

# OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY LESSON PLAN

STEAM-Powered Careers

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**Subject / Grade Level:** Occupational Therapy / Lower elementary

## Materials:

- ▶ Play-Doh
- ▶ paper
- ▶ pencil

## NGSS Essential Standards and Clarifying Objectives:

- ▶ **K-2-ETS1-1:** Ask questions, make observations, and gather information about a situation people want to change to define a simple problem that can be solved through the development of a new or improved object or tool.
- ▶ **K-2-ETS1-2:** Develop a simple sketch, drawing, or physical model to illustrate how the shape of an object helps it function to solve a given problem.

## Lesson Objectives:

- ▶ Students will learn the difference between fine and gross motor skills.
- ▶ Students will learn about modifications.
- ▶ Students will learn about disabilities.

## Differentiation Strategies to Meet Diverse Learner Needs:

- ▶ Think-pair-share, for students who learn through engaging with others
- ▶ Multisensory learning, to accommodate students who are auditory learners and visual learners, and to encourage students to engage their senses in the learning process
- ▶ Awareness of social and cultural backgrounds of students, in order to reinforce the real-life application of what they are learning



## ENGAGEMENT

### Teacher discussion questions:

- ▶ Ask students about the activities they do with their fingers and hands. What are their favorites? Why do they enjoy those activities?
  - ▶ Response examples:
    - ▶ painting, coloring, playing video games

### Teacher prompt:

- ▶ By doing these activities, you are practicing your fine motor skills.
- ▶ You may remember a time when zipping up your sweater or holding your utensils was hard. That's because you hadn't practiced your fine motor skills enough. Fine motor skills involve the small muscles in your fingers and wrists.

### Teacher discussion questions:

- ▶ Ask students about activities they do that use the big muscles in their bodies. What are their favorites? Why do they enjoy those activities?



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- ▶ Response examples:
  - ▶ jumping rope, skating, playing soccer, because I get to be with my friends

**Teacher prompt:**

- ▶ When you use the big muscles in your arms and legs, you are practicing your gross motor skills.
- ▶ You may remember a time where you couldn't walk or kick a soccer ball far, but as you grew, these activities became easier. That's because you practiced using your gross motor skills.

**EXPLORATION**

**Part 1:**

1. Each student will receive a small amount of Play-Doh.
2. Ask students: What is your favorite animal?
  - a. Responses may include: a dog, a cat, a lion, an elephant
3. Tell students to make their favorite animal out of Play-Doh.
4. Ask students: Which motor skills do we use when we move the small muscles in our fingers and wrists?
  - a. Answer: Fine motor skills

**Part 2:**

1. Ask students: Which motor skills do we use when we move the big muscles in our bodies?
  - a. Answer: Gross motor skills
2. Tell students they are going to use their gross motor skills as they pretend to move like the animal they made out of Play-Doh.
  - a. Students should pretend to swim if they are marine animals, flap their arms if they are birds, and move their arms and legs to walk like their favorite animal.

**Part 3:**

1. Tell students to imagine that their animal can talk.
2. Tell students to imagine that their animal was injured and comes to them for help.
3. Tell students they will need to think like occupational therapists and help their animals by:
  - a. talking to them about how to avoid repeating the same injury.
  - b. modifying an item so that their animal will still be able to move or hunt while facing their physical challenge.
4. Remind students that modifying an item means to make changes to an existing item in order to help a person (or animal) with a specific challenge. For example, a cat with a neck injury may have trouble bending its neck down to eat. To fix this, you can raise the cat's food dish by placing a box underneath it. This will enable the cat to eat on its own.
5. Tell students they will use their pencils and paper to draw the item they want to modify and show how their animal will use it.
6. Assign each student a number between 1 and 3. Each number corresponds to an injury, detailed below:
  - Injury #1: Your animal took too big a leap. As a result, it broke its leg/arm/wing.
  - Injury #2: Your animal got lost on its way home and fell asleep by the railroad tracks. It was awakened by the sound of the train whistle as the train passed by. The whistle was so loud that it hurt the animal's ears. Now the animal can't hear very well.

Injury #3: Your animal stepped on its glasses and is having trouble seeing. As a result, everything is blurry and it is bumping into things.

7. Tell students to think about what their animals can do to make sure this injury doesn't happen again.
8. Tell students to think about how they can help their animal do its Activities of Daily Living, like hunting and moving around.

**Part 4:**

1. Ask students to share how their animal might avoid getting hurt in the same way again.
  - a. Responses for Injury #1 may include: the animal should take a longer way to avoid leaping next time, the animal can practice a small jump before taking a big leap
  - b. Responses for Injury #2 may include: the animal should use its strong sense of smell to lead it home, the animal should look for familiar landmarks to guide it home
  - c. Responses for Injury #3 may include: the animal should keep a second pair of glasses handy, the animal should make sure that its glasses are always put away and not on the ground.

**Part 5:**

1. Ask students to draw their modifications.
2. Ask students to share how they can help their animal with their Activities for Daily Living.
  - a. Responses for Injury #1 may include: the animal can attach a branch to its injured limb to help it move around, the animal can eat a plant-based diet so it doesn't need to chase its prey
  - b. Responses for Injury #2 may include: the animal can rely on its eyes and not its ears, the animal can practice its speed
  - c. Responses for Injury #3 may include: the animal can use swimming goggles until it gets a new pair of glasses

**EXPLANATION**

1. Tell students that almost none of the animals could perform their Activities of Daily Living without item modifications.
2. Remind students that not all disabilities occur as a result of injuries and that some people (and animals) are born with disabilities.
3. Explain that by helping the animal try to do all the activities they did before their injury, they were simulating the work of an occupational therapist. Explain that an occupational therapist helps people overcome or prevent the challenges caused by illness or injury.
4. Explain that a person may be born with a disability, or they might attain a disability through an injury. The person will need help through the modification of items or by practicing new ways of doing things.

**ELABORATION****Teacher prompt:**

- ▶ When talking about the animals, ask the students to think about how the injuries could also happen to people.
- ▶ Remind them that if a person has a disability, they may need modified tools and items to help them do their Activities of Daily Living and more.

**Vocabulary:**

- ▶ **Activities of Daily Living (ADLs):** activities we have to do every day to live and be healthy, such as eating, taking a shower, getting dressed, and using the bathroom—people in occupational therapy work on doing these independently so they can live on their own
- ▶ **adapt:** to change something so it is easier to function
- ▶ **disability:** an injury or illness, or something a person is born with, that causes a person to need modifications in order to see, eat, smell, drink, walk, learn, and more
- ▶ **fine motor skills:** skills we develop when we practice the small movements of our hands
- ▶ **gross motor skills:** skills we develop when we practice using bigger muscles like in our legs or arms
- ▶ **modified:** when an item or space has been altered in a way that allows people to do activities they like, or activities they need
- ▶ **occupational therapist:** a person whose job it is to help people overcome or prevent the physical challenges caused by illness or injury

**EVALUATION**

To end the lesson, ask the students the following questions:

1. Now that you know what fine motor skills are, can you think of other activities you do that help you practice them?
  - a. Responses may include: drawing or tying your shoes
2. Now that you know what gross motor skills are, can you think of other activities you do that help you practice them?
  - a. Responses may include: biking, swimming, running
3. Can you be born with a disability?
  - a. Correct response is “Yes”