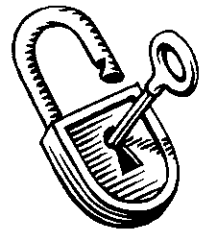


## Activities to Develop Visual Motor Skills

- Ping-pong pass: Have children lie on their stomachs in a circle on the floor. Give children a squeeze bottle and put a ping-pong ball on the floor in front of them. Start the game (using music) and let the children pass the ball back and forth by squeezing air out of the bottles.
- Beach volleyball: Make a volleyball net by tying a string between two chairs. Let the children sit on each side of the net and use a beach ball or balloon to pass. Use bats to hit the ball as another option
- Play connect the dots or dot-to-dot games, do mazes
- Trace pictures through tracing paper. Use cartoons, and simpler line drawings.
- Play games using marbles such as magnetic marble attraction using magnetic marbles, marble bowling, marble shoot out, etc.
- Encourage children to play with picture puzzles, use board puzzles or make their own puzzles by drawing the picture and then cutting it into pieces.
- Play games such as flash light grab, follow the light
- Play ball toss and target games. Use wall targets with under-hand throws. Use baskets as the target and toss a beanbag or ball into it. Use plastic bowling pins to knock down.
- Walk on a line (masking tape, paper) with feet touching.
- Play "Simon Says"
- Make pictures using "Lite Brite"
- Play with fasteners (plugs, zippers, buttons, locks, snaps, levers)
- Make letters or shapes using playdough, pipe cleaners, plasticine
- Threading Cheerios or Fruit Loops onto straws, licorice sticks etc.
- Placing small keys into locks
- Building with sugar cubes
- Spearling raisins, peas or corn with cocktail sticks
- Make towers out of pennies
- Practice interlocking puzzles
- Construction games: Build with Lego, meccano, models, etc.
- Egg and spoon races – marble and spoon races....
- Putting stickers in an album on a target spot
- Play *scrabble*, *spill and spell*, *pick up sticks*, *dominoes* or *checkers*.
- Crafts: macramé, leather lacing, sewing cards, paper weaving, etc.
- Cutting along the lines with scissors





### Fine Motor Activities for Older Students

- Consider games and board games that use the thumb and index finger together such as :

Hi-Q

Card Games: War, UNO, cribbage

Battleship

Checkers

Coin Games

Chinese checkers

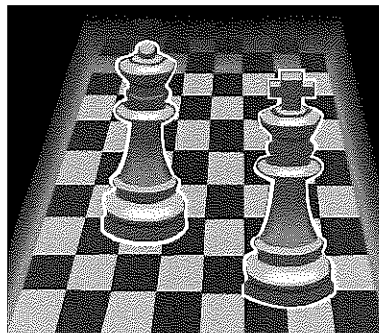
Rummio or Tile Rummy

Travel size board games with small pieces eg: chess, four in a row

Spoons

Lego

- Activities such as model crafts (model planes, model cars, building/construction tasks such as “mechano”, and paint by numbers, work on dexterity and require detailed movements of the fingers
- Knit a scarf or a toque, sewing or needle point – these activities work on the skill of translation which is moving the thumb and index finger together, towards and away from the palm
- Playing the piano or other musical instruments works on finger individuation
- Practice eating with chopsticks
- Making jewelry such as bracelets and necklaces with various sizes of beads – focus on using the thumb and index finger to string the beads



## Adjusting Pencil Pressure



### Heavy Pencil Pressure

Heavy pencil pressure can occur when a student has poor awareness of finger placement and movement or poor control of the smaller muscles of the hand. Sometimes correcting the pencil grasp may help to solve this problem. The following are strategies for helping the student that writes TOO HARD:

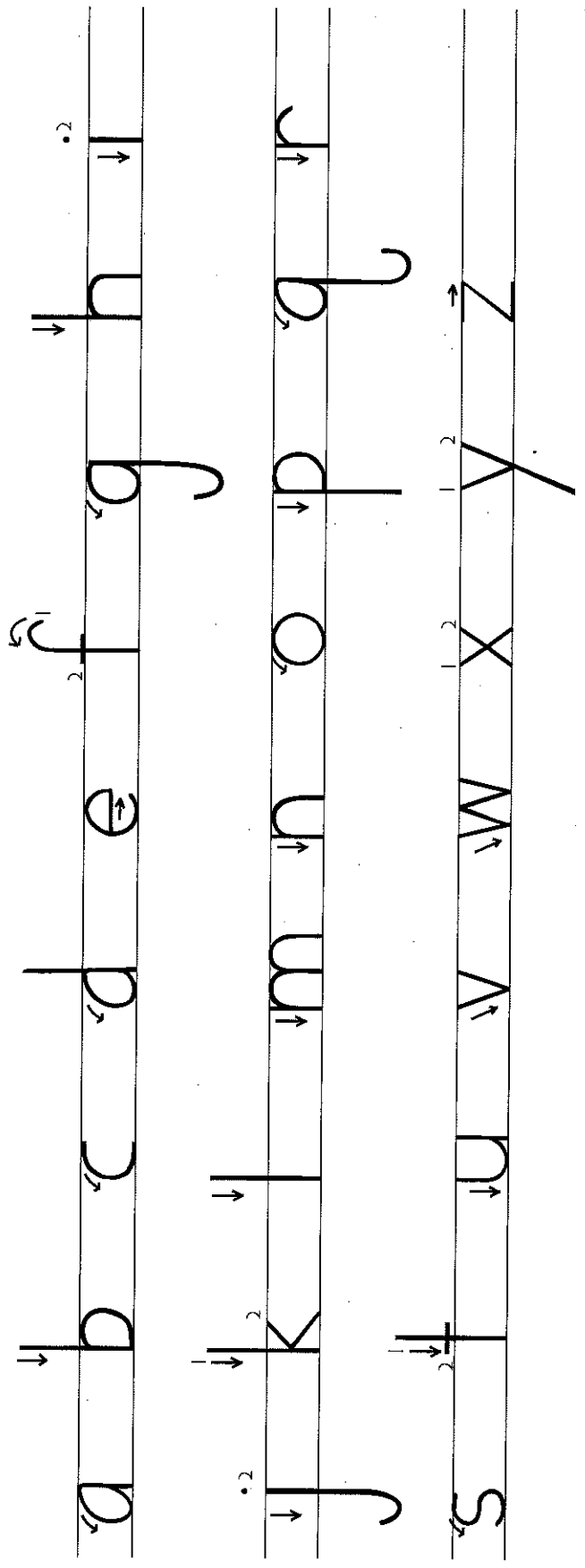
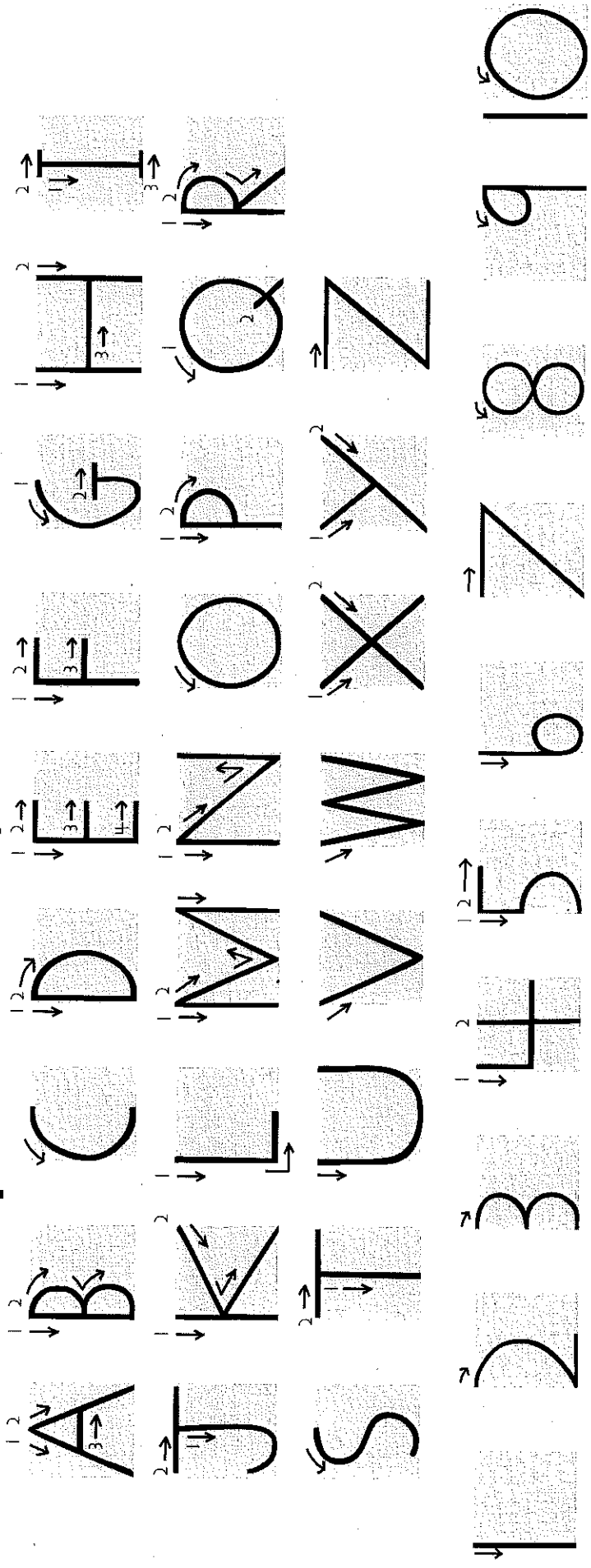
- Warm up the muscles of the arms and hands prior to beginning writing.
- Try writing on different textured surfaces (sandpaper, paper on top of carpet, sidewalks with chalk, etc.)
- You can also have the student place their paper on a piece of Styrofoam or Fun-foam (if they press too hard they will poke holes in their paper) OR try having the child write on a phone book.
- Have the student either use a #3 pencil (which isn't as dark as a #2 pencil) OR a mechanical pencil (the tips break easily so the student has to learn to control the amount of pressure used).
- Write on tissue paper
- Try **invisible writing** -have the student make lighter and lighter strokes until they can barely see the line. This increases their awareness of *how it feels* to produce different degrees of pressure on the pencil.
- Have the student write on their 3 ring binders, if they are the slightly padded nylon type. Not only do they have the advantage of the "slant" but also the pressure will decrease or they will put holes in the paper.



• Try **ghost writing** -have the student write a word lightly on the paper and then erase it without leaving any marks. The student wins if they are able to do this.



# Capitals, Numbers, and Lowercase Letters



## **Activities to Improve Bilateral Coordination**

Bilateral hand and arm use is the ability to use the two arms or hands together to complete an activity. This skill develops through childhood, starting first with both hands doing same action, then moving towards both hands doing different actions.

### Alternating movements

- Drum or Bongos: with both hands one at a time (reciprocally); try to imitate a rhythm
- Ride a tricycle or bicycle
- Air biking: while on your back, raise your feet up toward the ceiling and pretend you're pedalling a bike
- Walking, running, skipping, swimming
- Play follow the leader hopping on one foot, then the other; then 2 to 3 times on each foot, alternate repetitions and feet; add arm motions to increase the challenge
- Juggle scarves

### Activities that require different skill sets for each hand

- Cut out all types of things with scissors: cut straws and then string up pieces for jewelry, cut play doh or putty, cut up greeting cards and make a collage, cut styrofoam packing peanuts
- Spread peanut butter, or any spread on crackers, frost cookies; be sure to hold the cracker or cookie still
- String beads to make jewelry
- Coloring, writing, drawing: be sure the other hand is holding down the paper
- Trace around stencils: the helper hand holds the stencil down firmly while the other draws around the stencil

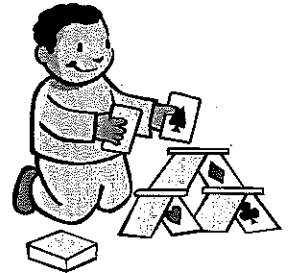
### Body Awareness activities

- Simon Says, Hokey Pokey
- Wheelbarrow walking
- Crawl on all fours: forward, backward, sideways or change direction on command.
- Crawl through an obstacle course
- Animal Walking: Gorilla crouch walking, Bear walking, Inchworm walking, Snake crawling, Bird walking, Crab walking.



## **Activities to Encourage Development of Visual Perception**

- Obstacle Courses
- Mazes
- Picture searches
- Find the difference between two pictures
- "Fill in the missing letter" word games
- Practice recognizing shapes, objects, letters and numbers by feel. Draw on their back with your finger and get them to guess what shape you made.
- "I Spy" or "Where's Waldo" books and card games
- Matching shapes/ shapes sorter
- Build a tower with a pattern (red, blue, red, etc) and encourage child to imitate this.
- Checkers/ Chess
- Battle ship
- Hangman game
- Memory games
- Memory scrum- grab as many matching pairs as you can from card pile
- "Go Fish" and other card games
- Dot-to-dot puzzles
- Tic-tac-toe
- Picture puzzles
- Making Lego shapes using visual instructions
- Copying patterns of shapes/ objects
- Sorting and matching socks/ mittens by colors
- Strengthen spatial concepts (eg: up, down, beside, etc)



## Activities to Work on Visual Discrimination

**Letter Lingo** –play like Bingo, only cards will have letters instead of numbers

L I N G O

b e r o z

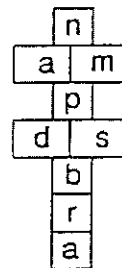
"Under the O - q"

j n g r q

d k g w n

m p s e b

**Letter Hopscotch** –the student hops on one foot from square to square and either say the letter or think of a word that begins with that letter

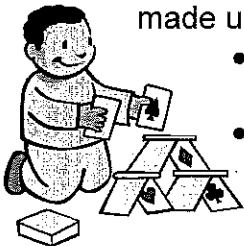


**Hangman** –use words that you know the student is familiar with

**Scrabble** –commercial Junior Scrabble games can be purchased and are great for learning and combining letters.

**Crosswords** –make up your own on graph paper or look for children's versions.

**Letter Card Games** –A deck of cards with the letters of the alphabet can be made up, use these cards to play:



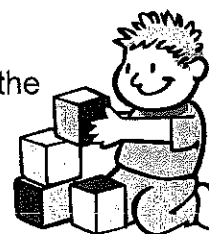
- *Go Fish!* –letters can be matched or you can try to make words by asking your partner for the letters you need
- *Concentration* –lay down cards in columns and try to pick up two that match; keep the pairs in they match, if not, try again.

**Word Scramble** –Think of a list of words that your student is familiar with. Scramble up the letters and let the student unscramble them.

rukct	-truck
tmeh	-them
hewer	-where
reov	-over
owh	-how, who
isht	-this

**Similarities and Difference** –Use almost matching pictures, circle the differences

**Block Designs** –Match the patterns follow the diagrams



## Motor Planning

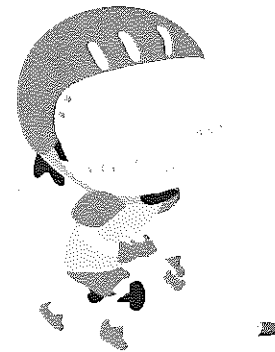
### What is it?

We use our motor planning ability to do complex movements or series of movements automatically. Examples of complex movements are activities such as dressing, writing, climbing on playground apparatus or riding a bicycle. The technical name for difficulties with motor planning is *dyspraxia*. A child is said to have dyspraxia when he or she has significant difficulty performing complex movements and that difficulty is not caused or explained by other motor or medical problems. It can affect fine motor, gross motor and/or speech development, but a child may or may not have difficulties in all of these areas.

When we first learn a new motor skill, we watch our movements carefully. We make many decisions and adjustments in order to achieve the desired movements that we are striving for. After we have repeated the same sequence of movements many times, it then begins to feel familiar. A pattern will develop and this movement will become more and more firmly established in our memories. Finally, after much repetition, it becomes automatic. We are able to perform automatic skills easily, with little or no conscious attention to component parts. The ability to perform these movements automatically requires motor planning. Therefore, children with motor planning difficulties have trouble making movements automatic. Typically, a child with motor planning problems will have difficulty copying complex movements and will have difficulty producing complex movements on his/her own.

### What might be seen in the classroom, gym or playground?

- Clumsiness, awkwardness
- Required assistance putting on or removing clothing
- Unusual ways of forming letters and numbers
- Difficulties learning to tie shoes
- Reluctance to participate in paper/pencil tasks
- Avoidance of tasks, sometimes by talking
- Trouble keeping up with actions of songs and finger plays
- Difficulty imitating and learning movements in gym class (eg. jumping, hopping on one foot, somersaults, galloping, skipping, jumping rope, following dance routines)
- Over-exaggeration of emotional needs
- Preference to follow routine
- Good understanding of instructions but difficulty with execution of tasks
- Avoidance of climbing on play structures





## Key components to help children with motor planning difficulties

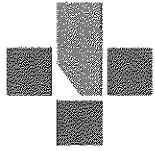
- Realize that the underlying motor planning problem cannot be fixed.
- These children have the ability to learn many complex tasks if they are taught strategies and are given adequate support and practice.
- Do not make fun of a child when he/she cries or becomes frustrated "for no apparent reason."
- Soothing words of understanding will help a child to feel less alone with his/her struggles.



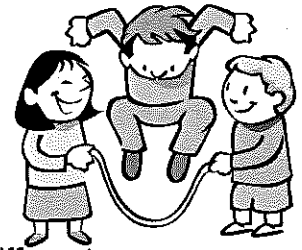
## Strategies for Teaching New Motor Tasks

- Orient yourself in the same direction as the child when teaching/explaining a task. Sit or stand beside the child or work over top of his/her shoulders.
- Allow time for the child to observe other children.
- Teach the child to break down motor tasks into smaller steps and allow the child to become familiar with the first part before adding the next step. Encourage him/her to ask for help if required.
- Strongly encourage the child to use self-talk through tasks. Self talk has been found to be a helpful and easy tool for children to use (eg. Say the steps of the movement as they do it).
- Encourage the child to think through the movement mentally (mental practice) and then allow time for practice and repetition.
- Give extra time to practice the difficult steps of a movement.
- Gradually bring together the steps of the movement into the whole.
- Start by practicing the movement slowly and increase speed as the child begins to master the movement.
- Practice newly acquired skills under different conditions (eg. practice skipping on uneven ground, or as part of a game or series of other movements).
- Use the same process when teaching a movement in steps when teaching a series of movements.
- Develop a general base of motor activities before developing specific skilled activities (eg. teach running, jumping, hopping, galloping and skipping skills before incorporating them into games or other activities).
- Start learning simple and then move to more complex ones (eg. teach running and hopping on one foot before teaching galloping and skipping).





## Body and Body-Spatial Awareness



### Defined:

#### Body Awareness:

- This refers to the child's ability to identify and understand the different parts of the body and being able to discriminate between right and left.

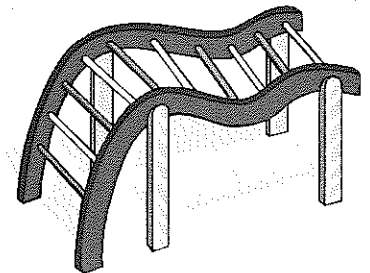
#### Body- Spatial Awareness:

- This refers to the awareness and the ability to move body parts and the body as a whole around the environment  
Eg: understanding of forward, backward, sideways, etc.

Body and body spatial awareness refers to the child's ability to know where his or her body is in space. Opening jar lids without looking at your hands, gauging how far to duck your head when getting under a low table, and sitting down without constantly looking at the chair all require you to have a good sense of body awareness.

Children with body and body spatial awareness difficulties may present as:

- Clumsy
- Disorganized with personal belongings
- Falls out of a chair
- Frequently breaks things
- Difficulty moving without looking at his/ her arms and legs
- Difficulty putting on jacket, sweater or backpack
- Difficulty standing in line
- Poorly developed fine motor skills
- Unable to climb on playground equipment
- Student pushes too hard or too soft on pencil or crayon
- Rips the paper when erasing
- Shuffles feet when walking

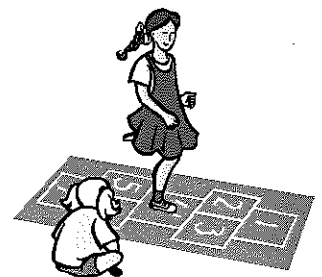
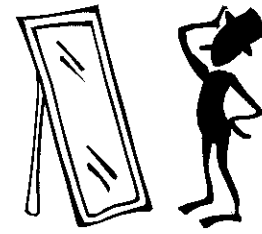


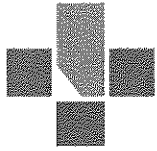
Heaving, lifting, pushing, pulling and carrying all help your brain to know where your body is located in space. Suggestions to help students who have difficulty with body and body spatial awareness include:

- Carry a heavy stack of books
- Do frog jumps or jumping activities
- Do pushups, pull ups or wall pushups
- Play on jungle gym. Start on low equipment and advance to taller
- Play on monkey bars or play tug-of-war
- Play "Simon Says"
- Try beanbag activities
- Swing by lying on stomach rather than sitting on swing seat
- Use teeter-totters

## Strategies to Further Develop these Skills:

- Label body parts, identify body parts in the mirror
- Touch different body parts with various textures
- Body paints to identify various body parts
- Move different body parts in different ways  
Eg: rolling, sliding, and turning in circles
- Make body into various shapes  
Eg: long, wide, small, etc
- Make body “alphabet letters” or imitate various positions
- Simon Says
- Body puzzles
- Practice “Mat Man” or making a body from paper shapes
- Body tracing
- Use colored ribbons to identify left and right
- Play “Statues, Hokey-Pokey, Mother May I...”
- Move body through obstacle courses- through, under, over, between, etc.
- Mazes- walk through using left and right
- Balance beam activities- forwards, backward, sideways, etc.
- Animal walks
- Angels in the snow
- Log roll
- Passing a ball
- Mimes and charades
- Hopping and jumping in various directions (eg: hopscotch)
- Move body to the left or right in relation to objects
- Examples of appropriate sports: swimming, dancing, gymnastics, karate





## Modifications to Accommodate for Difficulty with Written Expression

- Set realistic and mutually agreed upon **expectations** for neatness/legibility.
  - When required, focus on **written content**, and praise this aspect of writing. Avoid pressures of speed and accuracy.
  - During activities designed to improve penmanship, allow **extra time**, encourage **checking and correction** of written work, and stress **legibility**. Keep practice sessions **brief and regular** with warm-ups and movement breaks built into the session.
- Ensure the student can foresee the **end of the task**.
- **Modify student's work volume**. Students who grasp cognitive concepts quickly can be allowed to complete fewer problems on a test or work sheet. E.g., the student and teacher may have a pre-arranged rule to only complete odd-numbered problems on a worksheet. Reduce repetitive writing of vocabulary or spelling words.
- Allow the student to **type, record, or give answers orally** instead of writing. Learn computer keyboarding with an appropriate program (e.g., Mavis Beacon, All the Right Type, Type to Learn). There are also some great websites with free typing programs (e.g., [www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing/))
- **Reduce the amount** of copying from text and board.
  - Provide **photocopies** of notes from teacher or a classmate.
  - Allow the use of a **scribe** for longer assignments.
- Accept **key responses** instead of complete sentences –use **fill in the blanks** or **point form** to demonstrate knowledge.
- Break down assignments into **smaller chunks**. Have student complete one step at a time and check in with parent/teacher at the completion of each step. (This is a good strategy if the student tends to rush through their work.)
- **Promote pacing** of work by presenting worksheets one section/problem/part at a time (cover the rest or cut paper into pieces), instead of a full page of work.
- Provide worksheets with **fill in the blanks** for math, rather than requiring the student to focus on lining up numbers when copying the problem –Use of **graph paper** can also help with lining up numbers.
- If student has a tendency to rush, try using a **timer** so the student is required to work until the timer goes off. Gradually increase the time on the timer.

