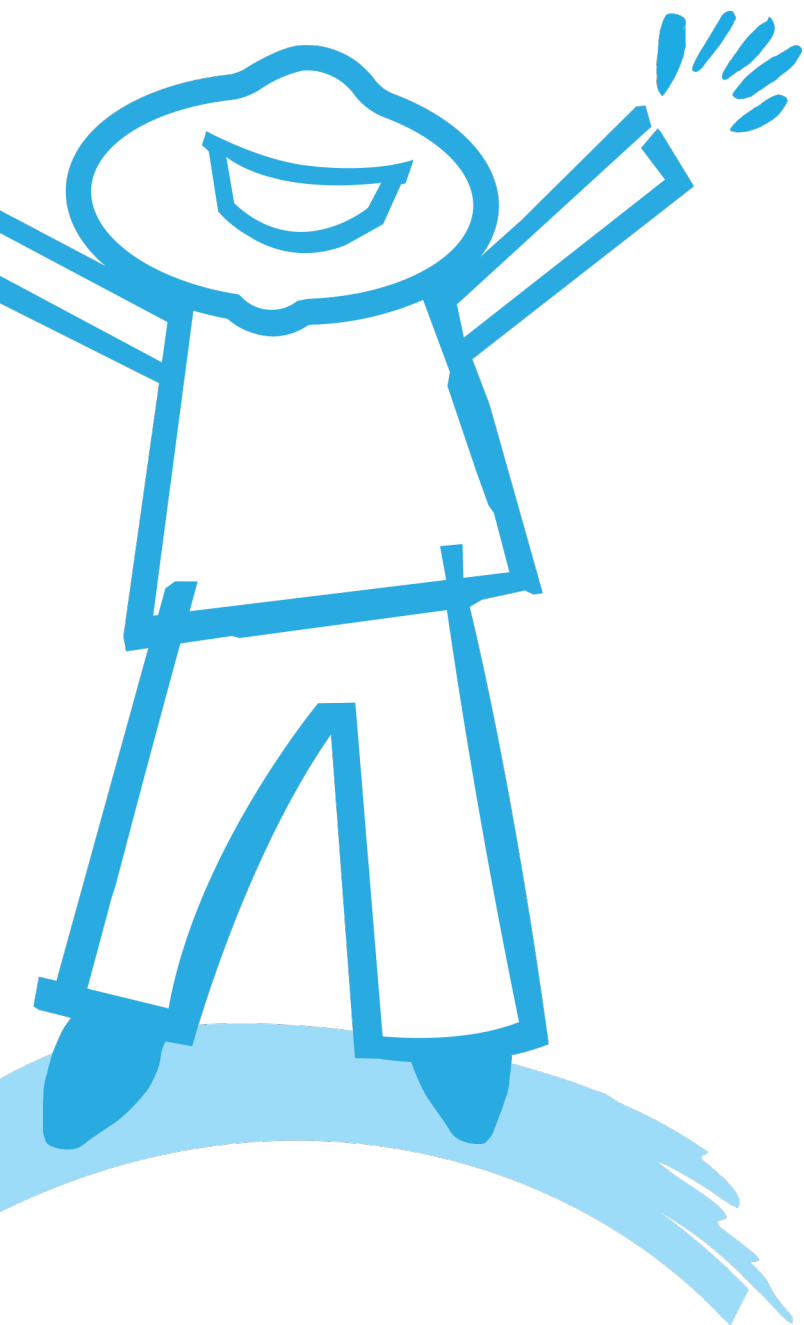
- Clothing and Dressing
- Using the Bathroom
- Lunches and Snacks
- Hand skills and Printing
- Using Scissors
- Routines and Transitions



Clothing

- Keep it simple
- Use looser fitting tops with large neck and arm holes,
- Use pull on pants, avoid buttons/zippers
- Use clothes with large buttons
- Add a zipper pull to make grabbing a zipper easier
- Mark the back of clothing that doesn't have a tag
- Use Velcro, slip-ons or elastic laces in shoes





Strategies for practicing dressing

- Practice when you have lots of time
- Use a stool or bench for extra support
- Have a helper hand and a doer hand for buttons and zippers
- Use a consistent step by step method
- Try backward chaining – start learning with the last step and learn the steps backward
- If a coat or jacket has a hood – put that on first so the arm holes line up

Using the Bathroom

- If your child isn't toilet trained yet, talk to the school to make a plan
- Over the summer practice managing their clothing
- Practice wiping independently
- Use pictures to show the routine
- Have your child practice washing their hands
- Read stories about using the toilet may help them get interested



Lunches and Snacks

- Buy containers they can open themselves
- Practice before school starts, have a picnic
- Consider bento styles, avoid pouch drinks and drink boxes
- Snip corners of prepackage food
- Avoid lunch bags that need everything to fit in “just right”
- Have them help pack their lunch

Left or Right-Handed

- Not all children have a preference yet
- Do 2 handed activities
- Give your child the pencil, spoon from the middle at the front so they can choose which hand to use
- Make sure they finish the task with the same hand to help build their strength and coordination



Play ideas for building hand strength and coordination

- Sensory Play – sand, paint, playdough
- Blocks for coordination and strength
- Small toys like beads or lego
- Do simple puzzles
- Colour or draw in different places and with different things – in pudding, sidewalk chalk, in sand
- Squirt toys and using scissors also build strength

Pencil Grasp

- Children grow from fistful grasp to a tri-pod grasp.
- Tri-pod grasp uses the thumb and first two fingers. The ring finger and pinky finger are tucked away.
- This grasp is most efficient



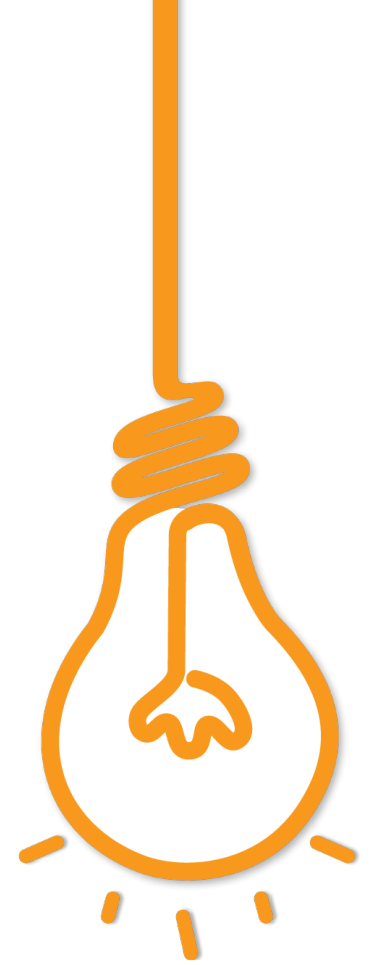


Practicing Grasp

- Threading beads
- Coin games – hold them in your hand with the pinky side of the hand and put them in/on things with the thumb and 2 fingers
- Tong or tweezer activities
- Makes games with clothes pegs
- Stack Lego blocks or cheerios
- Pop bubble wrap
- Play with windup toys
- Use water droppers

Colouring

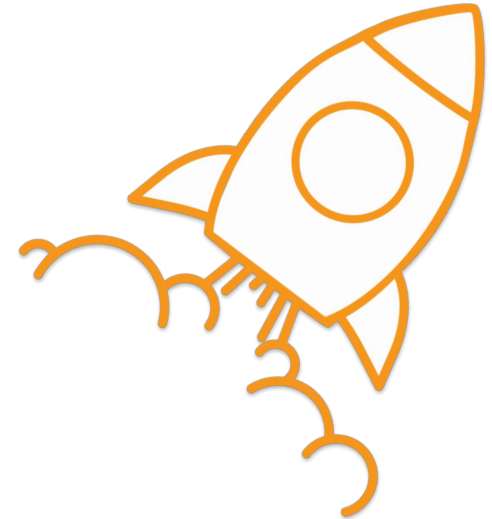
- **Helps build:**
 - strength, endurance,
 - grasping skills,
 - control and attention
- Laying on their stomach forces their hand to do the work instead of their whole arm
- Colour on vertical surfaces, tape the paper to the wall





Tools for printing

- Use small writing tools for small hands – golf pencils, broken crayons or broken chalk
- Use a slant board, large ring binder or tape paper onto a wall, mirror or easel
- Use a stylus with an ipad or table to practice their grasp





Pre-printing skills

- Shapes build into letters and often go in this order – vertical lines, horizontal lines, cross, square, circle, diagonal lines, X's and triangles
- Practice with chalk and sidewalk chalk, paint, water, dry-erase markers, shaving cream on a cookie sheet, paint in a ziplock bag
- Start with tracing and move to copying then using in making pictures



Printing

- Start with upper case because they are all the same size and all sit on the line
- Start all letters at the top
- Straight line letters are easier than those with diagonal lines
- Group letters that are similar together
- There are many online resources: Handwriting Without Tears is a good one.

- E F D P B R N M
- H K L U V W X Y Z
- A C G I J O Q S T



Printing Their Name

- Start in all capital letters first
- Longer names will take longer and so will those with lots of diagonal letters
- Practice putting the letters in order from letters on blocks, cut out letters or stickers
- Consider giving them a sticker or stamp with their name so they can still label their work

Pre-Cutting Activities

- Put objects such as pom poms into cups with large tongs
- Play with spray bottles, squirt guns or one hole punches
- Snip play dough or plasticine
- Tear paper with two hands and create pictures with the pieces
- Makes shadow talking puppets or alligators
- Snip drinking straws
- Snip to cut grass on edge of paper
- Any activity that uses and open and shut movement of the thumb and first finger

Scissor Skills

- Practice snipping and move towards cutting straight lines
- Encourage use of helper hand to hold and turn the paper
- Both hands are thumbs up, scissors point forward or up, elbows down
- Loop or spring scissors can help
- Build to curves and corners



Scissor Practice Suggestions

- Glue 2 pieces of cardboard on paper with a 2-3cm gap for the child to cut between. Make the gap smaller as they get better
- Cut out shapes they are interested in, pictures from magazines or flyers
- Try cutting different materials: playdough, thick paper
- Use quarter or half sheets of paper as they are easier to hold
- Draw shapes with straight lines that can be assembled

Routines and Transitions



- Learning to follow routines can be new.
- Develop routines at home so they get used to following one
- Provide your child with warnings before changes in activities
- Provide pictures of the routine or next activity
- Visit the school, talk about what they will do, see where they will go in, play there in the summer



If you are concerned with your Fine Motor or Self-help skill development

- Practice, practice, practice at home and at school
- Your school has an Occupational Therapist supporting the Kindergarten educators with strategies and supports for any child that needs a little extra boost.
- If there are still further needs, your teacher will talk with you about a referral to Grandview Kids.



EarlyON Child and Family Centres

EarlyON Child and Family Centres have free drop-in and registered programs for families with children from birth to age six.

- You can find programs in sites across Durham Region.
- Visit [EarlyON Child and Family Centres - Region of Durham](#)

Check out this great website for more ideas!

[Kindergarten Readiness \(google.com\)](#)



Information about Private OT Services

- Durham College Fine Motor Clinic
 - <https://durhamcollege.ca/student-life/health-and-wellness/fine-motor-clinic>
 - This program is run by Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy assistants under the supervision of an Occupational Therapist
- Families who wish to access services from a private Occupational Therapist can access the following:
 - [How to Find an Occupational Therapist \(OT\) \(coto.org\)](http://coto.org)