

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES



Getting children outdoors for therapy is really simple. It just takes a little thought and some creativity. You also need to view your outdoor environment as the “therapy clinic.”

Here are a few ideas to get you started.

GET IN THE GARDEN

Get outside and plant something! Gardening is great for promoting fine motor skills (digging, manipulating seeds and plants, grasping garden tools) and sensory processing skills (get those hands dirty, smell the fresh herbs, cook something with your veggies and give it a taste!).

What You'll Need

A variety of fruit/vegetable/flower seeds/dried beans/dried corn kernels (you'll need a range of different sizes and colours)



What to do

These activities for kids will allow kids to sort seeds in a variety of ways, working on visual skills as well as fine motor coordination.

1. Simple Seed collection: First, look through and explore your seeds with your child. Talk about what a seed is, how it grows, and his favourite foods that come from seeds. Have your child write his name on his seed collection page. Then, have him glue 5 or 6 of each type of seed into each box. Have him label each box with the name of the seed that he glued inside.
2. Sort by colour. Now, have your child try sorting his seeds by colour. Most are black or white...what other colours can you find?
3. Sort by size: Last, your child will sort his seeds by size, classifying them as small, medium, or large.

How to change it up

Kids have an easier time grasping small objects when they're presented to them rather than having to pick them up from a smooth table where they can slip around. Try placing several seeds in your hand and allowing your child to pick one up at a time.

For younger kids or kids who have more difficulty with grasping and fine motor coordination skills, use larger seeds like pumpkin, sunflower, etc.

SKILL AREAS ADDRESSED: Fine motor skills grasp, coordination, visual perception and cognitive skills.

Try a garden Scavenger hunt. This will get kids moving, touching, listening, noticing, and interacting with the outdoors in a totally different way.

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR FUN GAMES FOR YOUR KIDS, NOTHING BEATS GOOD OLD-FASHIONED HAND CLAPPING GAMES!

Classic HAND CLAPPING GAMES for Kids

THEINSPIREDTREEHOUSE.COM

MISS MARY MACK

Miss Mary Mack, Mack, Mack
All dressed in black, black, black
With silver buttons, buttons, buttons
All down her back, back, back
She asked her mother, mother, mother
For fifty cents, cents, cents
To see the elephants, elephants, elephants
Jump over the fence, fence, fence
They jumped so high, high, high
They touched the sky, sky, sky
And didn't come back, back, back
Till the fourth of July, July, July

A SAILOR WENT TO SEA

A sailor went to sea, sea, sea,
To see what he could see, see, see,
But all that he could see, see, see,
Was the bottom of the deep blue
sea, sea, sea.

E-I-E-I-O

I went to a Chinese restaurant
to buy a loaf of bread bread bread
They asked me what my name was
And this is what I said said said
My name is E-I-E-I-O
Niko Ni, Niko Ni,
Pam Pam Poodles
Write Wally Whiskers
My name is E-I-E-I-O
Niko Ni, Niko Ni,
Pam Pam Poodles
Write Wally Whiskers
My name is Elvis Presley
Sitting in a hot tub
Drinker! Doot Papa!

DOUBLE, DOUBLE

Double double this this,
Double double that that,
Double this, double that,
Double double this that,

SAY, SAY, OH PLAYMATE

Say, say, oh playmate
Come out and play with me
Bring out your dolls, those
Climb up my apple tree
Slide down my rainbow
Till my cellar door
And we'll be silly friends
Forevermore, one two three four!
(Clap both hands straight across with
partner when counting)
Say, say, oh playmate
I cannot play today
My dolls have the flu
Bee boo hoo hoo hoo hoo (rub eyes)
My apple tree is dead
My rainbow's gone away
My cellar door is locked
Forevermore, one two three four (clap
both hands straight across with partner
when counting)

PAT A CAKE

Pat a cake, Pat a cake, baker's man
Bake me a cake as fast as you can,
Pat it and prick it and mark it with
a 'B',
And put it in the oven for baby and
me.

APPLES ON A STECK

Apples on a stick
Makes me sick
Makes my heart beat
2-4-6,
Not because you're dirty,
Not because you're clean,
Just 'cause you kissed
a boy behind the magazine
girl, girl,
wanna have some fun?
here comes Suzi with
her hoop skill on
She can wobble she can wobble
she can do the splits
but if I batcho her dollars
she can't do this
close your eyes
and count to ten
if you miss you start again...
one two etc.

LEMONADE

Lemonade, crunchy ice
Beat it once, beat it twice,
Lemonade, crunchy ice
Beat it once, beat it twice,
Turn around, touch the ground,
FREEZE

MISS SUZIE

Miss Suzie had a steamboat
The steamboat had a bell
Miss Suzie went to heaven The steamboat
went to
Halo operator
Please give me number nine
If you disconnect me
I'll kick you from
behind the refrigerator there was a piece of
glass
Miss Suzie sat upon it and cut her little
Ask me no more questions
Tall me no more lies
The boys are in the bathroom zipping up their
Flies are in the meadow
The bees are in the park
Miss Suzie and her boyfriend are kissing in the
Dark is like a movie
A movie's like a show
A show is like a TV screen
And that is all I know

LONG LEGGED SAILOR

Have you ever, ever, ever
in your long legged life
seen a long legged sailor and his
long legged wife?
No, I've never, never, never
in my long legged life,
seen a long legged sailor
and his long legged wife

Who would have thought that hand clapping games could address so many different developmental skills at once?

SKILL AREAS ADDRESSED: Bilateral coordination, cognitive skills, midline crossing, motor control, posture, social skills

This activity is great for, proprioception, sensory processing, strengthening of the lower leg and foot muscles and motor control!

What to do

Place a large sheet or towel on the floor to protect from sand overflow! Fill the bin with approximately 3" of sand. Scatter the ocean animals all over the surface of the sand.

While seated in a chair (low enough so kids' knees and hips can be at 90*), have your sockless child use his feet to gently bury all of the figures.

Give the bin a little shake to mix things up, and now have him use his feet to find them! If you have a larger animal (we had a big whale on hand), try having him bury it with sand.



What You'll Need

- A large plastic container
- Small ocean animals
- A large sheet or towel



How to change it up

If your child has a hard time tolerating the feel of sand on his bare feet, try water with some sea foam (aka bubbles), some birdseed, or some shaving cream.

The deeper the sand, the greater the resistance will be for additional strengthening.

Have your child try to pick up the animals with their toes and place them in a separate container.

SKILL AREAS ADDRESSED – Core strength, foot/leg strength, proprioception, coordination and motor control.



This activity is easy and great fun. Summer activities like this are not only great for hand Strengthening but also amazing for visual motor practice and that all-important core strengthening!

What to do

Have your child explore their creative side by drawing a beautiful picture on the driveway/patio with the chalk.

Next, supply them with a squeeze bottle full of water and explain that they need to use both of her hands to squeeze out the water to trace their picture. This is an awesome visual motor challenge that will help strengthen their ability to focus visually on details as they move their hands to replicate the lines of the image.

It is also a *fantastic* way to get her to engage core and strengthen all those muscles that help them to stand up straight, maintain good posture at school, and even write.

Try it yourself....it is next to impossible to use both of your hands to squeeze water out of that bottle without engaging your core muscles!

What You'll Need

- A Squeezy bottle
- Chalk
- Access to water refills

Fish out your water guns and let your children practice their visual motor skills with some target shooting today. This bug game for kids is one of our many games for kids that works inside on a rainy day or outside in the sunshine!

What to do

Keep it simple with this easy bug game for kids. First, draw a variety of bugs onto a solid colored shower curtain and hang the curtain either on the far side of your shower inside the house, or outside on a solid surface.

Next, call out a bug and let your child see if he can spray that bug with his water gun!

Start close and have him move farther back for a greater challenge as he gets the hang of it. Fabulous for strengthening those little fingers and eyes!



What You'll Need

- Water gun
- Solid shower curtain or plastic sheet



THERE ARE MILLIONS OF WAYS TO FACILITATE THERAPY IN THE OUTDOORS, HITTING EVERY SKILL FROM BALANCE TO STRENGTH TO COORDINATION AND MORE! AND STIMULATING THE SENSES THROUGH MOVEMENT IS EASY WHEN YOU HAVE ACCESS TO SWINGS, SLIDES, AND OTHER EQUIPMENT.

Fun Ideas for Playing with Bubbles

1. Pop them with different body parts. Try your toes, your elbow, and your nose!
2. Concentrate on your breath and breathe slowly, softly, deeply. Try quick bursts of breath. This is great way to teach kids to control and think about their breath!
3. Make bubble snakes! Take an empty plastic water bottle and cut off the bottom. Duct tape or rubber band and old sock over the opening. Dip the sock into bubble solution or a mixture of dish soap and water. Have kids blow into the mouth of the water bottle and create a really cool bubble snake!
4. Jump to pop bubbles! Blow bubbles low to the ground for your child and see if he can jump up and pop them.
5. Make your own bubble wands with the pipe cleaner and beads in the bag!



OUTDOOR SENSORY DIET ACTIVITIES

Use these activities to incorporate play while meeting sensory needs in the great outdoors!

Each of the sensory diet activities below should meet specific needs of the child. Outdoor play involves a variety of sensory input. The proprioceptive input from running and jumping into puddles can calm the child who is typically overactive. The vestibular benefits of slowing swaying side to side on a swing or for the child who is challenged by sensory overload.

Or Simply take Indoor Toys Outside!

It's easy to breathe new life into toys and treatment materials simply by taking them outside. Toy cars, dinosaurs, dolls, trains and even Lego blocks and art/craft activities can all be done outside. We guarantee that you'll see kids use materials in more unique and creative ways simply by taking them outside!

OUTDOOR SENSORY DIET ACTIVITIES

- Balance activities
- Collect nature
- Short walks
- Play in the garden
- Climb on stumps
- Jump in puddles
- Driveway or pavement play activities
- Swings
- Sensory play in enclosed space
- Collect sticks
- Leaf hunt
- Water table
- Move and carry rocks of various sizes
- Hide and seek
- Create with nature
- Outdoor water play
- Build with rocks, stumps, sticks, small logs
- Mix and create nature soup (mud, sticks, flower petals, grass clippings)
Mud play

We hope you enjoy trying out some of these ideas. Have Fun!

Helen Knight

Strathmore OT team