



## Month 5: Coordination Skills School Age Activities

### Freeze Frame

Have the children sit in a chair with their feet flat on the floor. The adult should be seated in a similar fashion across from the children. Tell the children, “Imitate my movements and when I stop moving, you also stop moving. It’s called ‘freezing.’ Move your body, focusing on exaggerated head and arm movements, in varying directions, and don’t forget to cross midline! Suddenly freeze in an awkward position. The children should also immediately freeze in the same position. You can easily turn this activity into a *Simon Says* game. Have the children assume a position when you say and they may not change to a new position until you say, ‘Simon Says’ to do so. Remember to cross midline as much as possible; for example touch your right hand to your left foot.

### This Card Is Wild

The title says it all, you will need a deck of playing cards (you can also modify the game with flash cards for the alphabet or numbers) in order to play. Before you begin to play, decided on the wild card(s). It can be a certain suit, number, or face card. Have the child hold the deck in one hand. Show the child how to grasp the top card at the point of the card nearest the thumb and flip it over onto the table. The child should turn his hand over from palm down to palm up to discard the card. The object of the game is to “slap” or place a hand over the wild card(s) as they are discarded. Players take turns turning the cards over, one card at a time, and placing them on a pile in the center between the players. Tell the child, “The person who slaps the card first gets to keep the pile of cards beneath, including the wild card.” Play continues, and the player with the most cards when the deck is depleted is the winner.

Modifications:

- Choose red or black as the wild cards for a child with decreased attention span
- Work on shape recognition by simply choosing a certain suit – spades, hearts, diamonds or clubs – to use as wild cards.

### Barbie’s Closet

Materials needed to play are a doll and a bag of clothes for the doll. Have the child reach into the bag and choose a shirt for the doll. Say to the child, “Can you put the doll’s arms in the sleeves?” Next have the child choose a pair of pants, shorts or underpants from the bag. Ask the child to put the doll’s legs into the clothing. Proceed with other items of clothing such as socks, shoes, or hat until the doll is fully dressed.

Modifications:

- Vary the size of doll from a child-sized doll to a Barbie doll. A child-sized doll is easier to dress than a Barbie doll.
- Add clothing with zippers, snaps, ties or buttons to address the skill of fastening. The size of the fasteners can also be varied depending on the dexterity of the child.
- Use a bag of seasonal clothing and have the child dress the doll appropriately for the season.
- To make things harder change the bag to include adult sized clothing for the child to practice on himself.

### **Play Dough Fun**

Whether you purchase play dough or make it yourself, kids love to play with it and it helps to promote coordination skills and hand strength.

Activities:

1. Use both hands to roll dough into a ball.
2. Use both hands to roll ball on table into a long thin “snake.”
3. Other things children can do: squishing, flattening with a rolling pin, using cookie cutters to make different shapes.
4. Roll into long, thin strips and cut with safety knife or scissors.
5. Roll these smaller pieces to create numbers or letters. Make your own name or initials.
6. Practice “cutting” using long strips of play dough.
7. Cut the dough using a knife and fork.

### **Clay & Toothpicks**

For this activity you can use clay or playdough. Have the children form the clay into tiny balls. Which can be done two ways:

1. Roll clay between hands with palms flat and wrists in neutral.
2. Roll clay between thumb and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> fingers, keeping last two fingers curled into palm.

Join toothpicks using the balls of clay. Form letters, numbers and shapes such as a square, letter E, or a pyramid. The clay balls will form the corner joints of the structure. Make sure the child knows to use the helper hand to stabilize the structure and use the dominant hand to build to it.

### **Threading/Braiding/Lacing**

These activities help develop the skills that the children will need to help with “lifestyle activities” such as dressing, shoelace tying, and handling eating utensils.

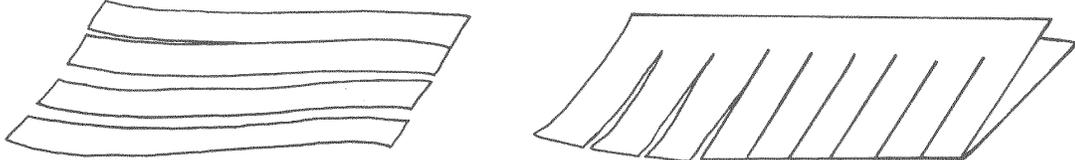
1. **Macaroni Necklace:** Use coloured macaroni (if you have it, if not plain works great) and strong string, pipe cleaner or a thin shoelace. Attach a paper clip to one end, and use the other end for threading macaroni pieces onto string. Make your necklace interesting by using different colour sequences. Knot end of thread together to form a necklace.
2. **Straw Necklace:** Use different coloured plastic straws cut into 3 cm lengths and a shoelace or string with a clothespin clipped onto string at one end. Thread straws

- in a colour sequence pattern, such as yellow-red-blue-green, to create a bright necklace.
3. Lacing: Create different lacing cards using a hole puncher. Have child thread string through holes to make different lacing patterns.
  4. Braiding: Use material such as thick wool, ribbons, thick cord, or strips of material. Attach three different coloured strips of material (if possible) into a support, such as a piece of cardboard. Teach child how to braid.
  5. Paper Chains: Each child has several strips of paper 2cm X 10 cm. Join the ends of a strip by gluing, taping, or stapling together. Continue to add another link in this way. Join all the children's chains together to form one long chain.
  6. Laced Name Plates: For each child you will need one piece of cardboard 15 cm X 15 cm, one large darning needle, one pencil some coloured wool, and masking tape. Have each child draw his or her initials on the card in large letters. Use the darning needle to carefully prick holes along each letter about ½" apart. Then thread the darning needle with wool and tie a knot in the end. Now lace the wool through the holes starting from the back of the card, to the front, then to the back. Continue this pattern until finished and tape wool to the back of card. Now you have your own personalized "license plate"!

### **Making A Place Mat**

In order to make a placemat each child will need 2 different colours of construction paper the same size. There is cutting in this activity, if the child can have them cut themselves and if the child is still learning they can tear carefully following the drawn lines. Before you give the child the papers with a marker, draw straight lines on the paper for the slits and strips. The strips should go across the width of the paper and should be approximately 1" wide. The slits should also be 1" apart but should end approximately 1" before the edge of the paper. It may be helpful to prepare a second place mat in advance, following the instructions below, so the child has a model to copy.

Instruct the child to cut the first sheet of paper into strips by cutting on the lines. Then have the child fold the second sheet in half widthwise (perpendicular to the slits), with the predrawn "slit" lines on the outside. (This allows the child to begin cutting at the folded edge.) Have the child cut along the marked lines, cutting through both halves of the paper at the same time. Remind the child to stop about 1" from the far edge (or to follow your predrawn lines). Finally, instruct the child to weave the strips of paper in and out of the slits (you may wish to demonstrate this step). If desired, laminate the mat to allow for repeated use.



### **Basket Weaving**

In order to make a basket you will need a basket frame (see template) and yarn in a variety of colours. Before the child begins, you need to make a basket frame out of cardboard or oaktag. Have the child fold up the sides to make basket spokes. Take a piece of yarn about 12" long. Start by tying a knot to the bottom of one of the basket spokes.

Then weave the yarn in front of the next spoke, behind the next one, in front of the next one and so on. When you get all the way around, push the yarn down evenly, and then continue with the next row. When you come to the end of the yarn, tie on another piece. Keep pushing the rows down, and continue until you get to the top. To end, tie off the yarn at the top on the inside and weave in the end of the yarn. You can change colours whenever you want by tying a new piece of yarn onto the old one.

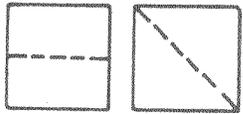
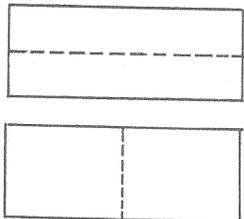
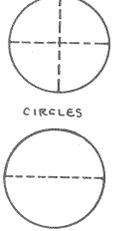
\*\*Remember to have the student hold the basket frame in fingertips to rotate it while weaving.

### Folding

Folding is a bi-manual task that initially requires both hands to work simultaneously to achieve the spatial aspects (the fold). The preferred hand completes the creasing action while the non-preferred hand provides stability or guidance to the paper.

The following are progressive samples of folding activities.

Fold the following shapes:

<p>Square: in half, diagonally</p>	 <p>SQUARES</p>
<p>Rectangle: length in half; width in half</p>	 <p>RECTANGLES</p>
<p>Circle: in half; in pie shapes</p>	 <p>CIRCLES</p>

Draw lines across a piece of paper and have the children fold along these lines. A fan can be made this way. An alternative is to have the children fold the edges of the paper to these lines.

### Folding Activities

#### Accordion Dog

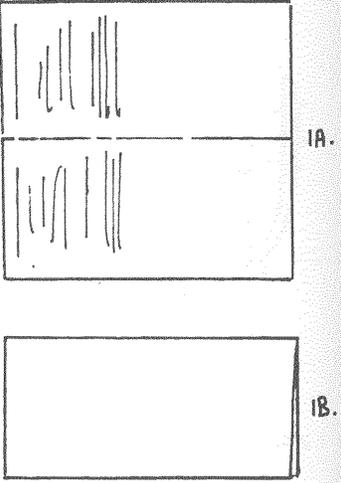
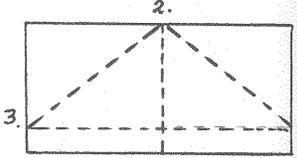
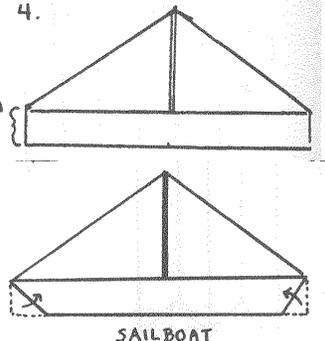
Before you begin to make the accordion dog, use the template attached to make sure that each child has the front and back of the dog already cut out and ready to go (unless they are awesome with scissors and they are able to cut out the dog on their own). Each child will need a 5" x 11" piece of construction paper. Demonstrate accordion folding, verbalizing the entire process. Instruct the child to accordion fold the 5" x 11" piece of construction paper, folding parallel to the 5" side. Make sure the child makes at least 10 folds (you may want to draw lines on the paper to the child knows where to fold). Then

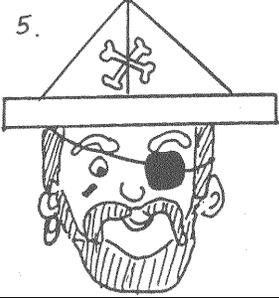
have the child glue the ends of the folded construction paper to the 2 halves of the dog, so that the paper becomes the middle of the body.

### Worms

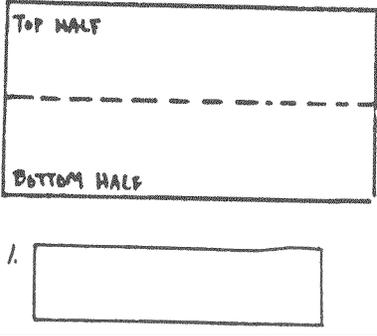
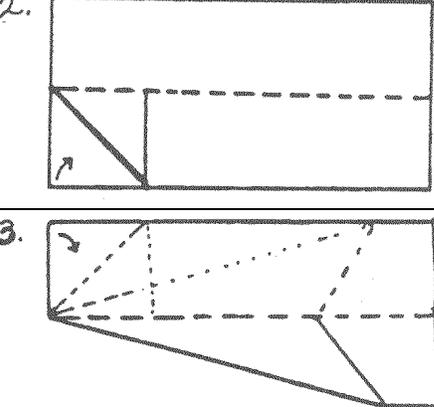
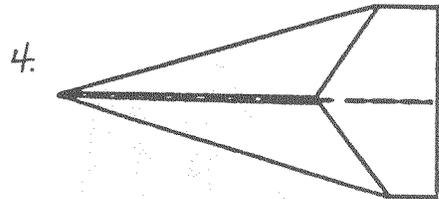
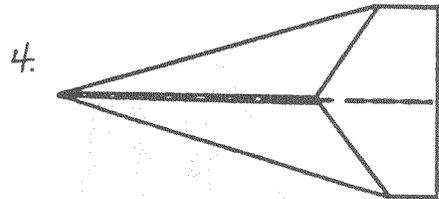
Using the same accordion folds as with the dog. The child instead will accordion fold long ovals to make worms. Then the child can draw eyes and a mouth on one end.

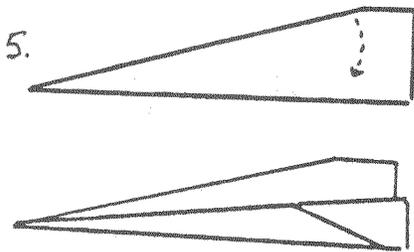
### Pirates Hat

<p>Step 1: Using a full sheet of newspaper, fold top half to bottom half</p>	
<p>Step 2: Now fold this in half from the left side to right</p>	
<p>Step 3: Open up and fold top left corner to center, then top right corner to center</p>	
<p>Step 4: Fold each bottom strip upwards to complete your pirate's hat. Variation: fold in the corner strips to create a "sail boat"</p>	

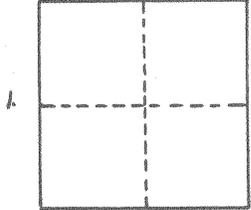
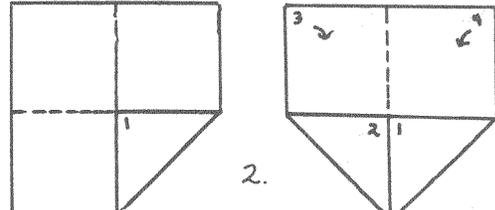
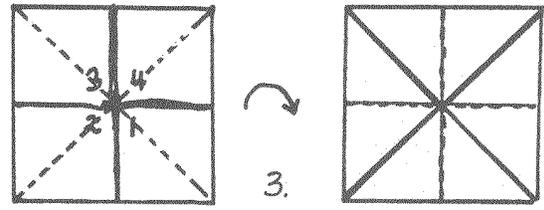
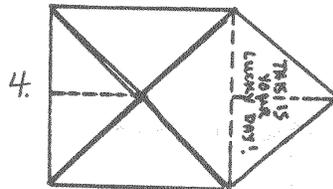
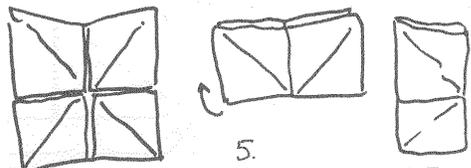
<p>Step 5: Decorate and colour the pirate's hat in your own favourite way!</p>	<p>5.</p> 
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**Paper Airplane**

<p>Step 1: Using 8 1/2" x 11" paper, fold top half to bottom half, then open up.</p>	
<p>Step 2: Fold bottom left corner to centre fold line. Then fold this part to centre again</p>	<p>2.</p> 
<p>Step 3: Repeat step 2 with the top left corner</p>	<p>3.</p> 
<p>Step 4: Now fold your paper in half again along the fold line.</p>	<p>4.</p> 

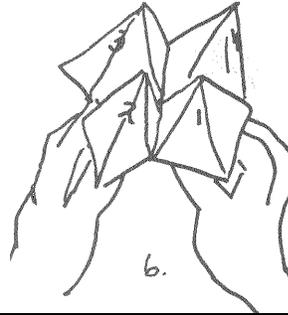
<p>Step 5: Fold each flap top to bottom line. Open as shown. Now your plane is ready. Show me how you can decorate the wings and make it very colourful. Test your paper plane and let it fly! Can you fly at or into a target? Whose plan will fly the farthest?</p>	
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**Fortune Cookie**

<p>Step 1: Fold square in half as shown (bottom to top/left to right)</p>	
<p>Step 2: Fold each corner of square into centre and number as shown.</p>	
<p>Step 3: Turn this smaller square over and again fold each corner into the centre</p>	
<p>Step 4: Open up each flap and write a “good fortune” message in it. Fold it back to center, then colour each triangle a different colour</p>	
<p>Step 5: Fold bottom half to top half; open up, then fold left side to right side; open up</p>	

**Step 6:**

Slip thumb and pointer finger of each hand underneath flaps to open up your “fortune cookie”. Move sections forward or backward. Now you are ready to use your fortune cookie and tell someone his or her fortune.



### **Snowflakes**

To make a snowflake the child will need a square sheet of paper, approximately 8'X8" (white office paper may be best). Instruct the child to fold one sheet of square paper in half, then in half again the other direction. Then instruct the child to fold the sheet again on the diagonal to make a triangle. Next have the child cut around the outside edges, with any desired designs. (Remember if cutting is difficult the child could also tear little pieces out around the outside edges). After the child has finished cutting, unfold the paper to reveal a snowflake. Finished snowflakes can be hung up around the room!

### **Juice Makers**

Children love to help in the kitchen, so it's time to let them make their own juice! You will need a citrus juicer (manual or electric), oranges, knife (for adults) and cups. To start you will need to cut the oranges in half. Show the child how to hold the juicer's handle with one hand and the orange with the other. Holding the orange with your whole hand, press the orange onto the juicer. Encourage the child to imitate your movements. Provide verbal instruction and physically help her as needed. Pour the juice into glasses and enjoy!

To make this activity easier...

- Place your hand over the child's hand to position the orange on the juicer.
- Stabilize the juicer by placing it on a non-skid mat, freeing both hands to hold the orange while juicing ( remember to encourage two hands).

To make this activity harder...

- Have the child switch hands to place and press the orange.
- Have the child pour the juice into large and small cups.
- Encourage the child to squeeze the oranges first in her hands and then use the juicer to extract the remaining juice.

### **Wiggle Worms**

In order to make a wiggle worm and activity board you will need: pencil, glue, pipe cleaner & wiggle eyes, magnetic tape -3/8" long, cardboard with a maze drawn on it, 1/4" dowel, 3" long with magnet glue on end.

How to make the Worm:

Wrap the pipe cleaner around a pencil to form a tight coil. If ends are sharp turn them in slightly. Slip the pipe cleaner off the pencil. Glue wiggle eyes to one end. Glue the magnetic tape to the underside of the worm. Let dry.

How to make the Worm move:

Hold the cardboard make with one hand and place the worm on the maze. Hold the dowel with a tripod grasp. Place the magnet against the cardboard under the worm. Make the worm move through the maze by sliding the dowel.

To increase development of the skilled side of the hand, make sure the last two fingers are curled into the palm while moving the dowel. If not, have the student hold a pom pom with the last two fingers.

Adaptations:

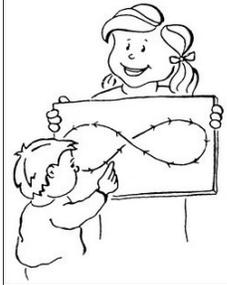
Instead of a maze on the cardboard, have shapes, letters, or numbers and the child can “write” with the worm.

**Crossing Midline Exercises** (*these activities were adapted from Brain Gym exercises developed by Paul E Dennison and Gail E Dennison*)

These activities can be done as a group or individually. Remember to also do these activity with the children so they have a model to follow.

### **Drawing 8's**

With the children standing with one arm extended at shoulder level, have them “draw” a sideways 8, so it looks like an infinity sign. If this is too difficult for the child draw an infinity sign on a poster board and tape to the wall at shoulder level. Have the child stand far enough away that just their finger tip is on the wall and their arm is straight and held at shoulder level. Now the child can trace the 8. Make sure when you do this exercise you go both clockwise and counter clockwise and use both the right and left arm.



### **Cross in Front #1**

With the children standing facing you with hands up and arms extended. Touch left knee while lifting it up with right hand meeting to touch at midline. Return to start and then touch right knee with right hand. Repeat 10 times. If you are noticing some children having difficulty patterning the activity it may help if you put stickers on one hand and the opposite knee so they can match the stickers.



### **Cross in Front #2**

Have the children standing, facing you and arms up in the air. With this exercise they are going to bring their right hand to the inside of their left foot, return to start then touch their left hand to the inside of their right foot.. Lifting their foot up and bring their hand down to meet at midline. Repeat 10 times. If you are noticing some children having difficulty patterning the activity it may help if you put stickers on one hand and the opposite foot so they can match the stickers.

### **Cross in Front #3**

This exercise starts as all the cross in front exercises. The goal of this exercise is to have the child touch their right elbow to their left knee, return to standing then have them touch their left elbow to their right knee. Repeat 10 times. If you are noticing some children having difficulty patterning the activity it may help if you put stickers on one elbow and the opposite knee so they can match the stickers.



### **Cross in Back**

This exercise begins with the children standing with arms ready. This activity is more difficult than crossing in front. The goal is to lift the right foot behind you and touch it with their left hand, return to standing then touch their left foot with their right hand. Repeat 10 times. When touching they should meet at midline around the buttocks level.

### **Stringing Paper Clips**

Have 25 paper clips per student and a timer or clock. Take 10 paper clips, and see how long it takes to hook them end to end using only your fingers to turn them as you link them. Try it again, and see if you can do it more quickly. Then try it with 25 paper clips. Tips:

- Increase or decrease the level of difficulty by changing the amount of shoulder stability the student is using. Less stability is needed if arms are leaning on table or legs. More stability is required when holding arms in space.
- To increase development of the skilled side of the hand, make sure the last two fingers are curled into the palm. If not, have the student hold a pom pom with the last two fingers.

### **Paper Clips on a Lid**

You will need a margarine tub lid (approximately 3”) and paper clips to play. Have the child hold their nondominant hand as if they were playing the piano. Then turn their hand up, so that all of their fingertips are up in the air. Put the margarine lid on top of your fingers. With your dominant hand, pick up 10 paper clips one at a time, holding them all in your palm! Move one paper clip at a time to your fingertips and drop onto lid. See how

many paper clips you can put on the lid. To make this more difficult you can change the amount of shoulder stability the student is using, to make it harder have the student hold their arms in space (not resting arms on table or lap).

This activity can easily be adapted into a math activity with counting and adding.

### **Hole Punch Art**

To make some hole punch art you will need a piece of paper (3"x3" size is best), a hole punch, and a pencil. Draw a picture (shape, letter, number) on a piece of paper or just let the child imagine one in their mind. Using a hole punch the child will follow the outline of what you have drawn. They will use the hole punch with their dominant hand and hold the paper with their "helper hand" turning it as required. (This patterning of the helper hand and turning the page may need demonstrating and physical prompting until the child learns and is comfortable with this activity). When holding the hole puncher make sure the child's thumb is always pointing up.

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