

# Occupational Therapy activities for Home



Occupational Therapy is a holistic profession that helps people across the lifespan participate in the things they want and need to do through the therapeutic use of everyday activities, also known as 'occupations'. We use specialist approaches and techniques to maximise a child's engagement, achievement and independence in all their occupations; including at school, during play and leisure activities and self-care skills such as dressing and feeding.

This pack has been designed by the Occupational Therapists from the London Children's Practice who work at Spa School and includes some activities and games that can be used to target key areas that essential for home and school life, while the students are at home.

If you have any questions or would like more specific advice– please get in contact with one of the school Occupational Therapists – Megan Finch ([megan.finch@londonchildrenspractice.com](mailto:megan.finch@londonchildrenspractice.com)) and Sasha Starr ([sasha.starr@londonchildrenspractice.com](mailto:sasha.starr@londonchildrenspractice.com))



## Toileting skills

*Developing independence with toileting skills is an important but complex skill to master. Many children with Autism find it difficult to achieve this independence with toileting. Some children may struggle to go to the toilet in a different environment or cope when there has been a change to their routine which may result in accidents. Some children may have issues with sensory aspects of toileting such as the sound of flushing, the feel of the toilet seat or toilet paper or the fear of dirtying their hands when cleaning. Some children may struggle from a physical aspect with regards to coordination of reaching around to wipe or to remove clothes. Some children may also struggle with the sequence required for toileting.*

### Strategies to trial to support with toileting difficulties;

#### Positioning

- Sitting in a forward tilted, bent knee posture is optimal for the bowel to relax and release poo.
- Putting a step underneath their feet will be beneficial, especially if their feet do not touch the floor.

#### Sensory

- The bathroom can be an overwhelming space for many who have sensitivities.
- Bright lights, loud flushing noises, humming of fans, cold hard seats and splashing of water can all contribute towards anxiety around using the toilet - be aware of these and consider how to reduce these (e.g lights off, fan off, their favourite music playing in the background etc)

#### Physical

- Getting undressed independently may be difficult for your child, encourage and practice the fastening on your child's trousers. If they are having continued difficulties with this, consider seeking further advice from your Occupational Therapist.

#### Routine

- Build a daily routine of using the toilet that falls in line with bowel and bladder needs.
- We tend to need to go after a physical activity and meals as having a full stomach pushes on the bladder and bowel.
- Consider the transition time between activities within the school or home to avoid having to pull them away from an engaging activity that they don't want to leave.

#### Visuals

- If your child struggles with the sequence of toileting or hand washing then print off visuals (provided) and have these up in your bathroom
- Prompt your child to refer to these visuals when they are in the bathroom - try talking them through it through the door to promote more independence.

## Strategies to trial to support with bottom wiping;

### Awareness

Play games to increase their awareness of where their bottom is and how to reach it;

- Simon Says
- Fill a bum bag with items, attach it to their waste and swivel this around so it is above their bottom. Encourage them to reach round and find certain items in the bum bag.
- Place pegs on the back of their t-shirt and get them to reach round and remove these.
- Get them to mirror you. Pass a beanbag through your legs from the back to the front and then front to back.

### Target Practice/Balloon game



Laminate a picture of a target or use a balloon. Place a small amount of chocolate spread/jam/body lotion on the centre of the target



Encourage your child to tear off 4 pieces of toilet roll at a time- placing one hand on top of the toilet roll and one hand around the piece they want to pull off.



Encourage your child to fold the paper in half and in half again. Try this on the table first and then on your child's leg.



Use the target as a guide- give your child a score according to how close they can stay to just keeping the chocolate spread on the centre of the target.



After one pinch/ small wipe encourage your child to look at the paper and hideaway anything they can see by folding the paper in half.



Continue until the target is clean/ your child needs a new piece of toilet paper.



Once your child has mastered this independently without you helping them physically or giving verbal prompts play the same game but hold the target behind your child's bottom.

You can also try using two balloons, attach these to the back of the chair and practice the above.



Bottom wiping is often a difficult and embarrassing topic to talk about. Often children do not realise the purpose of the target practice game. Once they have mastered this, they may need prompting to transfer this skill to bottom wiping. It's important to help your child to practice this skill independently, allow them to try wiping first before helping them.

You may find that using moist toilet tissues provides your child with more feedback and helps them to be more thorough with their wiping. Make sure the ones you get are flushable!

### Visuals – Female



## Visuals - Male



## Hand washing - Visuals

