**Fine Motor Fun Box Activity Guide**

We hope that you love your box, and especially enjoy the fun memories you and your child(ren) will make together.

One of the best parts of these activities is that your child does not even realize that he or she is working on a variety of skills: pincer grasp, bi-lateral coordination, manipulative prehension, hand/finger strengthening, and visual motor skills. Please reach out @theplayot if you have questions, or to share your toddler at play!

\*\*As a reminder, supervision is required with toddlers and older children who orally mouth objects to reduce the risk of choking\*\*

*Ways to use your included pom pom’s:*

1) **Whisk**: Have a bowl of pom pom's and have your child insert the pom pom's into and out of the whisk. The child should hold the whisk with one hand, and insert the pom's with the other hand. If this is too difficult, the caregiver can help hold the whisk for the child.

2) **Empty Ice Cube Tray**: Place one pom in each slot of the ice cube tray, and have your child pick them out (and then put them back in). You can also use an old egg carton, if it is clean.

3) **Mini Tongs (included!)**: Use a child's size pair of tongs or tweezers and pick up the pom pom's and place them into a bowl. You can use the enclosed tongs in your box ☺

4) **Empty Bottle (included!)**: Have your child pick up the pom pom's using his or her fingers and place them one by one into the water bottle or other container. It is fun to shake them out at the end! For younger children, use a container that has a larger slot, so that the child is successful. As the child becomes successful, the opening can become smaller so that dropping the pom's in requires precision.

5) **Color Sorting**: Have your child sort the pom pom's by color, using a different bowl to identify each color.

6) **Empty Paper Towel or Toilet Paper Roll**: Tape these to the wall (use painter's tape that won't peel off any paint) and have your child stand and drop the pom pom's through the various "tunnels" and see where they end up!

7) **Sensory Bins:** Put dry beans, pasta, rice, uncooked oatmeal, or sand into a container and hide the pom pom's inside. Then, have the child find the pom pom's using his or her hands, tongs, or a spoon. If the child has tactile defensiveness, start by using a tool (spoon or tongs) to find the pom's without having the touch the difficult texture.

*Ways to use your included pipe cleaners:*

\*Sometimes these stems can have sharp edges, so with my littlest ones I will fold over the ends to avoid any ouchies\*

1) **Pipe cleaners + colander:** Put a pasta colander upside down on a table, and have your child push the stems through the holes (and then pull them back out).

2) **Pipe cleaners + cereal:** Grab some cheerios or fruit loops and have your child thread the cereal onto the pipe cleaner. It is easiest if you help by tying a knot on the end of the pipe cleaner, so nothing falls off. I love using something edible with my little ones to ease the worry of them swallowing or putting something into their mouth that they shouldn't! You can also pretend that the finished product is a worm or caterpillar to add in imaginative fun :)

3) **Pipe cleaners + beads (included!):** Use the beads to make a “necklace” with the pipe cleaners. Remember to supervise, as beads or any small objects are choking hazards.

4) **Pipe cleaners and clothespins:** Stick clothespins on the pipe cleaner and have your child practice taking them off and putting them back on. Larger clothespins will be easier for little ones to get the hang of at first, as smaller clothespins require more targeted strength and precision.

5) **Pipe cleaners + empty toilet paper or paper towel roll:** You can punch or cut holes in the empty roll, and have your child thread the pipe cleaners through the holes. You can also make it fun by gluing on "googly" eyes and making it into an octopus or spider.

6) **Pipe cleaners + letters/shapes:** For your older child who is learning shapes and letters, take a piece of paper and draw the letter or shape with marker or crayon. Then have your child try and imitate with the pipe cleaner and place it over the paper. I usually start with imitating how to make circles. You can even try and glue it into place (although with the chenille stems it won't always stick perfectly!). This is a fun way for a child going into kindergarten to practice their name.

*Ways to use your enclosed beads:*

1) Use the enclosed string to work on threading beads (the large ones are typically easier, so start there), which is a simple skill with a myriad of benefits (visual motor improvements, prehensive skills, and bi-lateral coordination).

2) Add in a greater challenge by encouraging threading beads in certain patterns. You can also have your child sort the beads by shape and/or color.

3) Work on stacking the beads, to encourage fine muscle movement grading (being able to use the right amount of force to ensure that the tower does not tip over!).

*Ways to use your enclosed stickers:*

1) Have your child use the stickers to decorate a box (you can use one of the ones in your box), water bottle, or even a piece of paper.

2) For a more “therapeutic” approach, have your child stand in front of a mirror or window, and reach to put the stickers up above their heads, or down below their feet. Make sure they are using both sides of their body, and crossing midline. You can also do this with sticky notes!

*Ways to use your enclosed tape:*

1) Use the tape to make a line on the floor, and have your child walk across it, trying to focus and balance. You can “double” or “triple” up the tape to make it wider (and thus, easier).

2) **Tape + Toy “Rescue”:** Use small toy animals or figurines, and tape them to a tabletop, mirror, floor, or the wall (make sure the tape won’t peel off your paint!). Have your child “rescue” the toys, by peeling off the tape themselves.

3) **Tape + Letters/Shapes:** Work on making letters and/or simple shapes out of the tape. Have your child peel the tape as you talk about each letter, the sound it makes, and what words the letter starts with.