



A to Z OT Skill Builders

- Airplane.
- Animal Walks: pretend to be cats, dogs, bear or other crawling animals and make animal noises and chase each other - my 3 yr old likes this to some Wiggles tunes. Crab walk (tummy towards sky, weight on hands and feet), bear walk (tummy towards ground, weight on hands and feet), snake/army crawl (tummy on ground, use arms to move body).
- Anything Done in Dark - walk around in dark outside looking at stars, or pretend that the power went out and you have to use flashlights, play with glow in the dark toys (see science store/discovery store in solar system area)
- Arrange and re-arrange the furniture
- Balance beam
- Balance board
- Balance is a high level postural and sensory skill. The typical five year old should be able to balance on one foot for ten seconds, hop on each foot five times, transition in and out of chair, sit and remove shoes and socks using two hands, and walk a four inch wide balance beam. To work towards these goals: While holding the playground ball steady have the child lift foot to tap ball then return to the floor repeat ten times, eventually release your grip and have child balance foot on ball for ten seconds.
- Balance/hop on one foot
- Ball (or a pillowcase filled with bubble wrap and a single small bag of beans)
- Bounce and roll a heavy ball
- Balloon - bat the balloon to keep it in the air as long as possible.
- Basketball Hoop - for kids - with the hollow balls from the ball pit or socks
- Basketball Net (toddler size) for in garage
- Bean bag chair or sitting in my lap for reading.
- pressure and help with body awareness
- Beanbag chair - sit it in to read, play crashing into the beanbag chair games. Beanbag cahirs make cool pretend mountains too.
- Body mapping: Hide under pillows on the couch or in a tent. Or Play sandwich, pretend to make a sandwich with a bean bag chair, or pillows.
- Book: Where's Waldo
- Bouncing: large balls, hop ball, downstairs couch, mattress,
- Bowling
- Boxes: Push or pull boxes with toys or a few books in it
- Brain Highways - order online
- Bubbles: buster bubbles, squeeze to make bubbles
- Bumble ball and other vibrating toys with a pull string.
- Carry heavy objects-laundry, boxes, groceries
- Carry/push heavy items (baskets with laundry, groceries for Mom)
- Chalk: With big, sidewalk chalk, draw on outside fence, side of house, driveway or picnic table
- Chase someone running with tail tucked in back of pants (later try grabbing or stepping on tail)
- Chin-up bar in the doorway
- Clapping patterns on body, table tops, walls.
- Clay and Play dough
- Clean windows i.e. sliding glass door, using a spray bottle of water and a cloth
- Climb a tree or climb UP a slide
- Color a large "rainbow" on the floor or easel or with sidewalk chalk
- Computer time to develop typing skills



- Constantly refer to directions such as left, right, up, down, backwards, forwards, etc
- Copy me: Walk, run or jump through hula hoops lying on the ground
- Copy rhythms: slap knees, drum, clap, type on computer, etc.
- Crafts: gluing and stickers
- Cross bars/monkey bars at the playground.
- Cushions: we play with sofa cushions and also with large cushions that are about 2x4 feet filled with a sleeping bag or 2 regular pillows.
- Cut out bottom of a large cardboard box so that both ends are open-crawl in and roll
- Dance to music
- Deep Massages
- Deep squeezes or bear hugs
- Dirt- play trains in the dirt, dragging the trains thru the dirt is harder than running them along a track.
- Draw large shapes, letters or shapes outside on a fence with chalk, or on the sidewalk or inside on an easel.
- Draw on easel with markers, or crayons, or paint (if the handle is slim, wrap thin bubblewrap with masking tape about 2 inches up from the end to simulate a "pencil grip")
- Drink water.
- Environment: Try to limit the number of toys that are in clear line of sight.
- Exercise:
- Fabric scrap box: small shoe boxes of different textured fabric can be added to an obstacle course.
- Fall into a beanbag chair
- Finger painting with shaving cream
- Foam Blocks: Make constructions of large blocks to copy (take turns). I
- Foot basketball: Have the child grab beanbag or ball from the floor and bring it up and over behind their head.
- Game: Air hockey (small version)
- Game: croquet golf
- Hammer and nails -Can hammer golf tees into Styrofoam, use a crab mallet
- Hand exercises: pinch open a clothes pin 10x with right hand, then left, using thumb and index finger. Click a ball point pen that clicks, 10x R/L. finger circles. Walking fingers up a pencil. Pop bubble wrap. Travelers mini Lite Brite (same size pegs, battery operated), Penny pass (Wachs), Squeeze balls in the car, Use a stapler
- Hand matching - this game is played face to face, with hands held up like patty-cake, but you change the direction of your fingers, and the child must match, like a mirror, the finger positions -i.e. fingers facing up, palms down, one hand one way and then the other. Cross mid line as you do this copying game and you add another benefit.
- Hang on monkey bar- adult supervision to prevent injury
- Hang/pull-up from trapeze bar or from a chin-up bar.
- Have child roll with bean bag in hand, arms over head, and then throw bean bag at a target about two feet above ground
- Have child roll with bean bag in hand, arms over head, and then throw bean bag at a target about two feet above ground
- Have children walk "small" and then walk "tall" (squatting to tiptoes)
- Heavy work: Carry heavy things: bean bags, etc.
- Hiding: bag of feathers, or corn, lentils, noodles, acorns, pistachio shells, sea shells, rice, for feet or hands.
- High Fives
- Hippity hop ball: Bounce, race.
- Hokey Pokey.
- Hopscotch - draw a simple hopscotch with sidewalk chalk
- Hot dog: game where child lies across end of a blanket and is rolled (ends up inside the rolled up blanket with head outside)



- Hokey Pokey.
- Hopscotch - draw a simple hopscotch with sidewalk chalk, use "hopping" thru the hop scotch as part of an "obstacle course" activity.
- Hungry, hungry hippos
- Indoor trampoline with handle
- Gentle bouncing
- Jumping, swinging or spinning
- Jump or hop in a rhythm
- Karate - We are going to try this after he is 5 years old
- Keyboard
- Keys to the house: give keys to help open door
- Kit toys: toys that require taking apart and putting together, ie train, truck, etc.
- Laundry: push the box to the garage, and help sort laundry
- Lite Brite, can play with it in semi-dark,
- Magnetic train
- Painting with water the trees, fences, sidewalks, and playground equipment
- Mirror: Have child do activities/movements in front of a mirror, so they can see what his body is doing. Encourage imitation
- Missing game: Have the child identify missing parts
- Monkey bars at the park.
- Obstacle Course
- Open doors that are heavy or that have a little bit hard-to-turn door knob
- Piggy back rides. I ask him (he's 3) "where do you want to go? the couch or the bookshelf?"
- Pillow Fights
- Pinwheel- say blow and prompt
- Play dress-up - we have many hats all in a big box...
- Play outside
- Play on playground equipment
- Pouring water into and between bowls-
- Play dates
- Pull cooler on wheels
- Pull other kids around on a sheet or blanket or wagon.
- Punch a punch ball.
- Push weighted carts or boxes across carpeted floor
- Push/pull heavy things: blocks box, wagon, chair, etc.
- Put a tape or chalk line on the floor and have the children walk forward on the line, backwards, do crossover steps over the line, and walk sideways on the line.
- Put coins into a bank, talk about the coin types.."do you want a penny or a quarter? How many pennies do you want
- Puzzles
- Quiet squeeze toys and squeaky ones
- Rake leaves in the yard,
- rolling down a grassy hill - fun at the park
- Rolling in a short tunnel.
- Rope ladders
- Sandbox
- Scooter board
- Screw nuts on to matching bolts.
- Shadow puppets with hands against a light.
- Shopping cart: Go "shopping" with a child's shopping cart filled with items



- Short pieces of crayon and chalk, encourage a better grasp than larger whole ones for very early preschoolers
- Shovel sand into a wheelbarrow, wheel the wheelbarrow to a spot, dump out sand and use a rake or hoe to level it out.
- Shovel and dig in the yard.
- Simon Says
- Sit on a large ball at table- allows for vestibule movement and requires automatic balance reactions.
- Sit-ups - I hold his feet, knees are bent, he lifts his head and shoulders off the floor with arms crossed ..do 10
- Sleep: use lots of blankets (heavy) at night
- Soccer, phase 1: start with fun play with just the parent and child, using feet to kick the ball to each other and to dribble the ball around a small yard.
- Soccer, phase 2: more drills
- Song: row, row, row your boat: both sitting on the floor, pushing
- Spinning:
- Spirograph
- Squeezy balls and toys
- Sweep pine needles off the back porch after a wind storm!
- Swimming
- Swinging
- Sword fights with foam swords
- Table: Help set table (using plastic or paper plates)
- Tent: make a tent with blankets or sheets pulled across a few chairs.
- Throw a ball or bean-bag into a box or through a Hula Hoop (start with BIG targets).
- Throw balls into a toddler swimming pool or ball pit.
- Throw/catch balls.
- Tinker toys
- Tracing
- Trampoline
- Trike (bike)
- tummy: (prone) lying on the stomach and propped on elbows,
- Tunnel- crawl through a tunnel, there are even some bigger cloth
- Turtle walk- place beanbag on the back of the child while on all fours. Use spatial relations to describe pictures and then self-example.
- Vibrating pen (for writing and drawing)
- Wagon. Pull a friend or heavy items in a wagon.
- Walking in our backyard or a wooded area, jumping from rock to rock, or brick to brick (laid flat on dirt area)
- Walking up/down the stairs and singing "I am walking down the stairs, your turn"
- Wash tables, chairs, chalkboard
- Wash the car - we do this with Daddy and mommy every few weeks. H
- Wheelbarrow walking
- Wind-up toys (with big key first, then graduate to small narrow winders).
- Wrestle (dads and brothers love this)
- Writing preparation (homework) - we write down 3-5 things on a list. 1
- Yard work, raking grass/leaves, pushing child's wheelbarrow
- Yoga positions
- Zipper: pull zipper down
- Zoomball: have him practice with the big one and see how far he can propel it. You want it to be long enough that he has to give a full effort to reach the end.