

## Independence Activities

Encourage self-help skills at home such as:

- ⇒ Dressing – dress and undress with minimal help, put on socks and shoes, understand front versus back of clothing, hang up clothes, zip and unzip zippers, do snaps and large buttons
  - ❖ Remember undressing is easier than dressing
  - ❖ Try using loose fitting clothing when practicing
  - ❖ Practice dressing when schedule allows for extra time
  - ❖ Practice with toys such as dolls or teddy bears
- ⇒ Toileting – use alone, wipe self, manage clothing.
- ⇒ Basic hygiene – wash and dry hands by self, use a tissue when needed.
- ⇒ Eating – use fork and spoon with little to no spilling, open containers and packaging or ask for help if needed.
- ⇒ Establish habits of independently cleaning up materials/toys, opening and closing doors, opening and closing backpack and lunch kit.



If you have any concerns about your child's development of physical, attention and independence skills please connect with your child's teacher.



## Activity Ideas to Develop Physical, Attention and Independence Skills:

Movement and touch are valuable learning tools. Children develop and acquire skills through exploration of the world and how their bodies work in it. During their early years, allow them to learn through their entire bodies!



As Occupational Therapists (OTs) in Prairie Spirit School Division, we work with children and school staff to help with their learning and functioning in the Kindergarten classroom: gross and fine motor skills (ie: their ability to jump, skip, colour, cut, print); being able to pay attention; and completing routines (ie: bathroom, locker, snack). We do this by working with teachers in the classroom to develop strategies to promote learning for all students. We may also make suggestions for individual children struggling with specific skills (fine and gross motor, attention/focus, independence) through informal assessment, consultation and recommendations for play-based programming.

Here are some ways to play and explore with your child to get ready for their transition to Kindergarten!



### Gross Motor Activities

Gross motor skills are the foundation for developing good eye-hand coordination two-hand use, trunk control and fine motor control; participating in gross motor play is also important for learning.

- ⇒ Play on lots of different playgrounds. This encourages imagination and motor skills (climbing, crawling, sliding, swinging, etc. )
- ⇒ Play hopscotch and other jumping games.
- ⇒ Play with balls. Work on catching and throwing a big ball. This develops eye-hand coordination.
- ⇒ Ride a bike.
- ⇒ Pretend to be an animal (i.e., bear, frog, duck, inchworm, crab, etc.).
- ⇒ Play wrestle with your child.
- ⇒ Make obstacle courses, play Follow the Leader or Simon Says.
- ⇒ Encourage your kids to get outside and play. Limit technology use.
- ⇒ Encourage your kids to play board games, look at books or watch TV while lying on their tummy; this strengthens their trunk and shoulders.
- ⇒ Get to work! Have your kids help with chores (i.e., shoveling, raking leaves, sweeping, carrying the laundry basket, etc.). These are great two-handed activities to improve strength and coordination!
- ⇒ Play in the snow, sand, water.



### Fine Motor Activities

There is no rush to get to printing! Encourage your child by doing a lot of play to develop their small hand muscles as well as draw basic shapes and pictures.

- ⇒ Play manipulative games such as Connect 4, Marbles, card games, Pick-up Sticks, Barrel of Monkeys, etc.
- ⇒ Play with Playdoh, modelling clay, etc.
- ⇒ Do puzzles.
- ⇒ Make jewelry. String beads, cheerios, etc.
- ⇒ Cut up construction paper, Playdoh and straws with scissors.
- ⇒ Play with finger puppets, do finger songs and clapping games.
- ⇒ Build with Lego, Duplo and other blocks.
- ⇒ Paint or draw at an easel.
- ⇒ Makes lots of crafts that include ripping paper, gluing, colouring, hole punching, cutting, etc.
- ⇒ Put money into a piggy bank.
- ⇒ Eat finger foods (pick up one raisin at a time using a pinch grasp).
- ⇒ Makes cookies (stir the batter, roll out cookies, use cookie cutters, etc.)
- ⇒ Open containers, twist off caps, rip open bags, etc.
- ⇒ Try buttoning, lacing and snapping activities.
- ⇒ Use small pieces of crayon or chalk.
- ⇒ Do simple tracing, mazes, and dot-to-dot activities
- ⇒ Finger paint in: pudding, sand, shaving cream, grains, water, etc.

