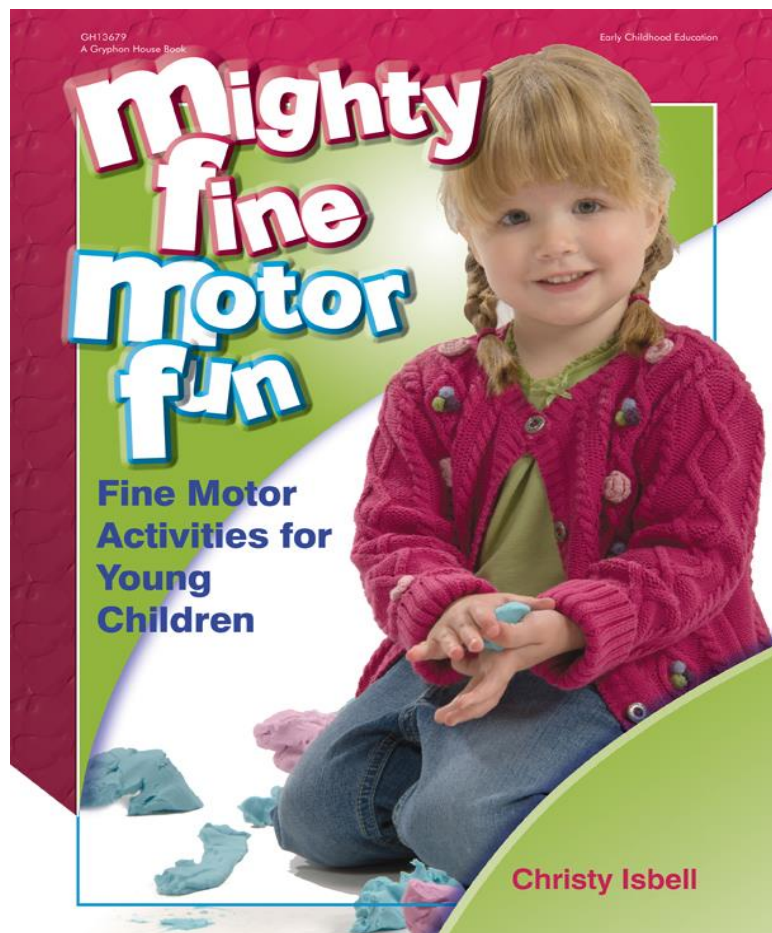


# MIGHTY FINE MOTOR FUN!

- Christy Isbell, Ph.D, OTR/L
- Clsbell@Milligan.edu
- ChristyIsbell.com



Books available at  
Gryphon House Booth

# WHY ARE FINE MOTOR SKILLS IMPORTANT?

- Young children use their hands to learn!
- Preschoolers need daily experience with developmentally appropriate fine motor activities.



# HOW DO YOUNG CHILDREN DEVELOP FINE MOTOR SKILLS?

- ◉ Opportunities to PLAY!
- ◉ Wide variety of open-ended materials
- ◉ It's the process not the product that matters!
- ◉ Interaction with peers/adults
- ◉ Cultural and Gender Considerations



# FOUNDATIONS OF FINE MOTOR SKILLS (3-4 YEAR OLDS)

- ◉ ***Before attempting pre-writing and pre-scissor skills the young child should have:***
- ◉ Developmental Readiness
- ◉ Good Posture/Balance
- ◉ Shoulder Strength
- ◉ Grasp
- ◉ Forearm and Wrist Control
- ◉ Bilateral Hand Use
- ◉ Eye-Hand Coordination

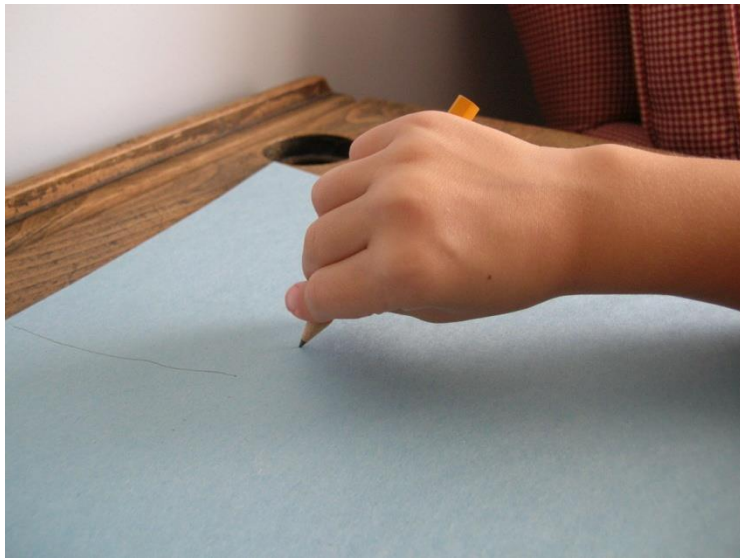
# FOUNDATIONS OF FINE MOTOR SKILLS

- ◉ IS EARLIER BETTER???
- ◉ Don't push before child is developmentally ready or child is at risk for:
  - ◉ Lack of interest
  - ◉ Poor pencil grasp
  - ◉ Illegible handwriting
  - ◉ Slow handwriting
    - (Benbow, 1990; Bredekamp & Copple, 2009; Case-Smith & Pehoski, 1992; Exner, 2005)

# FINE MOTOR MILESTONES

- References
- Beery, 1997; Case-Smith & O'Brien, 2010; Hawaii Early Learning Profile, 2006; Gardner, 1996; Klein, 1996; Peabody Developmental Motor Scale, 2011

# WHAT CAN MOST 3 Y.O.'S DO WITH THEIR HANDS?



- Uses Digital Pronate Grasp

# WHAT CAN MOST 3 Y.O.'S DO WITH THEIR HANDS?

- ◉ Copies a circle
- ◉ Imitates a square
- ◉ Threads large beads
- ◉ Draws and paints with variety of large tools
- ◉ Unbuttons large buttons/unzips
- ◉ Uses glue w/ supervision
- ◉ Cuts straight line
- ◉ Feeds self with spoon/fork
- ◉ Builds tower of blocks



# WHAT CAN MOST 4 Y.O.'S DO WITH THEIR HANDS?



- Uses Static Tripod Grasp

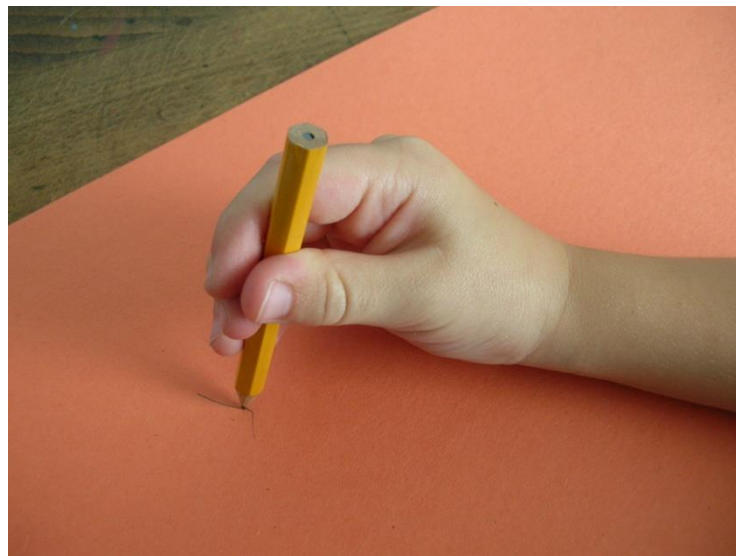
# WHAT CAN MOST 4 Y.O.'S DO WITH THEIR HANDS?

- ◉ Cuts out large shapes
- ◉ Copies square/triangle
- ◉ Makes marks to represent name
- ◉ Strings small beads
- ◉ Draws and paints with variety of sizes/shapes of utensils
- ◉ Uses fingers to act out simple songs
- ◉ Puts together simple puzzles (8 pieces)

# WHAT CAN MOST 5 Y.O.'S DO WITH THEIR HANDS?



Dynamic tripod grasp



Quadripod grasp

# WHAT CAN MOST 5 Y.O.'S DO WITH THEIR HANDS?

- ◉ Draw a person with facial features
- ◉ Uses tools with little supervision Ex. Glue stick, hole punch, stapler and tape
- ◉ Creates symbolic representations of objects through drawing/painting (may not look like real object)
- ◉ Uses scissors to cut non-paper materials



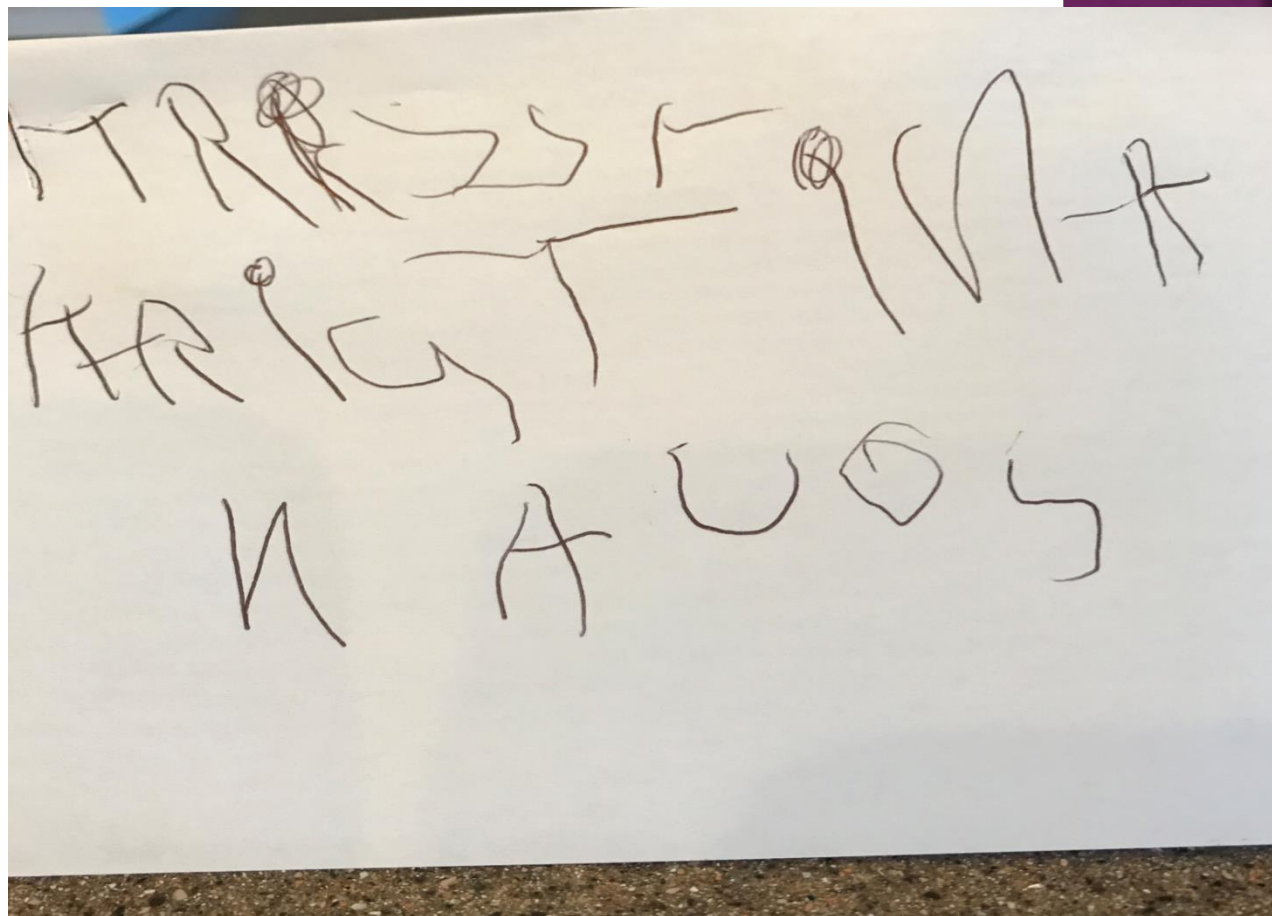
# WHAT CAN MOST 5 Y.O.'S DO WITH THEIR HANDS?



- Builds steps with small blocks
- Makes strings of marks that may look like letters
- Makes Signs and labels drawings

# WHAT CAN MOST 5 Y.O.'S DO WITH THEIR HANDS?

- ◉ Writes first name
- ◉ Writes a few letters
- ◉ May include reversals
- ◉ May not be in straight line



# SEQUENCE OF PRE-WRITING

- ◉ TRACE---COPY---DRAW
- ◉ Copy horizontal line (18 months-2years)
- ◉ Copy vertical line
- ◉ Copy circle
- ◉ Copy cross
- ◉ Copy right to left diagonal
- ◉ Copy square
- ◉ Copy left to right diagonal
- ◉ Copy X
- ◉ Copy triangle
- ◉ Copy diamond (5 years)

# SEQUENCE OF PRE-SCISSOR USE

- ◉ Open/close scissors with 2 hands
- ◉ Holds scissors appropriately (3 years)
- ◉ Open/close scissors with 1 hand
- ◉ Snips paper/playdough
- ◉ Cuts forward through paper
- ◉ Cuts straight line (4 years)
- ◉ Cuts out square/triangle
- ◉ Cuts out circle
- ◉ Cuts non-paper materials or thin paper (4 ½ - 5 years)



# SELECTING TOOLS AND MATERIALS

## “JUST THE WRITE SIZE”



- ◉ Grasp is “habit-based”
- ◉ Young preschoolers- large writing tools Ex. Bulb paint brushes, thick markers
- ◉ Older preschoolers- “Itsy Bitsy” or “Teeny Tiny”  
Ex. golf pencils, thin markers, small paint brushes, broken crayons, Pip squeaks

# SELECTING TOOLS AND MATERIALS

## SCISSOR SKILLS

- ◉ For beginners:
- ◉ Open/Close
  - Squeeze loop scissors
  - Tongs/Tweezers
- ◉ Hand Strength
  - Pipettes
  - Playdough
  - Clay



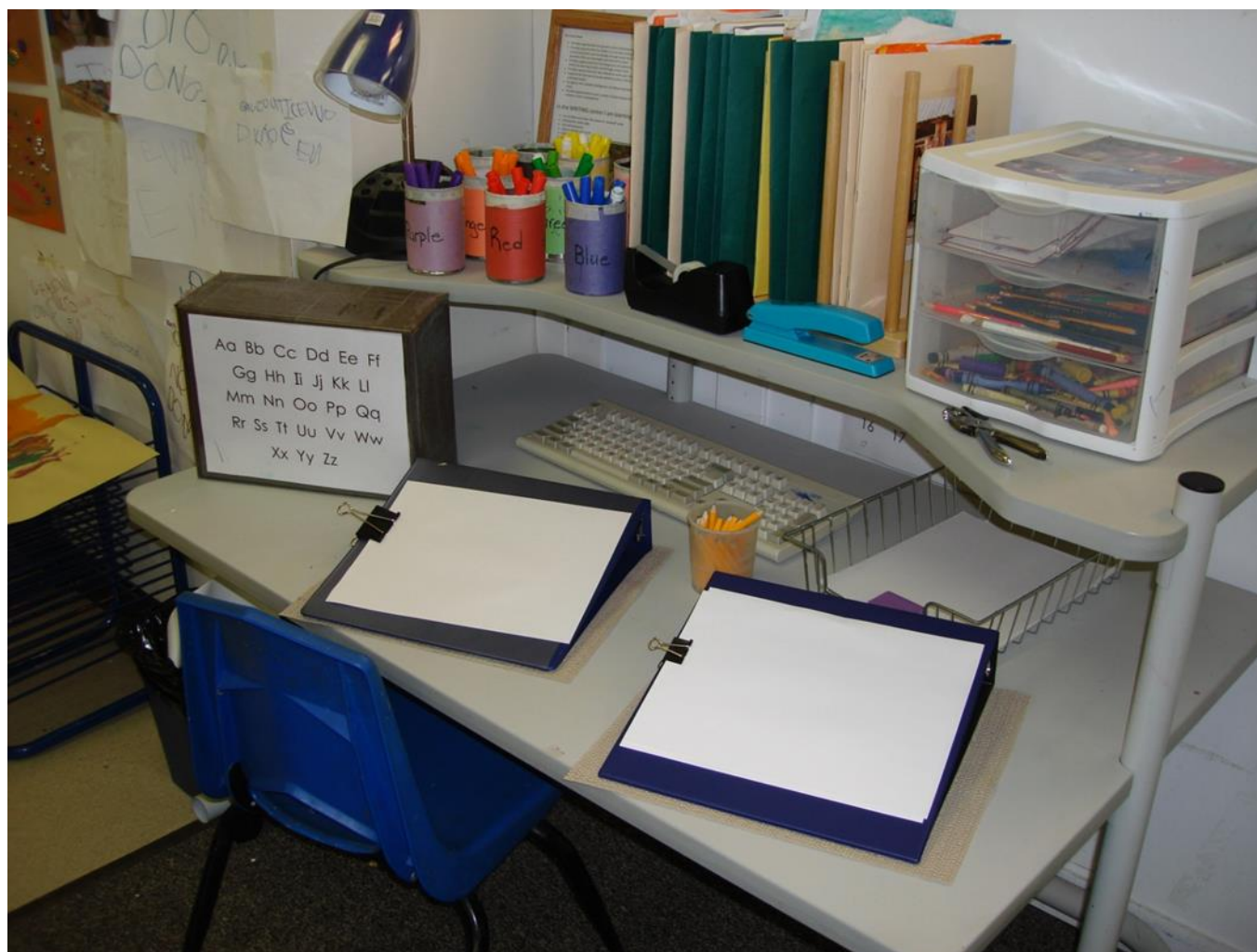
# SELECTING TOOLS AND MATERIALS

## SCISSOR SKILLS



- Young Preschool:
- Sharp scissors
- Thick paper
  - Card stock
  - Construction Paper
  - Index cards
- Thumb on top
- Start with large shapes
- Older Preschool:  
Non-Paper (fabric, etc.) and thin materials are last

# SELECTING TOOLS AND MATERIALS FINE MOTOR CENTER



# SELECTING TOOLS AND MATERIALS FINE MOTOR CENTER



# TOOLS FOR FINE MOTOR



- ◉ Dressing dolls
- ◉ Finger puppets
- ◉ Tongs/tweezers
- ◉ Laminated paper for pre-writing- plain and with letters
- ◉ Clay and dough with tools



# TOOLS FOR PAINTING/DRAWING

- Large and very small paint brushes, cotton balls, feathers, turkey baster, paint rollers, cotton swabs
- Sponges: makeup sponges, kitchen sponges, large cleaning sponges
- Large graph paper





# TOOLS FOR FINE MOTOR



- Individual dry erase boards/chalk boards
- Magnet Boards and Letters
  - Cookie Sheets
  - Oil Pan

# TOOLS FOR FINE MOTOR

- ◉ Sticky notes
- ◉ Textured fabrics
- ◉ Buttons
- ◉ Hole punch
- ◉ Paper plates or thick paper
- ◉ Chenille stems
- ◉ Nuts, bolts, screws
- ◉ Wikki Stix©



DEVELOPMENTALLY  
APPROPRIATE FINE MOTOR  
ACTIVITIES

# FINE MOTOR ACTIVITY FOR 3 YEAR OLDS: “POP” STRAWS

- ◉ Objective: Pre-scissor skills
- ◉ Materials:
  - Thick plastic straws
  - Child safe scissors
- ◉ Procedure:
  - Show child how to hold straw and snip pieces with scissors.
  - Say “pop” as you cut the straw.
- ◉ More ideas:
  - Glue to paper
  - String
  - Put into containers
  - Tweezers pick up



# FINE MOTOR ACTIVITY FOR 3 YEAR OLDS: CONTAINER SORT

- Objectives: In hand manipulation and Grasp
- Materials:
  - Gum containers with flip tops
  - Small items such as toothpicks, pom poms, beads
- Procedure:
  - Show child how to open/close lid and insert items
- More ideas:
  - Tweezers/tongs to pick up and put in



# FINE MOTOR ACTIVITY FOR 4 YEAR OLDS: INCLINE WRITING BOARDS

- ◉ Objective:  
Effective grasp of writing utensil
- ◉ 2 ½ inch 3 ring binder
- ◉ Non-skid drawer liner
- ◉ Glue
- ◉ Large paper clip



# FINE MOTOR ACTIVITY FOR 4 YEAR OLDS: GLUE SHAPES AND LETTERS

- Objectives: Trace shapes or letters, develop hand strength, and learn to control glue.
- Materials:
  - Color glue and/or glitter glue
  - Thick paper (card stock works best for re-use)
- Procedure
  - Draw shapes or write child's name on paper.
  - Demonstrate how to squeeze glue to trace shapes or letters, leaving raised line on paper.
  - Assist child in tracing, as needed.
  - Allow to dry.
  - Encourage child to trace shapes/letters with index finger.
- More Ideas:
  - Use glue shapes or letters for crayon rubbings.

# FINE MOTOR ACTIVITY FOR 4 YEAR OLDS: PAC MAN



- Objectives: Finger strength and coordination, scissor skills
- Materials
  - Tennis balls
  - Small items like buttons
- Procedure
  - Adult should cut hole
  - Wider is easier
  - Show how to squeeze



# FINE MOTOR ACTIVITY FOR 5 YEAR OLDS: CLAY WRITING BOARD

- Objectives: Develop effective grasp of writing tools and learn letter formation.
- Materials:
  - Small cookie sheet or pizza pan.
  - Modeling clay.
  - Stylus (wooden or metal tool used with clay).  
May use a chopstick or pen with ink removed as stylus.
  - Re-sealable plastic bag to hold the pan.

# FINE MOTOR ACTIVITY FOR 5 YEAR OLDS: CLAY WRITING BOARD



# FINE MOTOR ACTIVITY FOR 5 YEAR OLDS: CLAY WRITING BOARD

## ○ Procedure:

- Invite child to help you flatten modeling clay evenly over cookie sheet (1/4" thick or so).
- Show the child the “Stylus” and explain that it is a tool that artists use with clay.
- Demonstrate how to use the “Stylus” to write letters or draw shapes.
- Demonstrate how to “erase” the letters by using fingers to spread out the clay.

# FINE MOTOR ACTIVITY FOR 5 YEAR OLDS: PIPETTE PLAY



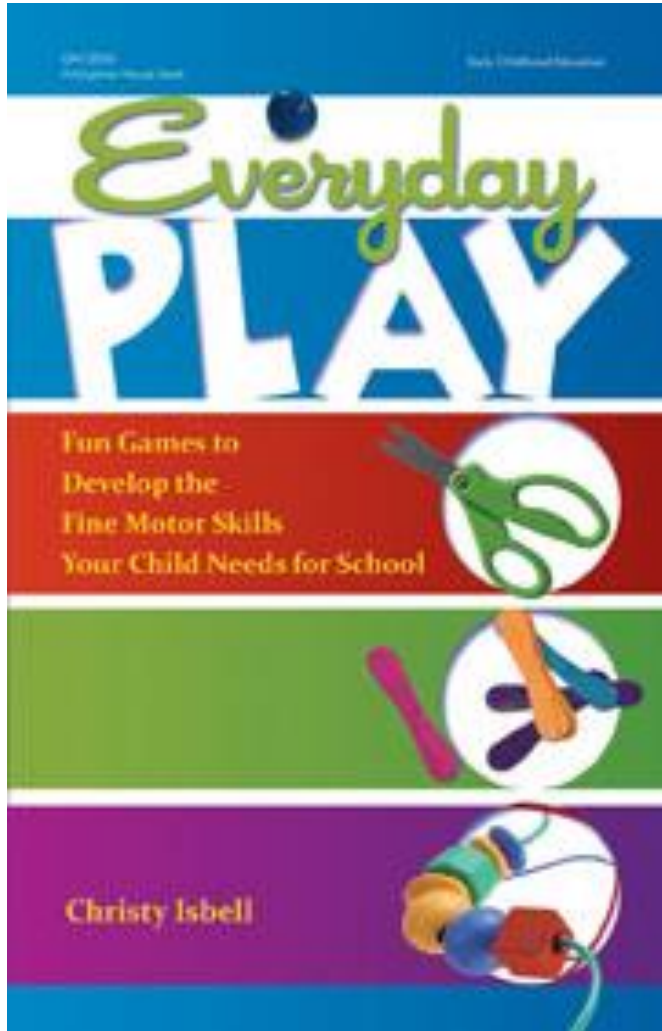
**Objectives: Finger strength  
and Coordination**



**Materials: Pipettes, water, lids,  
food coloring**  
**Procedure: Demonstrate how to  
squeeze and release**

ANSWERS TO MOST  
COMMONLY ASKED  
QUESTIONS...

# HOW DO YOU EDUCATE PARENTS ABOUT WHAT IS DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN?



- Everyday Play: Fun games to develop the fine motor skills your child needs for school
- by Christy Isbell

# IF A PRESCHOOLER HOLDS HER PENCIL IN AWKWARD MANNER, SHOULD I TRY TO CHANGE IT?

- ◉ Consider child's developmental level
- ◉ Make sure child participates in activities that promote a strong foundation for fine motor.
- ◉ Grasp is habit-based.
- ◉ Demonstrate proper grasp.
- ◉ Gently reposition.
- ◉ Try different writing utensils.

# WHAT IF PRESCHOOLER HOLDS SCISSORS UPSIDE DOWN?

- ◉ Typical for children who don't have a lot of experience with scissors (2-3 years)
- ◉ Pre-scissor activities: tongs, tweezers, one-hole punch
- ◉ “Thumb on top” verbal reminders





# STICKER ON THUMB AS CUE FOR APPROPRIATE SCISSORS HOLD



# WHAT TYPE OF PAPER IS MOST APPROPRIATE TO USE IN PRE-K?

- ⦿ **PLAIN, WHITE PAPER**
- ⦿ **No lines**

# WHAT IF PRESCHOOLER IS USING FINE MOTOR SKILLS THAT ARE WELL BELOW AGE APPROPRIATE?

- ◉ Inform parents
- ◉ Contact school system's Child Find Program or Special Education Program to refer
- ◉ Recommend Occupational Therapy Evaluation
  
- ◉ OTs specialize in treatment of fine motor delays

# INFORMATION

- ◉ Email: [Clsbell@Milligan.edu](mailto:Clsbell@Milligan.edu)
- ◉ Website: [ChristyIsbell.com](http://ChristyIsbell.com)
- ◉ Fine Motor Books by Christy Isbell:
- ◉ *Mighty Fine Motor Fun! Fine motor activities for young children*
- ◉ *Everyday Play: Fun games to develop the fine motor skills your child needs for school*
- ◉ Available at:
  - [www.ghbooks.com](http://www.ghbooks.com)
  - [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)