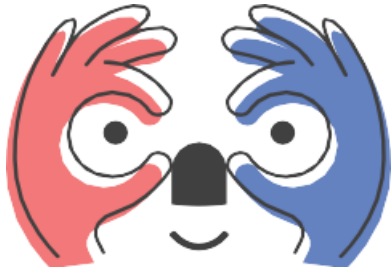


**Castle Hill Speech &
Occupational Therapy**

A Guide for Home Therapy Activities During Lockdown

***From the Castle Hill Speech &
Occupational Therapy Team***





Preface



This guide has been developed by the team of Castle Hill Speech & Occupational Therapy to assist parents during lockdown.

In this guide are a practical set of activities to help you see through the lockdown and develop your child's motor, communication, and social skills. The activities in this guide have been adapted from your usual therapy sessions to meet the needs of staying home during the lockdown.

The use of functional activities in play or interesting tasks help facilitate the improvement of skills as well as your relationship with your child.

We hope you enjoy using this book to make your time at home with your child fruitful and enjoyable.



Speech Pathology Activities



Communication is a part of everyday life – so this means that there are plenty of opportunities to practice your speech pathology goals just about everywhere! It takes minimal prep and some creativity so that it can still be fun and creative activities.

Picture Scavenger Hunt



Pictures that you are using to practice in speech therapy can be used at home in a fun way! Of course, in order to get the prize, they need to make the best sentence or say each word clearly.

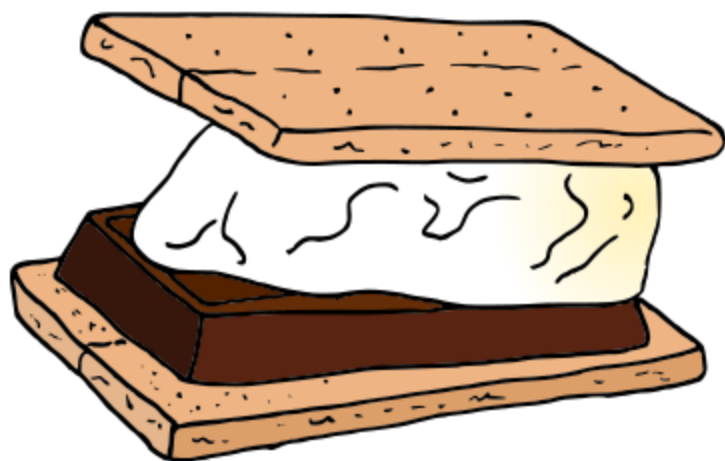
1. Use pictures for practice at home and hide them around the house.
2. The person who finds the most things around the house wins.

Trying Some Simple Recipes



Cooking is a great lockdown activity to support communication and language skills while they are at home. You can cook simple snacks. Some concepts and skills you can target are:

- Following instructions
- Flexibility – helps with problem solving when something does not go to plan. Mistakes can happen. We can use this opportunity to talk about our feelings and reactions.
- Sequencing and listening comprehension: Since following a recipe is all about following a sequence, you can use visuals and simple narrative talk to support children to complete activities.
- Vocabulary: New vocabulary related to the kitchen can be explored, like *mixing* or *texture* or *appliances*.
- WH-questions: Answering simple questions about what to do next, where to find things, and when to do things is a simple, low pressure way to answer questions.



Sample Recipe: Making S'mores!

Vocabulary: Ingredients List



Chocolate Chips



Spoon



Popsicle Stick



Bowl



Plastic Bag



Microwave



Rolling Pin



Baking Sheet



Marshmallows



Graham Crackers



Measuring
Cups

Steps:

1.



Put 2 cups
chocolate chips



In small bowl

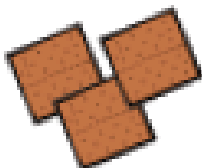


place in
microwave



and melt

2.



Put 3 Graham
Crackers



In a bag



and crush

3.



Push



1 marshmallow



on a popsicle
stick

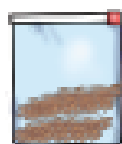
4.



Dip the
marshmallow



In the melted
chocolate



then in the
crushed crackers



and eat.

Looking at Old Photos and Talking about Them



You can use your personal snapshots to help conversation practice happen. You can use photos of your recent holidays and everyday activities to work on

conversation skills, target specific sounds, or teach new vocabulary and concepts.



In the Sand



You can use sand in the backyard sandbox or at the beach to hide laminated pictures or objects. When they find the objects and speech cards to have them say

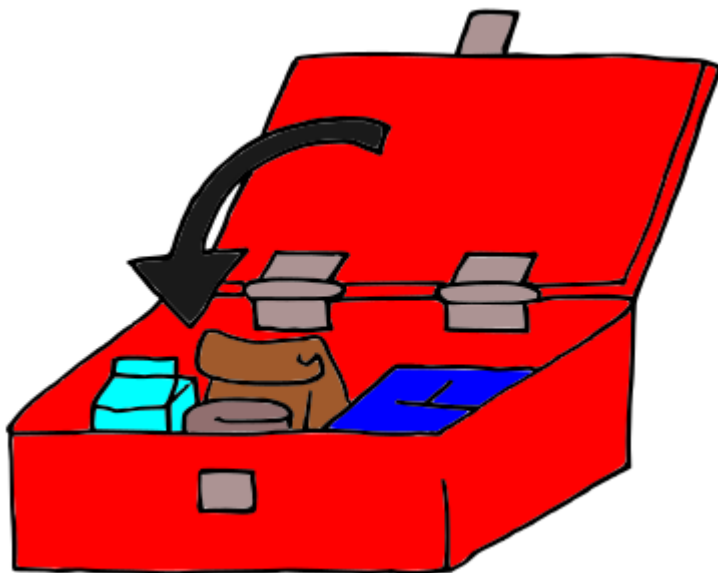
the word as they put them in their sand pail. Make sure the kids can find them with their little hands!

Using Books

Choose books that are interesting for your children and help them find pictures or words that starts with sounds they are working on. You can also talk about what is going on in the pictures to practice conversation or reasoning skills.



What's in the Box?



Place familiar objects in a box. Have your child take one out and tell you its name and how to use it. You can also talk about the colours, shapes, and what the object does or looks like.



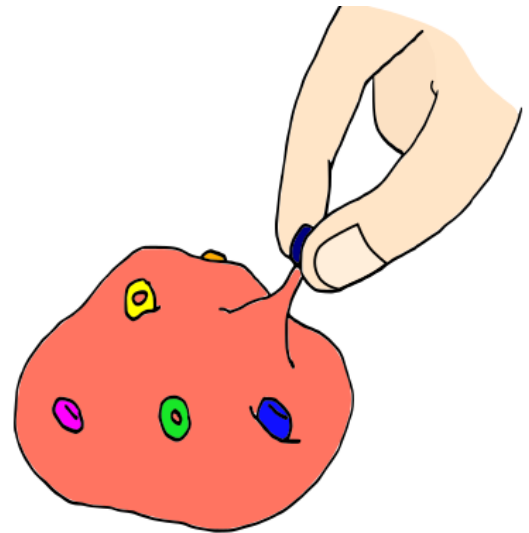
Occupational Therapy Activities

Everything we do that occupies our time is considered an occupation. The main occupation of children is to play, and we know that children learn best through play.

Here are some suggestions for how you can re-purpose regular household items and encourage your child's skill development through play.

Hiding Beads in Playdough or Theraputty

This activity helps promote the pincer grasp that is an important precursor for a pencil grip. Take beads, coins, and counters inside the playdough. Tell your children that you are looking for hidden treasures inside the therapy.



Sensory bin, water play or rice play

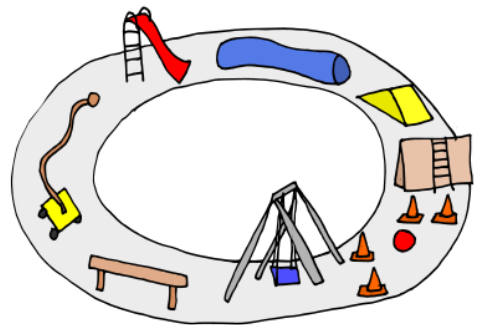


Give your children the opportunity to explore different sensations in sand, water, or rice. Talk about what they are doing to describe different sensations they are feeling.

It helps to build nerve connections in the brain, encourages the development of motor skills, support language development, it encourages scientific thinking and problem solving, and it can involve mindful activities which are beneficial for children.

Obstacle Course

One of the best ways to work on balance, coordination and motor planning skills for children is to create and navigate an obstacle course. You can make an obstacle course, using things you already have at home, such as pillows, blankets, chairs, and baskets. Involving your child in the design and set up of the course can



help to promote their creativity, planning and play skills. You could even set them challenges, to help guide their thinking. For example: Do you think you could build a path from the loungeroom to the kitchen? You can also design the course to suit your child's current level of skill, as well as strengthen the specific skills they are working on in therapy. For example: incorporating uneven surfaces, such as pillows stacked on top of each other, will test your child's balance.

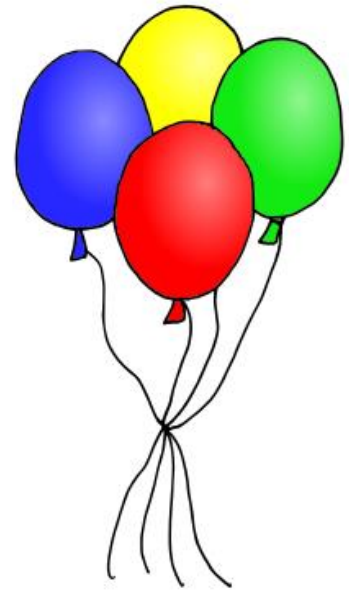
Playing Playdough or Lego

Free play with Lego or playdough is a great way to promote your child's play skills as well as develop their fine motor skills. Using tools, such as a rolling pin or cutters, or hiding things inside the playdough is a great way to work on hand and finger strength and coordination. You can also work on planning and visual-perceptual skills, you can encourage your child to copy shapes, structures and patterns using Lego, or perhaps you can set up your own playdough restaurant and make food to order, the possibilities are endless!



Balloon Games

Using a balloon is a simple way to develop your child's coordination, motor planning and ball skills. You can adapt the activity based on whatever your child is working on. For example, to support their visual tracking and motor planning, you may try to hit the balloon to a specific target, such as a sticker on the wall, or into a basket. If you are working on early ball skills, you may use a balloon to work on throwing and catching with a partner or play a game where the balloon cannot touch the ground.



Get your child into active, weightbearing positions to strengthen their core and develop their body awareness:



Completing activities and games in body positions where your child's core is activated is a great way to develop their strength and awareness of their bodies.

Positions to try include:

- Laying on your belly with arms extended out.
- Kneeling
- All fours
- Long sitting (with legs extended)

Completing an activity, such as a puzzle, drawing or stacking blocks, while in these positions helps to also work on some fine motor skills.

Have Family Fun!

Even with all the activities in the world, your child will learn and engage best, when they are having fun. Focus on being present and playful, and everyone is sure to have a great time!

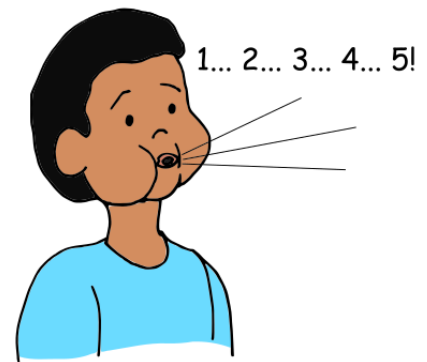
Be Kind to Yourself:

Lockdown, COVID, working and schooling from home are all very challenging and stressful. Keep this in mind and remember that there is no such thing as a perfect parent. Make sure that you are setting realistic expectations for yourself and taking time to re-fill your emotional cup. Children learn from watching and observing their main caregivers, if you can model self-care and self-kindness, they

will learn to do this for themselves. This is crucial to good mental health and wellbeing, and it is never too early to model these behaviours.

Make a list of Strategies with Coping and Mindfulness Visual Aid or Book

Visual aids are important to help children stay focused and regulated during a difficult time of lockdown. Making a book that compiles these ideas are great for these trying time.



Work with your child to come up with 5-7 things you can do when they are frustrated, too bored, or need a break. Some ideas include:

- Counting down or blowing-out pretend candles
- Sitting down in a quiet corner or asking for a break or deep pressure.
- Doing star jumps or quick exercises.
- Eating crunchy foods like carrots or popcorn.
- Listening to good music.



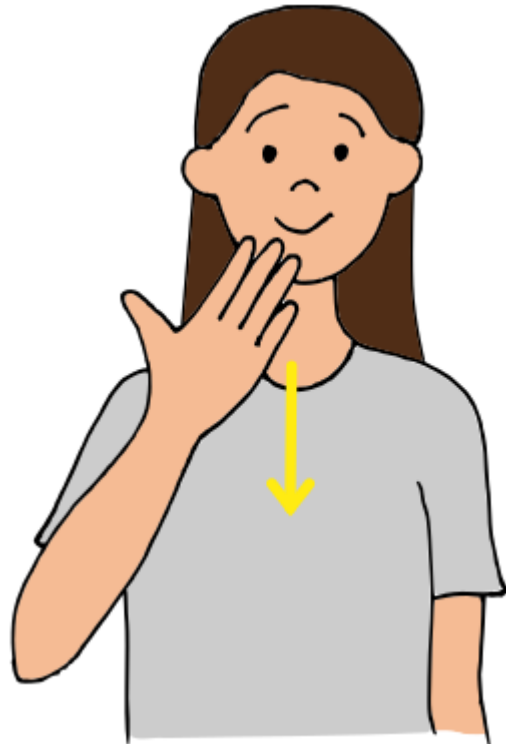


Behaviour Management

During lockdown, you can experience an escalation of behaviours that challenges at home when you and your family are always together. It may be helpful for you to think about the following:

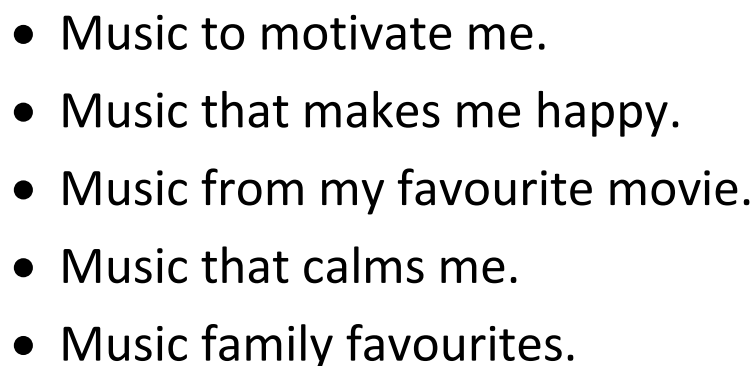
1. Understand where the 'unwanted' behaviours are coming from and what they are "saying". This may help you understand your child and reduce their behaviours.
 - a. Do they need positive attention?
 - b. Are they bored or finding tasks difficult?
 - c. Feeling unwell?
2. Consider a consistent routine despite always being at home. This may mean choosing activities that continue throughout the week (i.e. homework, reading time, bath times, meal times, etc.). You also need to consider the introduction of new things and how this might affect your child's behaviour.

3. Vary your child's activities throughout the day. Give them opportunities to play with toys, watch TV/iPad as well as read books and practice homework.
4. Displaying Behaviour that challenges are distressing for the person and for anyone in the immediate environment. Consider the following if you see a change in the person's behaviour:
 - Provide choice where possible.
 - Praise and reward positive behaviour.
 - Keep language simple.
 - Use positive language.
 - Divert or distract.





Families can choose an emotion and search for songs for each playlist. Make sure YouTube is on guided access. Themes for your playlist could be:



Children can create art, such as painting, drawing, or collaging to match the music or their feelings.

This is a good extension of our previous activity.

Make your own instruments.



You can things around the house such as empty bottles and fill it with rice/beans/pasta.

You can also dye the rice with food colouring to make it more colourful and sensory. Plastic containers can turn into a fun guitar or stringed

instrument with elastic bands around it.

Pots and pans are also a favourite with young children but not parents (cover your ears!!!).

Literacy and numeracy

Music can help with new educational material. For example, the alphabet song is just Twinkle Twinkle Little Star!

You can create math song melodies to learn addition, subtraction, division multiplication and more.



Use rhythm and melody to help with spelling (remember in Matilda, Ms Honey taught a song for D.I.FFI, C. U L T Y).

Music & Movement

Sometimes you might find your kids just need to move around. A good game is Musical freeze.



Play a song and ask them to freeze (You can also dedicate themes - animals/nature).

Using Old MacDonald....



1. Place some toy animals/creatures in a soft cloth bag/ pillowcase/box with lid.

2. Sing the song "Old MacDonald" and when it's time to sing... you can say and on that farm he had a ...

3. Your child then takes an animal out of the bag - with or without looking. (So that what comes out of the bag is always a surprise)

4. Sing the appropriate animal sounds or ask them to name the animal!