

# Kids Master Skills™ Skill-Building Posters



**Foundations for Fine Motor Skills . . .**

- Tripod Grasp:** When the tips of the thumb and first two fingers meet to hold and manipulate an object.
- Bilateral Coordination:** To efficiently use our hands, one hand holds or stabilizes and the other hand works.
- Hand Strength:** Improve hand strength through squeezing, pushing, and pulling activities.
- Tactile Perception:** Children may be over- or under-reactive to the feel of objects. Kids learn through touching.
- Shoulder Stability/Core:**

**Tactile Perception Ideas . . .**

- Tactile Perception:** Children may be over- or under-reactive to the feel of objects. Kids learn through touching.
- Feely Games:**
  - Hide objects in a box or under a blanket. Ask kids how they feel. What are they?
  - Pass objects around a circle. Children describe how each object feels.
- Science Time:**
  - Collect items in the classroom or outside. Are they wet/dry, hard/soft, fuzzy/smooth?
  - Mix water with sand. How does it feel? Who likes this feeling? Who doesn't?
- Play Detective:** Children search in the classroom and find things that are hard, soft, fuzzy, smooth, wet, and dry.

**Bilateral (Two-Handed) Coordination**

- Bilateral Coordination:** To efficiently use our hands, one hand holds or stabilizes and the other hand works.
- Clipping Activities:**
  - Write letters or numbers on clothes. Put them in order on a piece of card.
  - Link Paper clips together.
  - Link plastic "links" together.
- Cutting Activities:**
  - Roll putty into a snake. Snip piece.
  - Snip strips of construction paper.
  - Cut out shapes. Cut out pictures.

**Shoulder Stability & Core Strength . . .**

- Shoulder Stability/Core:** A solid, strong core and shoulders enable children to develop good fine motor skills.
- Work on a Vertical Surface:**
  - Color on a chalkboard or dry erase board.
  - Draw rainbows, rain, snowstorms, sun rays.
  - Do worksheets taped on a wall.
  - Place stickers on a mounted page.

**Hand Strengthening Ideas . . .**

- Hand Strengthening:** Improve hand strength through squeezing, pushing, and pulling activities.
- Games with Elastics:**
  - Play with geoboards.
  - Place elastic on fingers. Open/close hand.
  - Make a rubber band ball.
- Squeezing and Pushing:**
  - Squeeze glue, therapy putty.
  - Push pegs, pennies, or marbles.
  - Roll Play-doh with hands.
  - Use a hole punch.
- Pulling Activities:**
  - Place tape on a table. Cut it off.
  - Separate Velcro that is stuck together.
  - Play with pop tubes. Let them pop.
  - Tear paper into tiny pieces.

**Tripod Grasp Ideas . . .**

- Tripod Grasp:** When the tips of the thumb and first two fingers meet to hold and manipulate an object.
- Use Tong or Tweezers:**
  - Spread pompons or tiny pieces of paper.
  - Count by 1's or 2's, opening and closing the tongs or tweezers in a rhythm.
- Play with Play-doh:**
  - Make a snake. Pinch off small pieces and make baby snakes.
  - Make play-doh pancakes, pies, snowballs.

**The 3 T's: Rules for Using Scissors**

- TUCK!**  
TUCK your elbow by your side.
- TOP!**  
Keep your thumb on TOP.
- TARGET!**



## Fine Motor Coordination

# Welcome to Kids Master Skills!



Thank you for downloading this resource!

These *Skill-Building Posters* offer quick, go-to information and ideas for busy teachers, parents, and occupational therapists.

Fine motor skills are key to developing competence in academics and daily life. Research shows that mastery of fine motor skills in kindergarten is a predictor of reading and math achievement during elementary school (Grissmer et al. 2010). Also, good fine motor skills help children gain confidence and increase independence.

Hang these posters on a wall at home, in a classroom, or in a therapy space. The first poster reviews the five foundations of fine motor skill development. The next posters offer activities to help children master these skills. The fine motor foundations include:

- 1- Tripod (or 3-Jaw Chuck) Grasp
  - 2- Bilateral (Two-Handed) Coordination
  - 3- Hand Strength
  - 4- Tactile Perception
  - 5- Shoulder Stability & Core Strength
- Bonus: *The 3 T's: Rules for Using Scissors*

Feel welcome to share these posters with teachers, parents, and OTs. Reach me with questions or comments at [KidsMasterSkills@gmail.com](mailto:KidsMasterSkills@gmail.com)

Sincerely,

Lisa Marnell MS, OTR/L (Occupational Therapist)



# All About Fine Motor Skills!

## Current Research on Fine Motor Skills



Recent research suggests that children today may be lagging in fine motor skills acquisition. A study completed at Dublin City University's School of Health showed that 36% of children tested did not meet expected fine motor milestones (Issartel et al., 2017).

Also, an article published in the journal, *Physical & Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics*, studied fine motor skills in preschoolers (Lin et al., 2017). Researchers reported that children who engaged in greater than 60 minutes of weekly touch-screen play had weaker fine motor coordination when compared to children who engaged in less screen time. These results suggest that increased use of technology may be negatively impacting fine motor development in kids.

### 1- Tripod (or 3 Jaw Chuck) Grasp



The thumb and first two fingers form a tripod grasp. This enables kids to easily straighten and bend fingers. A mature tripod grasp takes time to develop. At home and in school, use short (1-inch) crayon pieces to promote this grasp in young children. Also, encourage the use of tongs, tearing, and pegboard activities to build a tripod grasp.

### 2- Bilateral Coordination



Using two hands together is important for many daily tasks that kids must master, like shoe tying, buttoning, and zipping. It is also necessary for in-class activities like putting worksheets in a folder or holding a paper with one hand while writing. Difficulty with bilateral skills can translate into difficulty with school and with classroom tasks.

# All About Fine Motor Skills! (cont)

## 3- Hand Strength



Did you know that the “pinky” side of the hand and the “thumb” side of the hand play different roles? The “pinky” or “ulnar” side provides strength. (Can you feel that large muscle on the outside of the hand?) The “thumb” side or “radial” side specializes in dexterity. Developing hand strength goes hand in hand with the final category below, “Shoulder Stability and Core Strength”. Think of a tree. It has a solid trunk (this is the core), strong branches (these are the shoulders), and leaves that must hang on tightly (these are the hands).

## 4- Tactile Perception



Children develop hand skills through interacting with objects in their environments. Many fine motor and craft activities offer tactile experiences with glue, finger paint, sand, or chalk. Tactile over-reactivity (when a child cannot tolerate a feeling, such as with sticky, wet, goopy input) can stop a child from taking part in messy activities. Gentle encouragement works best: Allow a child to take breaks as needed. Tactile feedback also teaches children how to use their hands well, how hard to push down on their pencils, for instance.

## 5- Shoulder Stability and Core Strength



In order to have good fine motor control, the core must be strong, the shoulders must be stable, and a child must have adequate upper body strength. If a child has inadequate strength to sit up straight for long periods, or if he cannot hold his shoulder and arm still, then he cannot cut carefully on a line, accurately color within the lines, or orient a button correctly in a button hole. Activities to build shoulder stability and core strength are key to helping children develop good fine motor skills.



# Foundations for Fine Motor Skills . . .

## Tripod Grasp:

When the tips of the thumb and first two fingers meet to hold and manipulate an object.



## Bilateral Coordination:

To efficiently use our hands, one hand holds or stabilizes and the other hand works.



## Hand Strength:

Improve hand strength through squeezing, pushing, and pulling activities.



## Tactile Perception:

Children may be over- or under-reactive to the feel of objects. Kids learn through touching.



## Shoulder Stability/Core:

A solid, strong core and shoulders enable children to develop good fine motor skills.



# Tripod Grasp Ideas . . .

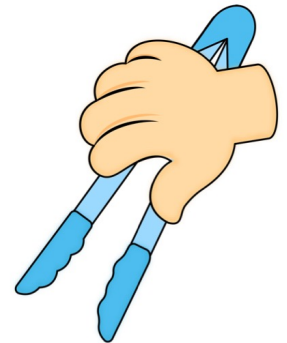
## Tripod Grasp:

When the tips of the thumb and first two fingers meet to hold and manipulate an object.



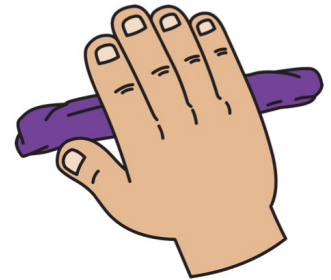
## Use Tongs or Tweezers:

- Spread pompoms or tiny pieces about then pick them up.
- Count by 1's or 2's, opening and closing the tongs or tweezers in a rhythm.



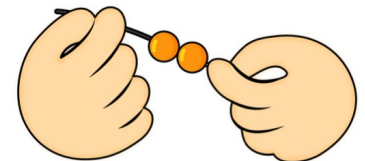
## Play with Play-doh:

- Make a snake. Pinch off small pieces and make baby snakes.
- Make Play-doh pancakes, pies, snowballs.
- Hide items in Play-doh then find them.



## String Things:

- String beads, Cheerios, Fruit Loops, pieces of cut straws, macaroni, rotini.
- Weave pipe cleaners in and out of a colander.





# Bilateral Coordination . . .

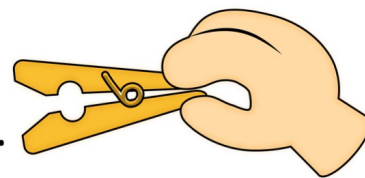
## Bilateral Coordination:

To efficiently use our hands, one hand holds or stabilizes and the other hand works.



## Clipping Activities:

- Write letters or numbers on clothespins. Put them in order on a piece of cardboard.
  - Link Paper clips together.
  - Link plastic “links” together .



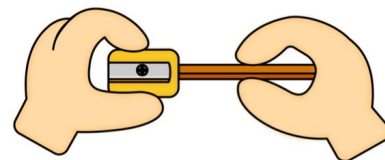
## Cutting Activities:

- Roll putty into a snake. Snip pieces off.
  - Snip strips of construction paper.
  - Cut out shapes. Cut out pictures.



## Two Handed Activities:

- Play with stickers; string beads; lace lacing cards; open and close plastic bottles and containers; use a hole punch.



# Hand Strengthening Ideas . . .

Hand Strengthening:  
Improve hand strength through squeezing, pushing, and pulling activities.



## Games with Elastics:

- Play with geoboards.
- Place elastic on fingers. Open/close hand.
- Make a rubber band ball.



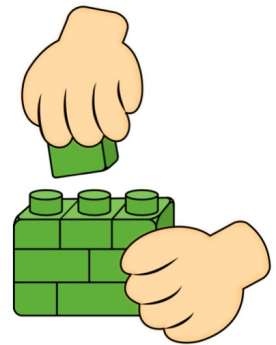
## Squeezing and Pushing Games:

- Squeeze glue, therapy ball, or sponges.
- Push pegs, pennies, or beads into putty.
  - Roll Play-doh with a rolling pin.
  - Use a hole punch or stapler.



## Pulling Activities:

- Place tape on a table. Tear it off.
- Separate Velcro that is stuck together.
- Play with pop tubes, Lego, snap cubes.
- Tear paper into tiny pieces. Make a picture.





# Tactile Perception Ideas . . .

## Tactile Perception:

Children may be over- or under-reactive to the feel of objects.

Kids learn through touching.



## Feely Games:

- Hide objects in a box or under a blanket. Ask kids how they feel. Identify them.
- Pass objects around a circle. Children describe how each object feels.



## Science Time:

- Collect items in the classroom or outside. Are they wet/dry, hard/soft, fuzzy/smooth?
- Mix water with sand. How does it feel? Who likes this feeling? Who doesn't?



## Play Detective:

- Ask children to search in the classroom or outside and find things that are hard.
- Repeat this game for soft, fuzzy, smooth, prickly, wet, and dry objects.



# Shoulder Stability & Core Strength . . .

## Shoulder Stability/Core:

A solid, strong core and shoulders enable children to develop good fine motor skills.



## Work on a Vertical Surface:

- Color on a chalkboard or dry erase board.
- Draw rainbows, rain, snowstorms, sun rays.
  - Do worksheets taped on a wall.
  - Place stickers on a mounted page.



## Do Animal Walks:

- Walk like a bear, a crab, a snake, a frog, an elephant, a turtle.
  - Kick like a donkey.
- Try wheelbarrow walking.



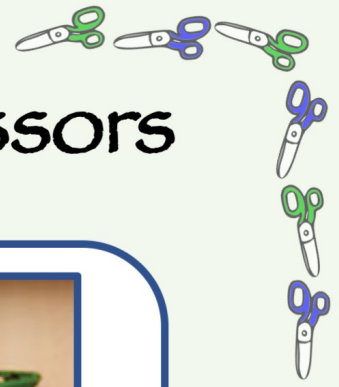
## Play Overhead Gross Motor Games:

- Play balloon volleyball.
- Do throwing and catching games.
- Play freeze dance with great big arm movements, reaching up and to the sides.





# The 3 T's: Rules for Using Scissors



## 1- **TUCK!**

**TUCK** your elbow  
by your side



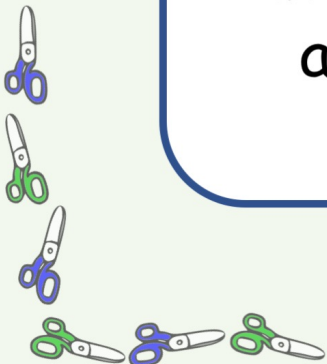
## 2- **TOP!**

Keep your thumb  
on **TOP**



## 3- **TABLE!**

Cut toward the **TABLE**  
and away from you



# More Resources from Kids Master Skills:

Consider my **84 Sensory Diet Activity Cards** for setting up a program to help children with self-regulation. Designed by Lisa Marnell, occupational therapist, every sensory activity card is paired with fun and kid-friendly images to help children understand, envision, practice, and master the activity.

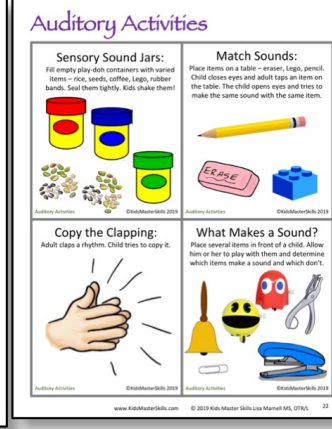
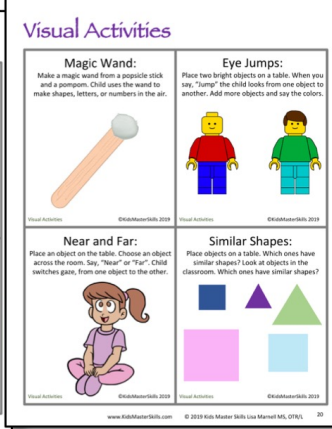
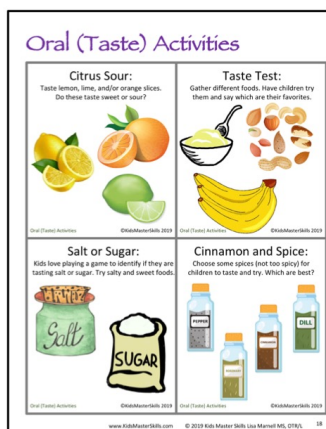
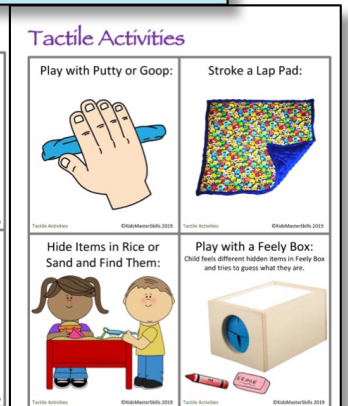
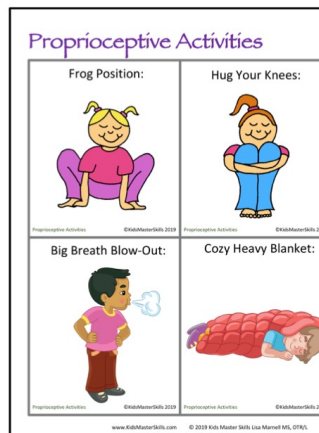
## What are the 7 categories of sensory diet cards?

- 1- Proprioceptive (Heavy Work) Cards
- 2- Vestibular (Movement) Cards
- 3- Tactile (Touch) Cards
- 4- Oral (Taste & Tactile) Cards
- 5- Visual (Looking) Cards
- 6- Auditory (Listening) Cards
- 7- Olfactory (Smelling) Cards

Sensory Diet Choice Boards are provided for teachers, therapists, and parents. The Choice Boards include:

- 1- Start of the Day
- 2- Mid-Morning Movement
- 3- During Meeting Time
- 4- After-Recess Calm Down
- 5- Before Lunch
- 6- At the Cafeteria
- 7- After Lunch
- 8- Mid-Afternoon Movement
- 9- Mid-Afternoon Wake-Up
- 10- End of the Day Calm-Down.

Also, four blank Sensory Diet Choice Boards are included.



AVAILABLE at [www.KidsMasterSkills.com](http://www.KidsMasterSkills.com)

© 2020 Kids Master Skills/Lisa Marnell MS, OTR/L



# About the Author/Contact

Find Lisa Marnell & Kids Master Skills Online!

Websites: [www.KidsMasterSkills.com](http://www.KidsMasterSkills.com) and [www.HandwritingHelpforKids.com](http://www.HandwritingHelpforKids.com)

*"Today's Foundation is Tomorrow's Success!"*

Our website is building a wealth of information and activities to help kids master skills.

Follow our blog to keep updated on the latest research in education and child development.

On Social Media: Follow *Kids Master Skills* on these platforms!



@KidsMasterSkills



@KidsMasterSkills



@KidsMasterSkills



@KidsMasterSkills

Teachers Pay Teachers



@KidsMasterSkills

About the Author: Lisa Marnell MS, OTR/L [KidsMasterSkills@gmail.com](mailto:KidsMasterSkills@gmail.com)



In 1997 I graduated from Tufts University with a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy. Prior to that, I completed an MBA at McGill University in Montreal. I am beyond happy that I became an OTR and that I have had the opportunity to work with so many wonderful kids and teachers. I am excited to start the next leg of my OT journey as I begin my doctorate at Boston University.

My philosophy in regard to helping kids master skills is simple, but important: Children should be engaged and motivated by therapeutic and/or teaching activities. In other words, Learning should be fun!

Thank you for purchasing this resource. I sincerely hope that it has proven useful in supporting and promoting your students' skills. Please let me know!

# Terms of Use/Clipart/Disclaimer

## Terms of Use:

Thank you for purchasing this resource!

Please note that the contents of this resource are the property of Lisa Marnell and Kids Master Skills LLC and are licensed to you to use as a single user. All rights are reserved. Nonetheless, permission is granted for this book and any portions thereof to be reproduced for use in homes, clinics, classrooms, and all settings, and may be shared on any school or business websites for free. Any party charging for this resource or any portion thereof is violating copyright law.

Thank you for abiding to universally accepted codes of professional ethics while using this product.

Please enjoy!

## Clip Art Sources:

The adorable Clip Art used in this resource came in part from the following sources Thank You!

MyCuteGraphics

<https://www.mycutegraphics.com/>



<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Ramonam-Graphics>

## Disclaimer:

Lisa Marnell is a registered Occupational Therapist in the state of California. Activity suggestions, and information in this resource are not intended or implied to substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or therapeutic treatment. All content, including text, graphics, images and information, contained in this workbook are for general information purposes only. This information is not intended to be patient education, does not create any patient-physician or patient-therapist relationship, and should not be used as a substitute for professional diagnosis and treatment.

All activities in this workbook are designed to be performed with complete adult supervision of children at all times. Lisa Marnell and Kids Master Skills are not liable for any injury when children are completing any of the activities or participating in any of the recommendations found in this workbook/product. Kids Master Skills LLC and Lisa Marnell expressly disclaim responsibility, and shall have no liability for any damages, loss, injury, or liability whatsoever suffered as a result of your reliance on the information or use of activities, advice, or information in this workbook.