



for students who are blind or
visually impaired

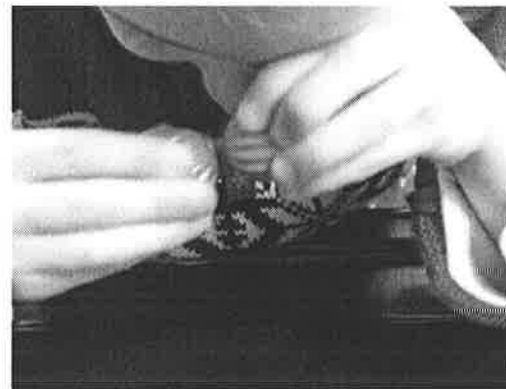
Strong Hands Make Good Readers

By Cheryl Brown

These ideas are designed to address developing handskills for the young beginning braille reader who is ready to start braille instruction and who has received preschool instruction on concept development. For

experienced TVIs this will be a review of ideas and activities you may already be familiar with. Many of these fine motor activities are simple, and may well be things you already do.

The ideas and activities listed below are not necessarily my own. They have been gathered over the years from other TVIs, books, and resources, and I have simply pulled them together for your reference. Thanks to all those who shared their ideas with me!



A child puts together popbeads.

Readiness Skills

Preschool skills and concepts important for braille learning and reading

The student should be able to:

- Manipulate objects with purpose and explores with two hands
- Communicate with others
- Demonstrate emotional and mental readiness
- Discriminate, name and match shapes, textures and objects
- Sort by features, size and shape (classification)
- Relate part to whole
- Sequence objects, activities or events, ability to anticipate
- Background of rich and varied experiences to assist with comprehension
- Understand concepts:
 - Directional concepts: Left, right, behind, in front, top, bottom, back, center, nearest, middle, farthest, above, between, upper, next to, below, up, down, higher, lower, over, under, closer, away from, beside, facing, in, on, out

- General concepts: tall, short, big, small, different, same, more, less, first, second, last
- Explore books, turns pages, listens to and understands simple stories
- Explore and understand 2 dimensional shapes and simple pictures
- Follow 2-3 step directions
- Develop basic pre-reading skills along with peers

Planning Activities

When planning activities for young children, try to include music, movement and games. These help children to develop many skills, in addition to making learning fun.

Music

- Increases attention and concentration
- Facilitates multisensory learning
- Improves memory
- Can raise energy levels and reduce stress



Movement

- Cross midline

- Improve blood flow
- Stimulates
- Reduces tension

Games

- Creates fun environment
- Increases memory for activities/learning

Areas of Instruction

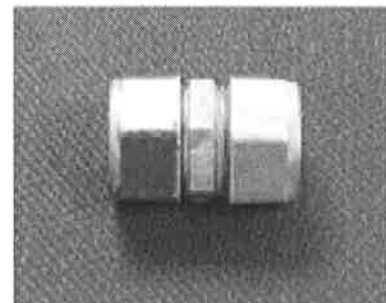
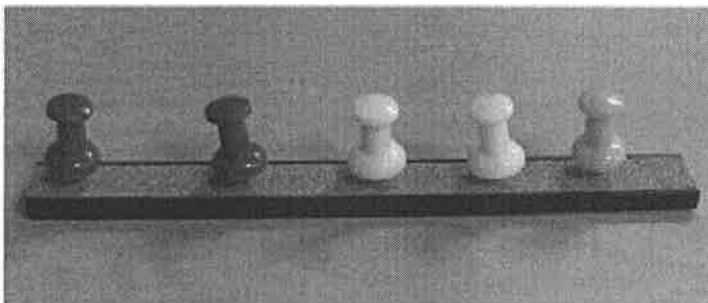
- **Tactual sensitivity**
- **Hand strength**
- **Wrist strength**
- **Hand dexterity**
- **Finger isolation**
- **Finger strength**
- **Tactile discrimination**
- **Tracking**
- **Hand positioning**
- **Resources**

Tactile Sensitivity

- Explore hairbrush, toothbrush, sponges, and towels
- Play with finger paints, pudding, shaving cream

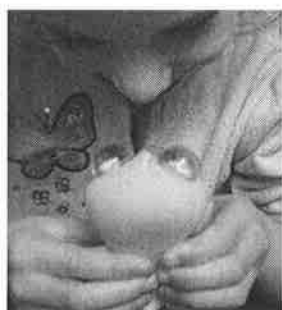
- Add textures such as sand, glitter, small craft/toy objects
- Differentiate temperatures, e.g. with ice, hot pads
- Water play: scooping, pouring, cupping in palms
- Sensory Box: rice, macaroni, beans, sand; hide coins and other objects
- Textures: sandpaper, aluminum foil, fabrics, screens
 - Matching games: finding the same and different objects. Encourages exploration and discrimination
 - Spinners with board games
 - Card games
 - Make texture books
- Differentiate: hard/soft, sharp/dull, wet/dry, sticky/slimy, bumpy/smooth
- Explore toys and the environment

Hand Strength



- Pull string toys w/speech

- Play with hammer toys, clay/play dough
- Play with push lever toys (as in gumball machines)
- Play with push button toys
- Push down on spinner toys
- Wind up music boxes or Jack-in-the-Box toy

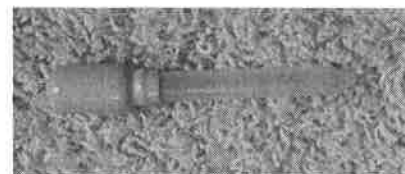


*Eye-popping
duck*

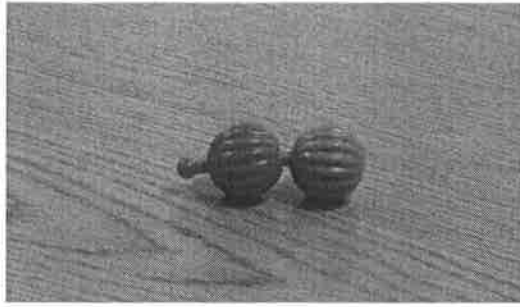


*Close up of eye-
popping duck*

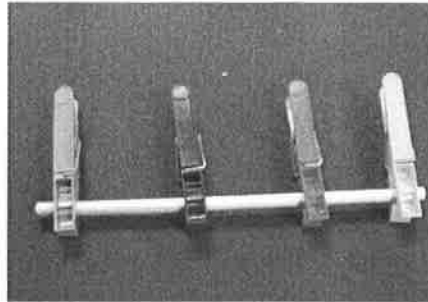
- Cooking tasks:
 - Stir cookie dough batter
 - Use garlic press, potato masher, juicer, hand mixer, sifter
 - Open jars, remove lids from containers- find what is inside
- Squeeze water out of sponge, squeeze bulb or medicine dropper
- Fill liquid dishwasher soap dispenser with water and squeeze out liquid into sink
- Tear paper (increasing thicknesses)



- Use scissors on different textures



 Items in putty

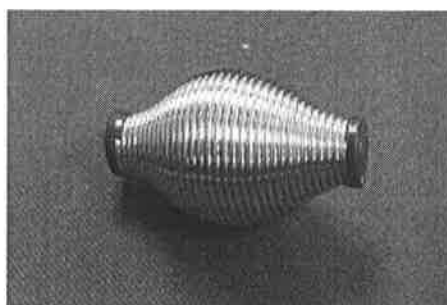
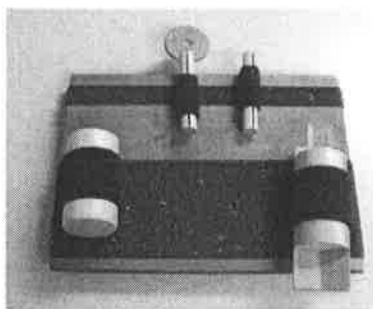


- Punch holes with paper-hole puncher
- Staple papers together
- Squeeze paper holders/clips
- Crumple paper into balls and glue to make shapes and pictures
- Squirt water from squirt bottle or squirt gun
- Hang things with clothespins
- Play modified tug of war games with yarns or shortened jump ropes
- Shovel sand in sand boxes
- Draw in wet sand with stick
- Push down on pump bottle dispensers (containers filled w/water)
- Lift/carry “heavy” objects, box lids

- Practice separating strong magnets

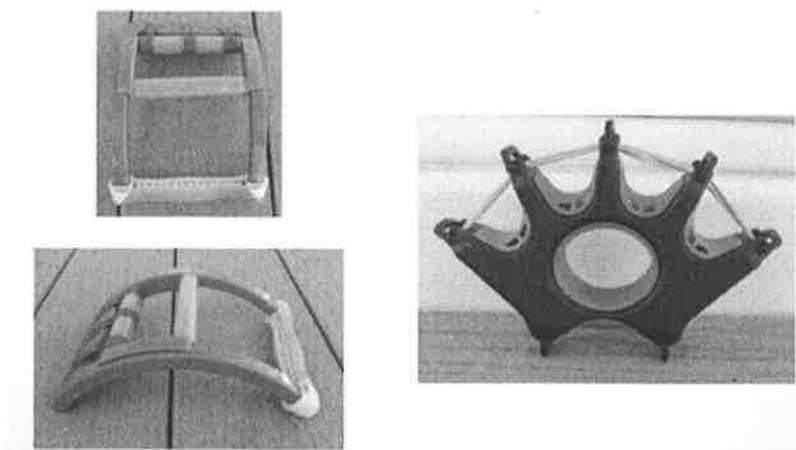


OT Tools for Increasing Hand Strength



OT Tools

Handi Grip-Digi Extend



Wrist Strength

- Practice knocking on doors
- Practice different kinds of waves
 - Finger, wrist, arm, twisting left to right)
- Make circles with your wrist
- Be a waitress/waiter
 - hold something with your palm facing upward
- Practice fanning yourself with your hands
- Do crab walks and wheelbarrow walks
- Use Therabands: pull out with wrists
- Do weight bearing tasks such as yoga positions
- Wring out wet hand towels or sponges
- Practice twirling jump rope
- Open jars

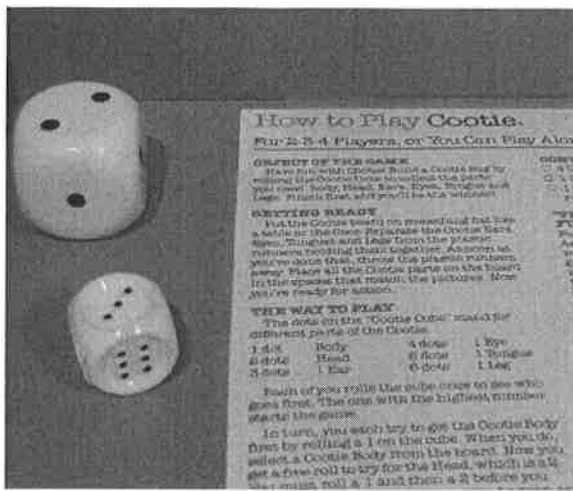
- Twist screws into pre-drilled holes

Hand Dexterity

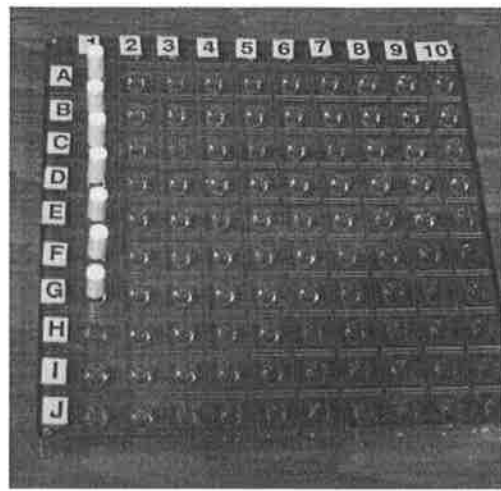
- Put pegs in holes
- Play with puzzles with recessed holes
- Dial old fashioned phones
- Twist knobs on radios or toys
- Pull up a zipper
- Button
- Put small items in slots (coins, buttons, paper clips)
- String beads
- Play musical instruments
- Use scissors
- Learn correct hold of pencil/crayon
- Color shapes/pictures (use screen board/sand paper)
- Play games with small pieces



Putting coin in slot

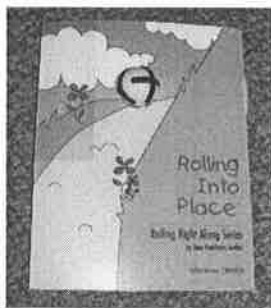


Cootie



Battleship

- Use tweezers or tongs to pick up objects
- Spray plants with water bottle
- Move marbles around in your hand (use different size marbles)
- Hand skills: Cat's claw
 - Bend fingers at the second joint
 - Pair with "Meow", slink like a cat
- Making fist and stretching out fingers to the beat of music or to count



*Rolling into
Place - APH*



Mr. Potato Head



*Picking up mini-
Teddy Bear*

Finger Isolation

- “Where is Thumbkin...?”
- Finger games
 - Make finger circles
 - Touch finger to palm
 - Touch thumb to fingers
 - Pinch nose
 - Touch pointer to pointer from opposite hands



 Finger games

- Finger Isolation Songs
 - The pointer says hello
 - The pointer says hello
 - Watch the pointer wave hello
 - The pointer says hello

 - The Middle man says hello...

 - (waving fingers one at a time)
 - With finger puppets, use name of puppet