



Excellence in Early Education  
Professional Development Seminars

Saturday, October 10, 2020

## More WHATs, HOWs, & WHYs of Fine Motor

**PLUS Sensory and Self-Help Activities!**

with Dr. Marianne Gibbs, Write Out of the Box

Explore activities that:

- Support Fine Motor Skill Development
- Encourage Self-Help
- Promote Sensory Development

Funding provided by Indian River County Children's Services Advisory Committee

## About Dr. Gibbs



Marianne Gibbs, EdD, OTR/L, the creator and presenter of Write Out of the Box , is a registered occupational therapist and a Texas Registered Master Trainer (#1116). Dr. Gibbs received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Economics and Psychology from Claremont McKenna College in 1985, Master of Occupational Therapy from Texas Woman's University in 2000, and doctorate in Educational Leadership with a Specialization in Curriculum and Instruction in 2010. Currently, Dr. Gibbs is an avid Edu-Tainer whose mission is to assist educators in their quest to improve the fine motor skills of their students through developmentally appropriate practice and provision of once in a lifetime workshops – every time!

# Fine Motor Skills...Write Out of the Box and Beyond!

**Workshops – Keynotes – E-Blasts – Products**

By, Dr. Marianne Gibbs, EdD, OTR  
Educational Inservice  
October 10, 2020

Gibbs Consulting, Inc.  
[mgibbs@writeoutofthebox.com](mailto:mgibbs@writeoutofthebox.com)  
[www.writeoutofthebox.com](http://www.writeoutofthebox.com)  
(281) 797-2403

## **Today's Agenda**

1. Fine Motor Skills...Write Out of the Box
2. I Can Do It by Myself
3. Making Sensational Sense of the Senses

# Fine Motor Skills...Write Out of the Box!®

## 1. Purpose of Write Out of the Box

Why?

What?

Then:

Now:

### The 3 H's of Hand Skill Knowledge

H1:

H2:

Handwriting:

Writing:

H3:

## 2. PENCIL GRASPS

### Types of Pencil Grasps: Efficient vs. Inefficient

#### Appropriate Pencil Grasps (3)

- Mature, Dynamic Tripod (4.5-6 years): **\*Will naturally occur if precision muscles are properly**



- Static Tripod:



- Adapted:



### **Inefficient Pencil Grasps (infinite)**

- Fisted:



- Thumb Wrap:



- Thumb Tuck:



- Quad:



- Index:



\*Aha! Moment:

### 3. Developmental Theory: The Basics

#### A. Concept of Mobility on Stability

“Danglers” and the Remedy:

#### B. General Developmental Sequence

- 
- 

#### C. The Importance of Weight Bearing:

- 
-

D. Strategies for Incorporating Weight Bearing Opportunities in the School Day:

- 
- 
- 
- 

4. **Classroom Activities to Promote Fine Motor Development  
and Pencil Grasp**

**Head and Neck Stability:** Usually in place. Supports appropriate use of the visual system.

Activities: “Superman”, “Snowball”, ball work on tummy with target, lay on tummy supported by forearms, swimming

**Trunk Stability:** Must have this to use two arms effectively in activities.

Look for “W”-Sitters. Encourage side, long, and tailor sitting. Allow for sitting options at circle time, be flexible because your students may not be!

“W” Sitting:

Why?

Other Positions to Encourage:

**Activities:** “Superman”, “Snowball”, gross motor play, swimming, ball work (sitting), unassisted sitting, sock pull, hand presses

**Shoulder Stability:** This is critical! Allows for control of arm, hand, and fingers.

**Activities: Use of vertical surface! 1.**

**2.**

**3.** , push-ups, rocking on all fours, crawling games, wheel barrow, crab walk, ball work on tummy, “Down Under”

**Forearm Rotation and Elbow Stability:** Supports wrist hand and fingers appropriately.

**Activities:** \*Animal Voice, \*Giggle Tube, one-handed button retrieval out of \*Putty, opening a candy in one hand away from body, carrying laundry basket/books, pouring from a container, utensil use, scissor use

**Wrist Stability/Extension:** Allows for dynamic movement of fingers as in holding a pencil when writing.

**Activities:** \*Twirling Wheel, \*Chinese yo-yo, \*Twisty Puzzle, use of vertical surface (i.e. wall, refrigerator, blackboard, easel, 3-5 inch notebook), “Mirror Me”, “Marble Madness, Lite Brite, jar lids, nuts and bolts, ball work on tummy, crawling games, crab walk, wheel barrow, “Down Under”

**Palmar Arches:** Hands can form a “cup” which facilitates grasping and in-hand manipulation skills.

**Activities:** \*Mini Dice, jingle bells, “more” sign, \*Mini Slinky, \*Squirters, \*Squeeze Ball, \*Worm Ball, \*Tongs, \*Putty, cutting Play Doh with plastic knife, playing piano

**Grasp and Release Patterns:** Promotes strength and timing coordination of hand use.

**Activities:** \*Squirters, \*Squeeze Ball, \*Worm Ball, \* Mine Hole Punch, peg games, clothespins, gross motor play, climbing

**Extrinsic (Strength) Muscles:** Powerful “on/off” muscles that stabilize.

**Isolated Finger Control:** Students must realize they have 10 fingers and not just two paws!

**Activities:** \*Jumping Frogs/Insects, \*Flinging Frogs, \*Spin Tops, Lite Brite, finger puppets, stringing beads, flicking wedges, “I love you” sign, clothespins, playing piano

**Thumb Opposition:** Thumb touches each finger individually.

**Web Space:** Maintain “O” shape with thumb and index when holding a pencil.

**Activities:** Zip Lock bags, “Straw Wars”, \*Putty Balls (just using thumb and index), “Silly Sunglasses”, OK sign

**Separation of Hand:** Critical! The two halves of the hand have different jobs. Facilitates tripod pencil grasp position.

**Busy Fingers (3):** Mobility

**Sleeping Fingers (2):** Stability

**Pillow:**



**Activities:** \*Sparky, \*Animal Grabbers, \*Lacing Card, \*Tongs, \*Tweezers, \*Mini Hole Punch, \*Mini Lock and Key, stringing beads, \*Wind-up Toys, \*Spin Tops, short pencils/crayons, mini spray bottles, scissor use, snapping fingers, PILLOWS!

**Fingers and Pillows**

**(sung to tune of Oh My Darlin')**

I have two hands with ten fingers -- I have five on each hand

First is Thumbkin, then Pointer, then the tall one, Middleman.

These 3 are special, they are busy, and they love to play

They play with toys and hold a pencil in just the right way.

Next is Ringman and Pinky -- they are sleepy little ones

They hug a pillow and stay sleeping so the busy fingers can have fun!

**Intrinsic (Precision) Muscles:** Necessary for precise control as with using a pencil.

**Activity:** Mini Rolling Pin with Play Doh

**Shift:** The ability to make minute pencil adjustments without thinking about it.

**Activities:** \*Mini Cards, \*Wikki Stix, Play Doh, single page turning, buttoning, moving hand along shaft of pencil

**Translation:** Single handedly move objects between fingers and palm. Leads to more efficient stroke making when writing.

- Finger to Palm:
- Palm to Finger:

**Activities:** popcorn pick-up, coins in vending machine, "Feed Freddie" with pennies, checkers, discs, etc...

**Rotation:** Use fingers in precise rotation movement without wrist movement. Turning the pencil over as if to erase during writing.

**Simple Rotation Activities:** Play Doh, jar lids, nuts and bolts

**Complex Rotation Activities:** turning a coin, turning a pencil in one hand as in erasing.

**All skills above lead to the tripod grasp which is the most efficient grasp for handwriting!**

## 5. DOMINANCE ACQUISITION

Usually settled between 4.5-6 years old as with tripod grasp

Above all, do no harm:

2 jobs:

Easy:

Difficult:

## 6. CUTTING TIPS

Sequence Progression: Crumple, Rip, Snip, Cut

Media Types:

Paper: Thick to thin, short to long

Non-paper for Snip: Grass, sandpaper, Play Doh, straws, Styrofoam chips, Cheetos!

Problems and Remedies:

1.

2.

Lollipop Friends Method to Track and Document Progress:

7. **Pre-Writing Stroke Sequence by Age (VMI)**

Years-Months	A	B	Notes
--------------	---	---	-------

2-10

3-0 (2 of them)

4-1

4-4

4-6

4-7

4-11

5-3

# I Can Do It by Myself!

## 1. Purpose of Presentation

- Define Activities of Daily Living by Students:
  - Dressing
  - Eating
  - Grooming
  - Transitioning
  - Manipulation of Classroom Materials
- To establish, reinforce, promote, or otherwise make clear that independence in daily activities is critical to the academic, social, and psychological health and growth of all human beings.
- To convey that competence (task mastery) leads to confidence and self-esteem, which increases willingness to risk.
- To realize that, more than words, the phrase "I can do it by myself," becomes a catalyst for future achievement and successes.

## 2. Profile of Independence in Daily Activities by Young Children

- What does it look like?
- How do we build independence?
- How do we sometimes prevent independence?

### **3. Strategies to Increase Independence in Young Students**

- **Set them up for success!**
  - a. Location, location, location! Think kid-friendly access for supplies, cubbies, snack stuff, etc...
  - b. Visual cues in the environment:
  - c. Ideas:
  
- **Backward Chaining:**
  - a. Student "backs into" successful task completion. Works best when there are many possible "next-step" options (e.g. shoe tying, putting on a coat).
  - b. Adult performs all but last step of task, student performs last step.
  - c. Student gradually progressively completes more of a task as adult does less and less of the task.
  - d. "Do It" Learning Activity:

- **Rapid Reinforcement for Results:**

Define motivator, present immediately at successful attempt/approximation of task upon initial learning of a task/skill.

Extend time between reinforcement as competence increases.

“Do It” Learning Activity and Reflection:

#### **4. Independence Building Activities**

Opening/closing doors

Carrying/opening/closing backpack

Organizational Skills (retrieve/replace)

Managing glue bottle/stick

Grooming (washing hands, brushing teeth, bathing)

Dressing/undressing

Manage clothing fasteners

Assist with meal preparation (pouring, mixing, scooping, etc...)

Assist with packing lunch kit (spreading, peeling, picking, etc...)

Open/close food packages (baggies, straws, caps, etc...)

Feeding self

Feeding pets

Setting/clearing table

Filling/clearing dishwasher

Washing/drying dishes

Emptying trash

Sweeping (small and large)

Watering plants

Sorting anything (laundry, socks, paper, ribbons, utensils, etc...)

Assist with laundry process

Assist with grocery shopping process

Assist a younger child

# Making Sensational Sense of the Senses!

**Sensory Processing:** SP is the process by which the central nervous system (CNS) detects and responds to information gathered by the seven senses.

**Sensory Integration:** SI is a specific sensory processing feature that helps the brain organize information and use it in daily function. SI impacts motor skills, emotional responses, attention span, and behavior.

- SP/SI enable us to process multiple sensory inputs effectively
- Everyone's sensory preferences are different
- No one possesses ideal SP at all times

## 1. Seven (7) Sensory Systems Defined

### The Five Far Senses

**Touch:** Protects from pain or threats and allows us to discriminate temperature, vibration, deep pressure, light touch, parts touched. Sense of touch is fully developed by 8 years of age. Touch is critical to healthy social-emotional and fine motor development.

**\*Stereognosis:** The ability to identify an object by touch when we cannot see the object directly (i.e. items in purse/backpack).

**Vision:** Allows for sight at near and far distances. Functions include facilitating attention to tasks, tracking, and alignment impacting attention span, eye contact with others, and reading. Less is more in terms of visual stimulation. Calming colors for the visual system are blue, green, and pastels. Lined paper????

**Auditory:** Hearing in terms of volume, distance, and frequency; ability to attend to sounds and voices; direction of sounds; sound discrimination (e.g. "cat" vs. "cap")

**Smell:** The olfactory system allows us to detect smells within the environment. Protects and engages us.

**Taste:** Types include salty, sweet, bitter, sour, spicy, and bland. Please note food textures such as "crunchy" fall under the sense of touch.

### The Two Near Senses

Everyone has sensory preferences and differences. A problem with sensory preferences exists when function in daily life is hindered by a misinterpretation of sensory input. Difficulty with sensory modulation can impact learning in the classroom and function in the family and community.

**Vestibular:** Vestibular processing assists us with posture, gross motor skills, and our sense of balance. The inner ear contains receptors that detect directional movements of the head.

**Proprioception:** Allows us to know where our body parts are in space when we are moving or still and without looking. Receptors in muscles and joints communicate timing, rate, direction, and force of motions.

**Sensory Over-responsivity (Piglet):**

- An over-noticer of sensory inputs. Responds to sensations faster, more vigorously, and for a longer duration.
- May become impulsive or aggressive when overwhelmed by sensory information. Avoids heights. Gets car sick.
- Unsociable; difficulty in groups and relationships; rigid
- Highly Sensitive and defensive – “Fight, Flight, or Freeze”
- Picky eater, shirt tags hurt, nail-cutting feels like cutting skin (\*soak nails first!)

**Strategies:**

Linear activities such as swinging and trampoline jumping help calm the nervous system  
Weighted blankets/neutral warmth  
Slow, predictable, and rhythmic motions are calming  
Minimize head turning (drinking fountain)  
Use soft music, and lavender and vanilla scents to calm  
Allow for play on floor while lying on tummy  
Don't force finger painting  
Warn of pending transitions or changes  
Maintain consistent classroom arrangement and routine  
Use picture icons to reinforce schedule/routine.

**Sensory Under-responsivity (Eeyore):**

- Decreased awareness; appears sedentary, apathetic
- May be mislabeled “lazy” or “unmotivated” (Myth of the Laziness, Dr. Mel Levine, M.D.)
- Passive, quiet, withdrawn; difficult to engage in activity or conversation
- Takes longer to respond to instructions
- May not cry when seriously hurt; may not realize when touched
- Toileting accidents

**Strategies:**

Needs more movement than typical just to “get going”  
Fidgets  
“Heavy Work”/Sock Pull/Pulling/Climbing/Carrying  
Squeezer activities/Animal grabber/ Spray bottles  
Clay tray  
Use high-contrast colored paper  
Incorporate “go” and “stop” visual cues on paper to emphasize boundaries



**Sensory Seeking (Tigger):**

- Seeks intense sensations such as rough and tumble play – not psychologically-based, it neurological
- Decreased regard for safety; increased need for attention
- Makes vocal sounds to stimulate auditory system; difficulty taking turns in a conversation
- Constantly “touching” and is “on the go”
- Loves to spin or rock self; taps, twirls hair, chews on pencil

**Strategies:**

Recess

**Sock Pull**

Weighted vests and blankets/ Chair Balls

Hugs/ OTC tight-pressure clothing (e.g. Under Armor)

Bungee cord around chair legs

Crunchy/chewy foods

**Sensory Diet** – Strategies for the nervous system. Provide prior to task! Recess before focused learning. Withholding recess from “Tigger” may lead to more unwanted behaviors. Recess is not a reward as much as it is an essential element to facilitating learning in the classroom. Movement is air for the life of the young child!

XX

Q & A Time:





# Coaching for Early Educators

**Collaborate** with an experienced educator:

- **Build** on your strengths as a teacher
- **Work** towards your classroom goals
- **Strengthen** relationships with staff and parents
- **Implement** ideas from professional development workshops

Contact a coach  
to get started!

[ChildcareResourcesIR.org/coach](http://ChildcareResourcesIR.org/coach)



772-567-3202 ext. 115



**Paulette Maggiacomo** is an educator with 29 years of experience. In addition to a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and a Master's degree in Reading Education, she holds an Early Learning Coaching Certification through the University of Florida Lastinger Center. Paulette is also a 'Smart Horizons Institute Observer' for teachers who need their FCCPC certification.



**Susan Roberts** is an educator with 29 years of experience in Indian River County. She holds an Early Learning Coaching Certification through the University of Florida Lastinger Center in addition to both a Bachelor's and Master's in Early Childhood Education as well as a Specialist degree in Educational Leadership.

### **Childcare Resources Mission:**

To elevate and promote the highest quality early childhood development and education in Indian River County, focusing on economically challenged children and families.

### **Childcare Resources Vision:**

All children and their families benefit from a high quality learning experience.



[ChildcareResourcesIR.org](http://ChildcareResourcesIR.org) | 772-567-3202  
2300 Fifth Avenue, Suite 149 | Vero Beach, FL 32960