

1-Train Your Child Pre-Academic Skills

by Malar G

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TIME SUBMITTED	29-OCT-2014 04:43PM	WORD COUNT	6545
SUBMISSION ID	470721893	CHARACTER COUNT	30285

Train your Child in Pre-Academic Skills



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All India Institute of Speech and Hearing
Manasagangothri, Mysore-570 006

'Train Your Child in Pre - Academic Skills', published by the All India Institute of Speech and Hearing, Mysore- 6.

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Published by

Dr. S. R. Savithri
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All India Institute of Speech and Hearing
Manasagangothri
Mysore- 6

Year: 2012

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Mysore 570 006

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Price: ₹ 300/-

Preface

Dear Parents,

You are special in the sense that you have the privilege of bringing up a special child. Your child might have any of the problems like hearing impairment, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, learning disability, etc. that might in turn lead to problems in listening, speaking, reading and writing. You might already be availing clinical services or training at home to help your child improve in these skills. If your child is nearing or past the developmental stage of 3 years, you should also start thinking about preparing the child for schooling. We call this as 'Training in School Readiness Skills'. Getting ready for school begins with training the child to:

- Take care of him/herself even in the absence of caregivers and immediate family, like in feeding, washing, moving around independently, etc.
- Behave appropriately with the other people around like cooperating and complying with directions of adults, playing and sharing with friends.
- Sustain attention and concentrate on specific/learning tasks without getting distracted or disinterested frequently and
- Be disciplined and follow rules and regulations in the learning environment.

After preparing him/her on the behavioural front, the next important aspect is to prepare him/her on the academic tasks that are ahead of them. In formal education, all learning is based on three fundamental skills, namely, reading, writing and number work. Before the child starts getting actual training in these skills a little bit of preparation will help. For example, before starting to read, a child should be able to hold a book, focus his/her visual attention, track visual materials in a specified direction, make out the top and bottom of visual materials, be able to identify or discriminate between different types of lines and shapes, and more than anything be eager to make sense out of different kinds of images, prints, etc.

Similarly, before beginning to write, your child should be able to hold writing tools like slate-pencils, chalk, pencils, pens, crayons, etc. S/he should have stamina to draw/write long lines, and should be able to control the lines and guide them with their vision. S/he should not only be able to copy lines, shapes or patterns that you provide; but should take interest to create their own meaningful images.

As you are aware, number work is to do with measurements of various aspects in our environment. Before you start teaching your child to count and measure, they should be able to informally measure and compare things in their environment like small vs. big, heavy vs. light, and so on. Besides all this, children should have basic awareness about the different people, things and materials that happen around them. You might have already started training your child in many of these skills; if not, this guidebook will provide you an idea as to how to go about the task.

There are three sections in this book, (I) Pre-reading; (II) Pre-writing ; and (III) Pre-number. You have to introduce these parts in the same order for a child who is yet to initiate reading, writing and mathematical skills. However, if a child has acquired good skills in reading but not in writing and mathematical skills, you may choose part 2 and 3, respectively.

The age range is provided in some sections with the intention of giving you an idea about the activities which could be more appropriate for children in that age range. However, you may try those activities even with children who are younger or older and notice whether they are useful to your child. I am sure you will be able to give us good feedback and suggestions regarding the activities described. We will try to incorporate them in the future editions.

You can access this book from www.aiishcredm.in. We hope this resource material will help you to teach your child to develop Reading, Writing and Arithmetic skills. For any further queries or suggestions, please contact email: director@aiishmysore.in (Subject: Train Your Child - Pre Academic Skills).

Yours and your child's well wisher,

Dr. S. R. Savithri
Director

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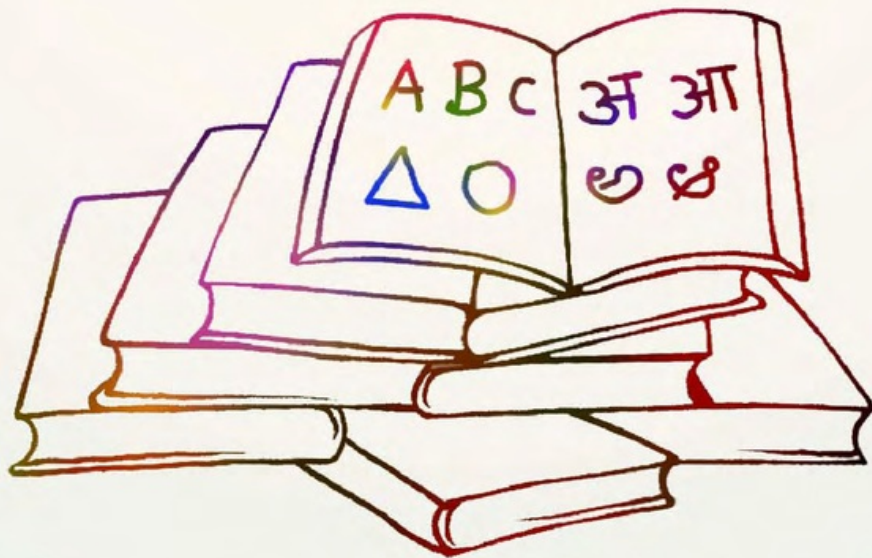
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SECTION - I
PRE-READING SKILL TRAINING



PRE-READING SKILL TRAINING

Dear parents,

Here are a few tips of how you could prepare the child for skills s/he needs at school, namely reading, writing and number work.

Reading

Reading is an activity where one sees written symbols clearly and understand what they mean. Written symbols usually mean letters of a language or mathematical numerals and operational symbols which are made up of lines and shapes of different kinds.

Pre-reading Training

Before starting to read, there are certain visual abilities that the child should have. For example:

- 👁 See and identify similar pictures, lines or shapes.
- 👁 See and identify the differences between pictures, lines and shapes.
- 👁 See and remember pictures, lines and shapes.
- 👁 See and guess part of pictures, sequence pictures representing actions, guess objects from shadows and so on.

To help the child develop pre reading skills, the following domains needs to be worked on:

- 👁 Visual Identification
- 👁 Visual Discrimination
- 👁 Visual Analysis

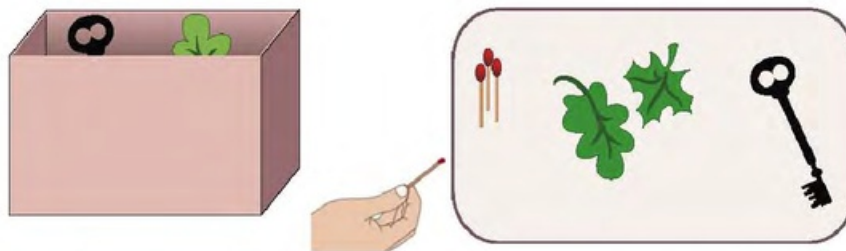
- Visual Memory
- Visual Tracking
- Developing related motor skills
- Developing motivation for reading

• VISUAL IDENTIFICATION

Visual identification includes identifying the similarity between pictures, lines or shapes. Here are some simple activities to train the child for this activity.

Activity I: Identification of Similar Objects

Step 1: Spread some common objects in front of the child. You can begin with objects like tooth brush, comb, pencil, paper, matchsticks, leaves, stones, vegetables, etc. for which you can find identical pairs. It is better if the child is familiar with the items.



Step 2: Keep one set of object in a box. Keep them hidden away from the sight of the child. Keep another set of similar looking object spread before the child.

Step 3: Take one object out of the box at a time, and hold it beside the objects spread before the child.

Step 4: Teach the child to identify similar objects placed before him/her.

Step 5: If the child has identified correctly, appreciate it. If not, holding the child's hand, guide the hand closer to the similar object laid in front of the child and help the child identify the similarity.

Activity II: Identification of Similar Pictures

Step 1: Lay out a set of attractive but simple pictures in front of the child. See that there is another set of same pictures.



Step 2: Pick up and give one picture card to the child, and guide the child to observe the same closely.

Step 3: Teach the child to observe the other pictures closely and identify similar picture.

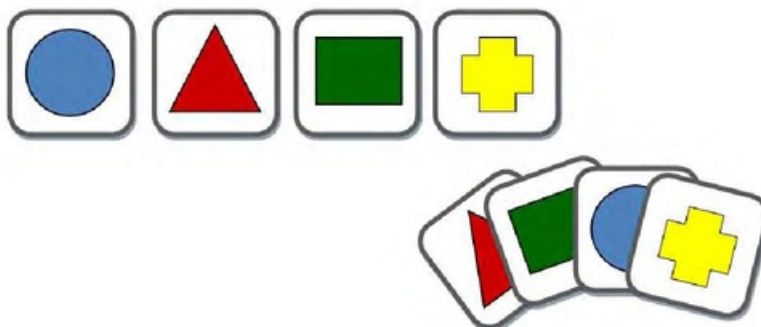
Step 4: If the child has difficulty in identifying similar picture, hold the child's hand and prompt him/her to match the similar looking picture.

Step 5: Provide reward or appreciate the child for correct identification.

Activity III: Identification of Similar Line or Shapes

Step 1: Make cards of lines or shapes of different types. There should be two identical cards for each line or shape. If you are using coloured lines or shapes, make sure that the pairs are of same colours. You can start with 4 types of shapes or lines which the child is familiar with. Gradually you can introduce more number of lines or shapes.

Step 2: Spread one set before the child, one by one while you name or describe the line or the shape (for example, look at this blue round, or see this is a standing line, etc.).



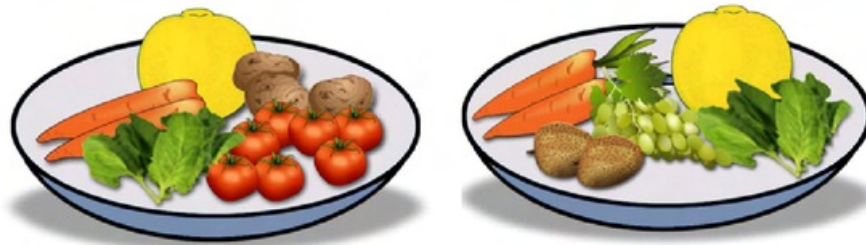
Step 3: From the other set of identical pairs take one card at a time and give it to the child and teach the child to match it with its pair that is displayed.

Step 4: If the child does the task correctly, appreciate him/her. If not, take the child's hand closer to cards that are laid out in front pointing to the cards one by one while speaking and comparing its features (name of the shape and colour), rejecting the unlike ones and finally finding the similar one.

Activity IV: Identification of Similarities between Objects, Pictures, Shapes or Lines

The activities I, II, and III can also be repeated with objects or pictures of the same objects which are slightly different in appearance, as follows:

- (I) Take a set of fruits or vegetables that are similar. The fruits and vegetables may slightly differ in their shape, size or colour as in the following illustration:



- (ii) Take a similar set of shapes or lines that may differ in colour.



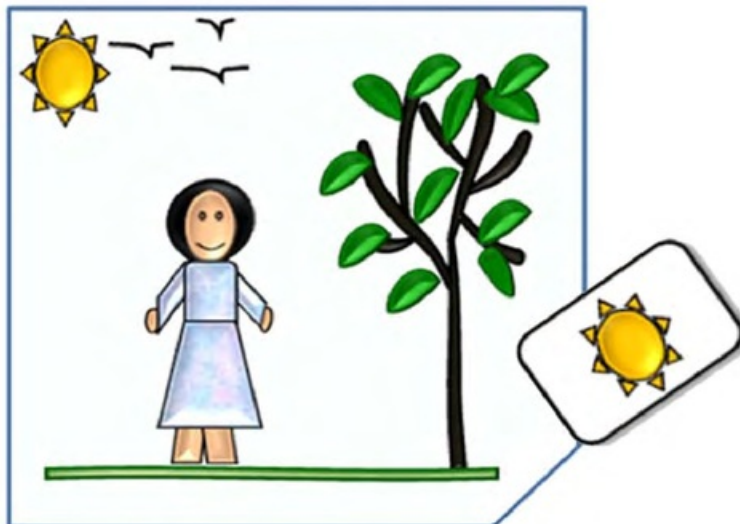
Activity V: Identification of a Part in a Picture

Step 1: Take a colourful picture that is interesting for the child to observe.

Step 2: Spread the picture before the child and describe it to the child in simple words.

Step 3: Take a smaller picture depicting any one part of the larger picture and hold it near the larger picture.

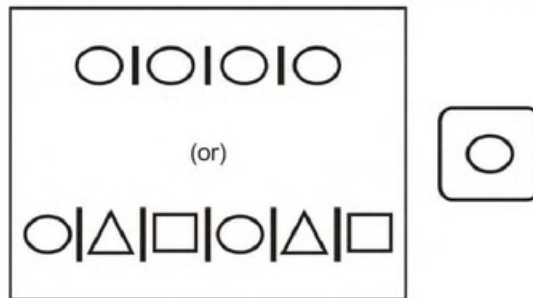
Step 4: Teach the child to identify the smaller picture shown to him/her with the larger picture.



Step 5: If the child has identified correctly, appreciate him/her. If not, take the smaller picture over and around the larger picture searching for the similar aspect, and finally help the child identify it.

Activity VI: Identification of a Specific Shape/Line in a Pattern

Step 1: You can make pattern on a paper involving different shapes and/or lines. To begin with, you can start with a simple pattern of two or three alternating shapes or lines as illustrated below.



Step 2: Hold out a card that has any one shape in the pattern, and teach the child to identify the same shape in the pattern by pointing out.

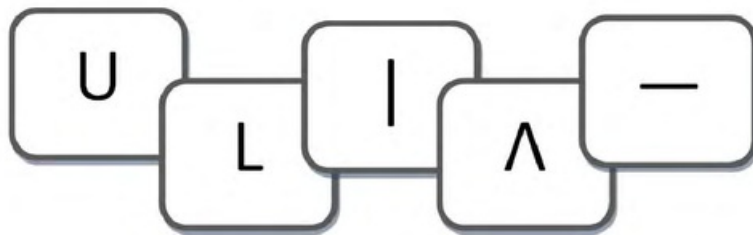
Step 3: If the child identifies correctly, appreciate the child. If not, place the card on the shape that matches with the one shown, proceeding one-by-one and help the child identify the same.

The pattern can be made a little complex (such as graphical design) as the child progresses. The design could contain combination of the same or different shapes in different sizes and colours. Some examples are given below:



Activity VII: Identification of Similarities between Varied Visual Information

Step 1: You can make small cards (of the size 4" x 6") and draw different types of lines (which might resemble letters, or part of letters) as shown below:



Step 2: Identify objects in the environment or other pictures which might resemble the outline form of these letters. You can even imitate such forms yourselves with different body positions like shown in the example below:



Step 3: Introduce each card one by one to the child, describing its appearance in simple words like standing line, sleeping line, sitting line, bending line and so on, and lay the cards in front of the child.

Step 4: Now teach the child to choose the correct card with the line that matches the body posture.

Step 5: Appreciate the child for correct response. If not, take the card with the correct line, describe it and also form the body posture that is similar and help the child identify the similarity.

Activity VIII: Improving Sight Reading

Step 1: Take cut-outs of logos of common but popular products or signs for bus stop, school, etc. which the child is familiar with.



Step 2: Teach the child to identify and name them.

Step 3: If the child is not able to identify, provide some more clues using pictures like the one shown below.

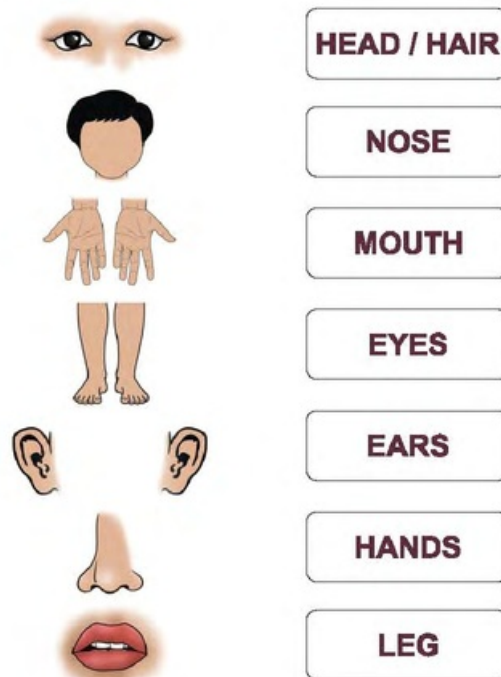


Step 4: If the child identifies them correctly, give them the same pictures as reinforcement. If not, show the actual object and help the child identify the same.

This activity could be extended to other sign boards that the child gets to see commonly and frequently like 'railway track', 'hotel', etc.

This activity could be extended to specific sight reading exercises like matching picture cards to their name cards as given in example 1 to 6. The exercises would be helpful in developing sight reading skills as well as the child's awareness about him/herself and things in the environment.

Example 1: Teach the child to match the picture of the body parts with its name.



Example 2: Teach the child to point out to show dress, bag, etc. when named. If they can read, teach them to match with the written word also.



SHOES



CAP



DRESS



BAG

Example 3: Teach the child to identify the food items named by you, and (if possible) match it with their written names.



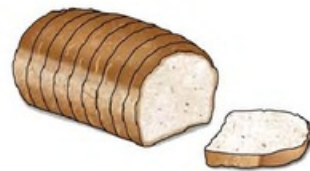
IDLI



BREAD



RICE



**BUN/
BURGER**



DOSA

Example 4: Collect pictures of common fruits and vegetables. Teach the child to name them. Then if the child is able to read teach him/her to match the pictures with written name. Using the same pictures you can also have another activity for sorting out fruits and vegetables.



BANANA



TOMATO



**LADIES
FINGER**



ORANGE



APPLE



CARROT

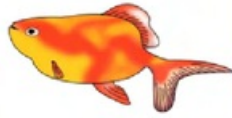
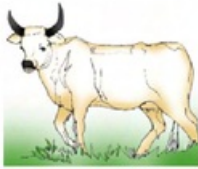


CARROT



**BITTER
GOURD**

Example 5: Teach the child to identify the written names of different animals and match them with the correct picture.



HEN

TIGER

COW

FISH

Example 6: Teach the child to colour the part of the house named by you one by one. Then let him/her connect each part with its written name.

DOOR

WINDOW

ROOF



FLOOR

WALLS

VISUAL DISCRIMINATION

Improving visual skills to discriminate similar looking objects, pictures, etc. is called as visual discrimination.

Activity I: Discrimination of Similar Objects

Step 1: You can take 2 identical objects and incorporate some minor changes. For example, take 2 identical sand trays and engrave some patterns on the surface of one, as follows:



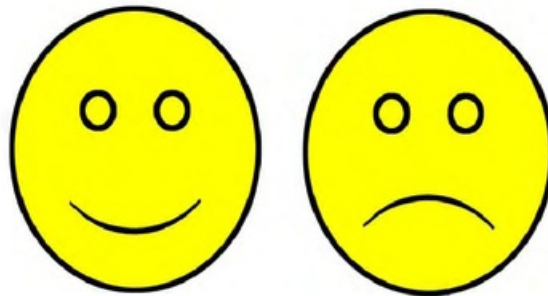
Step 2: Present both the sand trays to the child, and ask the child to explain what s/he sees in them.

Step 3: Then ask the child to find out the difference between both the trays.

Step 4: If the child points out to the engravings correctly, appreciate him/her. If not, hold the trays close together and point to the engravings on one of them.

Activity II: Discrimination of Similar Pictures

Step 1: Draw 2 identical pictures and purposely make some minor changes in one of them, like in the following example:



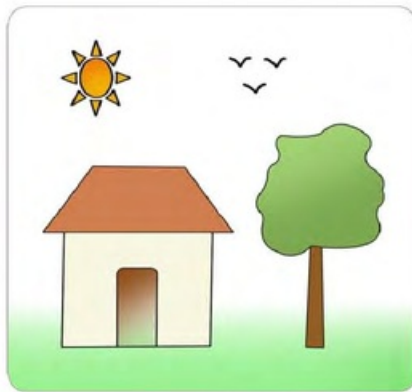
Step 2: Present both the pictures to the child, and teach him/her to describe what it is.

Step 3: Now teach the child to find out the difference between both.

Step 4: If the child points out to the difference correctly, appreciate him/her. If not, hold the pictures close together and draw the attention of the child towards the differences between the pictures.

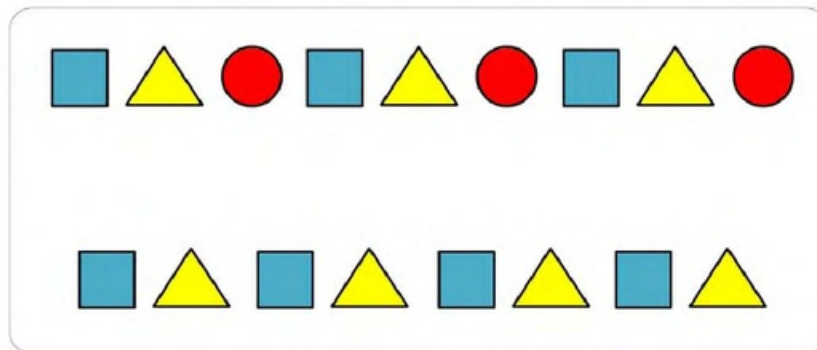
As the child progresses in discrimination skills you could insert more than one difference, like the sun being replaced by the rain clouds and the missing birds as in the picture shown below.

You can also introduce pictures with more number of differences, and help the child to find out the differences. For example, the missing leaves in the picture given below.



Activity III: Discrimination of Similar Patterns/Combination of Lines & Shapes

Step 1: Draw a simple pattern as given below, and make a copy with minor changes as illustrated below:



Step 2: Now teach the child to find out the differences between patterns.

Step 3: If the child points out to the difference correctly, appreciate him/her. If not, point out the missing shape in the second sequence.

As the child progresses in discrimination skills, you could make the patterns more complex, and also make patterns that look similar to letters/alphabets, like in the example shown below:



Note:

1. While making the pattern, see that the different components/ letters of the sequence have some similarity. Also make sure that the first component/letter has an identical pair among the sequence.
2. Mark the first component of the sequence distinct, and teach the child to find out a similar one in the sequence.
3. If the child correctly points out to the similar letter, appreciate him/her. If not, describe the formation of each component in simple terms like circle, long-line and circle, circle and short line, and so on. Then help the child identify the similar ones.

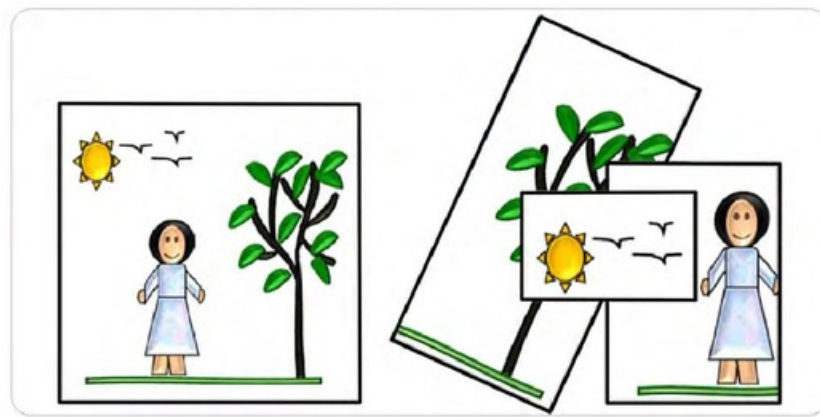
 **VISUAL ANALYSIS**

Visual analysis involves combining thinking and reasoning abilities with visual skill. Developing abilities like fixing in picture puzzles, finding oddities in pictures, guessing missing parts/aspects in pictures, sequencing pictures representing actions, guessing objects from shadows, and so on are important to develop visual analysis. Some activities have been described to improve this skill in the child.

Activity I: Fixing Picture Puzzles

Step 1: You could make your own picture puzzle. Start by selecting some simple, colourful and attractive picture that the child likes to see. It could be a picture drawn by you and the child together. See that it is drawn on a thick chart paper that is durable and easy to handle. Make two exact copies of the same picture.

Step 2: While making picture puzzles, see that they are progressively difficult. That is, you could start with simple 2 or 3-piece puzzles with straight cuts. As the child progresses, you could move on to more number of complex pieces with zigzag borders. To make the puzzle, take the second copy of the picture and neatly cut it into 2, 3 or more pieces like shown below:



Step 3: First take the whole picture and describe it in detail using simple terms to the child. Keep the puzzle pieces hidden or turned upside down when you do this.

Step 4: Now take out the puzzle pieces and teach the child to describe what s/he sees in each piece. Then assist the child to put them together to form the whole picture.

Step 5: If the child is able to do it correctly, appreciate him/her. If not help the child to match piece by piece with the whole picture by identifying the correct part of the whole picture and laying it exactly over it. Similarly, repeat with other pieces so that the entire picture in pieces is laid over the original picture.

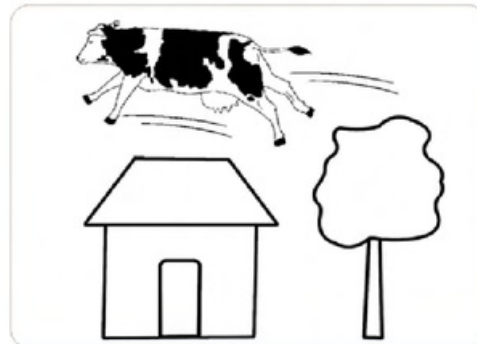
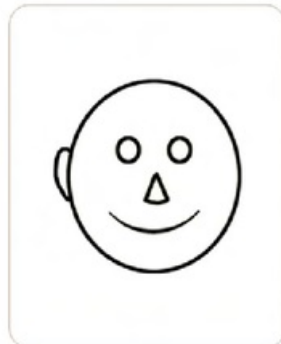
Step 6: Shuffle the pieces again, and teach the child to try once again on his/her own.

Step 7: As the child progresses, you could move on to more complex puzzles and with more number of pieces. Next, you can try removing the original picture out of sight after describing it, and encourage the child to fix the pieces from memory.



Activity II: Finding Oddities/Missing Parts in Pictures

Step 1: Draw a simple picture that interests the child. While drawing the picture purposefully make some errors in the picture like leaving out some essential part, or drawing some part wrongly. Draw these with pencil on paper, or on slate so that necessary correction could be done later. Some examples are shown below.



Step 2: Lay the picture in front of the child, and teach the child to describe the same.

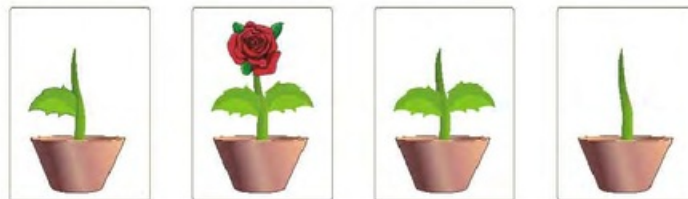
Step 3: See if the child identifies the oddity or missing part on his/her own. If not, after s/he finishes the description give clues through questions like 'What is wrong here?', or 'Is anything missing here?', etc.

Step 4: If the child is still not able to identify the error, you could ask more direct questions like 'Where is the ear on this side?' or 'Does the cow fly?' and so on.

Step 5: If the child is still not able to identify or understand the mistake, explain it clearly, and make necessary additions/ corrections in the picture to set it right.

Activity III: Sequencing Pictures

Step 1: Take a common activity that the child is well aware of; like dressing up, or daily activities from getting up in the morning to going to bed in the night, or a growing plant and so on. Get appropriate pictures depicting each step in the activity. You can buy simple picture charts and cut them into individual picture cards. Or you could make your own series of simple line or colour drawings, as shown below.



Step 2: Before you display the picture cards to the child, talk to the child about the sequence of events you are going to display and help the child recollect it.

Step 3: Shuffle the cards and display them to the child, teaching the child to arrange it in the same order as the sequence of events you had informed the child.

Step 4: If the child arranges the sequence in correct order, appreciate him/her. If not, you could help him/her by recollecting the events once again orally, and asking relevant questions like, 'What comes first?, A leaf, Is it not?' And so on.

Activity IV: Matching Relevant Pairs of Pictures

Step 1: This activity is similar to a picture puzzle. The difference is that the matching is done based on reasoning. For this activity, you have to prepare 2-piece picture puzzles of pairs using common objects that go together. It could be toothbrush and tooth paste, plate and spoon, or upper and lower parts of a dress, or paper and pencil, and slate and chalk like shown in the example below:



Step 2: Shuffle the cards and display them to the child, teach the child to first describe the individual pictures to make sure that s/he has understood it correctly.

Step 3: Then teach the child to fix the appropriate pairs of pictures together.

Step 4: If the child does it correctly appreciate it. If not, give clues in the form of questions like 'with what do we write on a slate or paper?', and help him/her to pair appropriate pictures together.

Activity V: Identification of Shadows of Pictures/Negatives of Objects/Pictures



Step 1: Select some common household or other objects that the child is familiar with. Either have the real objects or pictures that represent the real objects.

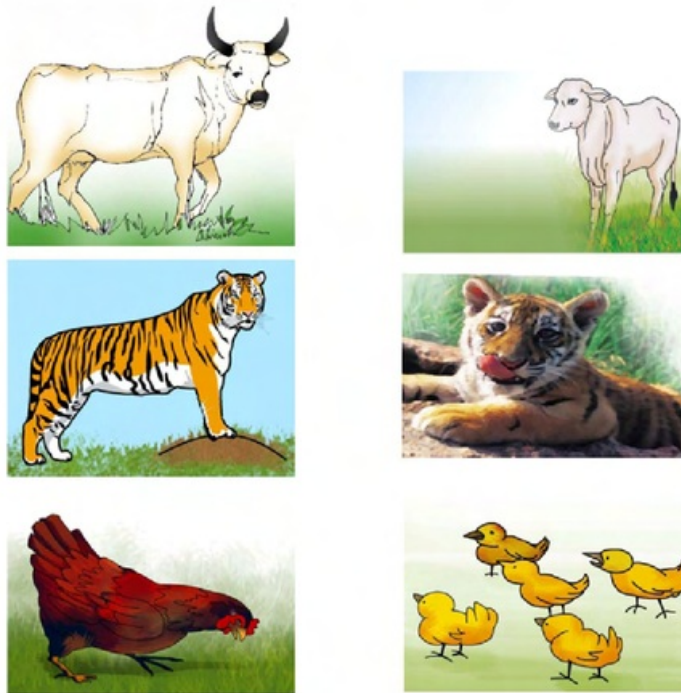
Step 2: As shown in the example, make simple drawings to represent their shadows or negatives.

Step 3: Teach the child to describe the real objects, or their pictures that you have displayed.

Step 4: Display the shadow pictures or negatives one by one and teach the child to match it with the appropriate object in the picture.

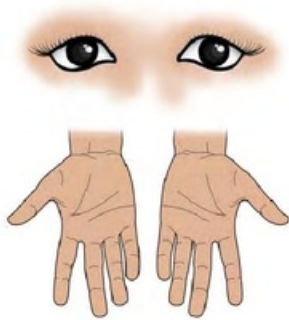
Step 5: If the child does correctly, appreciate. If not, keep both the picture cards of the object and its shadow/negative side by side, describe the outline verbally and help the child recognize the similarity between the two.

As the child progresses in such analytical matching, you can incorporate a variety of tasks like asking him/her to match pictures of animals with that of their little ones as depicted in the example below:

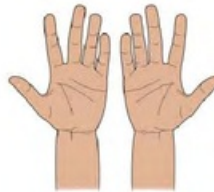


Some more exercises are provided to work on the child's visual analytical and/or sight reading tasks with relevance to his/her environment.

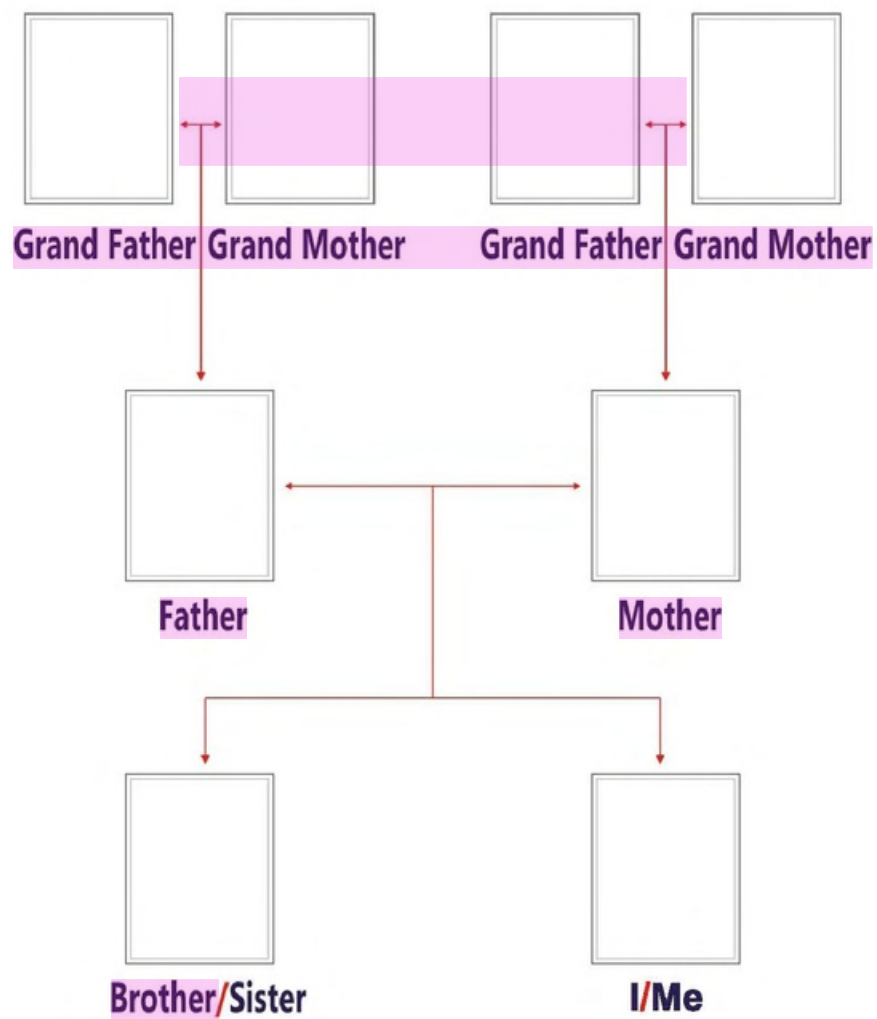
Example 1: Teach the child to match the picture of the body parts with objects used with them.



Example 2: Teach the child to identify and name the belongings illustrated below. Then teach him/her to match them with body parts on which we use them.



Example 3: Collect stamp sized photos of the immediate and/or extended family. Draw a family tree with boxes like the one shown below, but according to the members of the family.



If the child is able to read, let him/her read the name of the relative mentioned under each box, find their photos from the collection you have and stick it in appropriate boxes. If the child is yet to learn to read, you can call out the relative and teach the child to identify their photo. Then help them to stick the photo in the appropriate box. After identifying by relationship is over, teach the child to name each person (because generally the children recognize their significant others only by the name of their relationship). If the child is not aware of their personal names, then introduce them to him/her. Also explain the relationship between different relatives, like Grandmother is Mother's/Father's Mother, etc.

Example 4: Teach the child to identify family members of different groups and match with pictures/written form of their major occupations.

			
<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> ELDERS </div>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> CHILDREN </div>	
 WORK AT OFFICE	 STUDY	 WORK AT HOME	 PLAY

Example 5: Make the child match the rooms of the house with written names, as well as related objects.

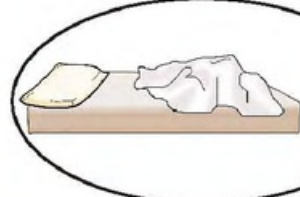
KITCHEN



BATH ROOM



DINING HALL



HALL



BED ROOM



Example 6: Teach the child to identify the food items that we eat and food items that we drink.



Example 7: Teach the child to identify/match with written word of the food items that are hot versus cold.



Example 8: Teach the child to identify/match the food items (including fruits and vegetables) with their taste.



SWEET **SALTY** **SOUR** **BITTER** **SPICY**

Example 9: First make the child name the different gender-specific apparels/clothes illustrated below. Then teach him/her to match with the male or female figures appropriately.



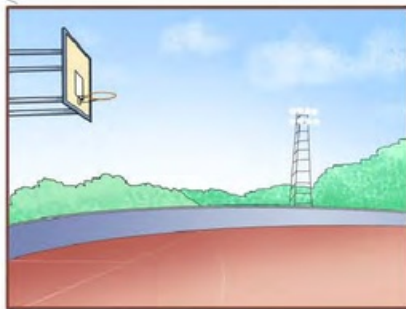
Example 10: First teach the child to identify different objects by name and describe the situations/places illustrated below. Then teach them to connect/match each object to the illustrated situations where it is used.



Example 11: First teach the child to identify the various outfits given on the left side. Then help him/her describe the public places illustrated on the right side and match appropriate dress for each place.



Example 12: Teach the child to identify the play activity/materials illustrated below. Then ask him/her whether we play with it inside or outside the room and match it with appropriate picture.



VISUAL MEMORY

Visual memory means that the child should remember the visual information or symbols that s/he has seen/learnt, that is the printed letters, words and illustrations. The training starts with visual memory for objects and then for pictures and finally for written symbols/letters.

Activity I: Memory for Simultaneously Presented Objects/Pictures

Step 1: You can collect some common objects like fruits or vegetables that the child is familiar with. You can start with 3 objects and gradually add on more items as the child becomes accustomed to the task.

Step 2: Display all the selected objects at a time, neatly in front of the child, like shown below.



Step 3: Remove the fruits and vegetables after displaying them providing adequate time for the child to observe.

Step 4: Now display an assorted collection of fruits and vegetables which includes the displayed ones and some more, like in the example shown



Step 5: Teach the child to pick up the fruits and vegetables s/he had seen earlier from this collection. If the child is a little older and familiar with this memory task, you can teach the child to recall the names of fruits and vegetables from memory without giving any visual clue.

Step 6: If the child recalls correctly, appreciate him/her. If not, give clues in the form of questions like, 'What is the red coloured fruit you saw?' and so on.

Activity II: Memory for Sequentially Presented Objects/ Pictures

Step 1: You can collect some pictures familiar to the child, like that of animals and birds as shown in the example.



Step 2: Carefully display the pictures one after another. Allow the child to see each picture for a maximum of 5 seconds and then remove it before displaying the next picture.

Step 3: After displaying and removing all pictures out of sight, teach the child to recall/name all the animals and birds he had seen in the pictures.

Step 4: If the child identifies correctly, appreciate him/her. If not, provide clues in the form of questions like 'What was the animal that meows?' and so on.

Step 5: Slowly train the child to recall the items in the same order as you had displayed their pictures.

VISUAL TRACKING SKILLS

Visual tracking skills mean pursuing visual information sequentially in a given order. This kind of training becomes helpful when the child has to later read written information in a specific fashion, like reading from left to right in English and in most of the Indian languages. Such training could be provided through several simple tasks.

Activity I: Visually Following Large Moving Objects

Step 1: Select an attractive mobile toy like toy cars/vehicles, big rolling balls, or any other rolling toy with wheels.



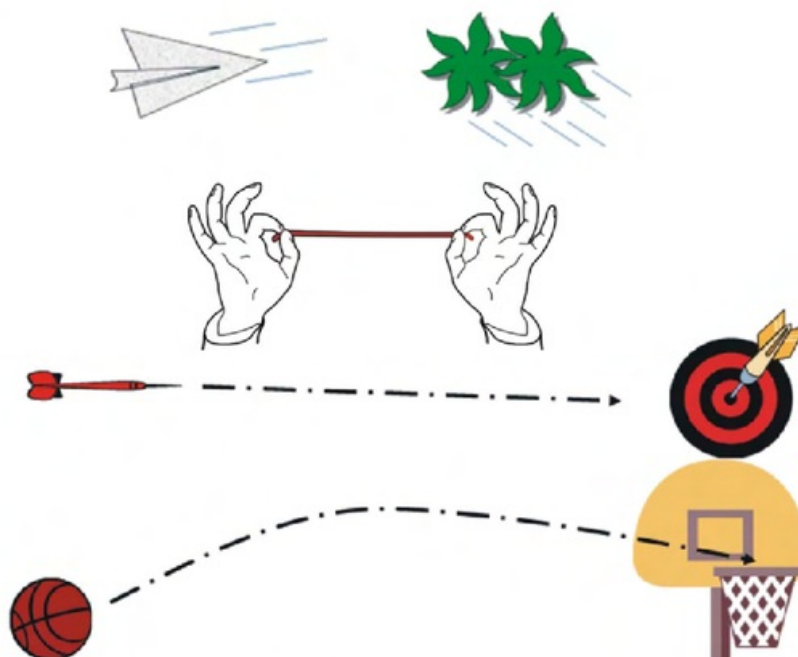
Step 2: Set the toy rolling in medium speed from left to the right side, while guiding the child to follow the movement with his/her eyes.

Step 3: If the child finds it difficult to track or gets distracted in the process, you could guide using pointing gestures with hand.

Initially you could start with movement across short distances (around 2 feet) in front of the child. Later, you could increase the distance, move the toy away from the child, and/or increase the speed of the toy.

Activity II: Visually Following Small Gliding/Flying Objects

Step 1: You can select an attractive gliding toy, or make one yourself. Your gliding toy could be a moving dart; a bead gliding across a stretched string; gliding paper arrows; drifting leaves or feathers and so on.



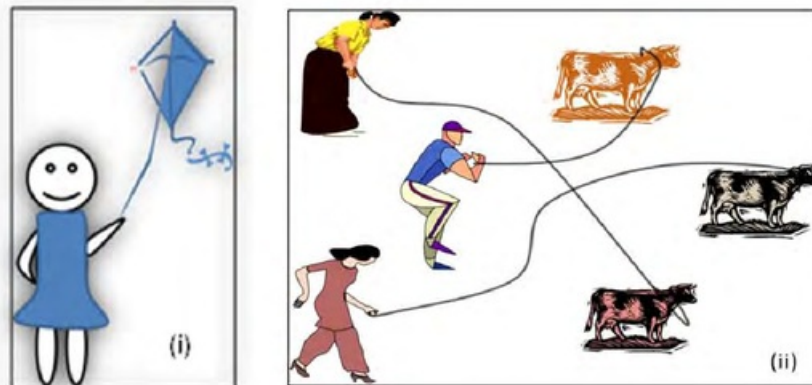
Step 2: Initially set the object moving at medium pace and teach the child to track the movement visually.

Step 3: If the child finds the task difficult, help the child to visually track the movement with your pointed finger.

Step 4: As the child progresses, you could move on to faster movement, smaller objects and continue the activity in the same manner.

Activity III: Visual Tracking in Pictures with Connecting Clues

Step 1: Make some simple drawing that has 2 items linked through lines. It could be a person holding a kite with a string, or a dog with a leash, or cow with a lasso.



Step 2: Help the child track the connecting string/link between the kite and the person with his/her index finger, like in the first picture above.

Step 3: As the child gets familiar with the task, you can increase the difficulty by having more than one or two such inter-twined pictures and teach the child to trace with his/her finger through the cord to the correct cow held by each of the person as in the second picture shown above.

Activity IV: Visual Tracking in Pictures without Connecting Clues

Step 1: Make some simple drawing with a maze connecting between two items like in the picture below:

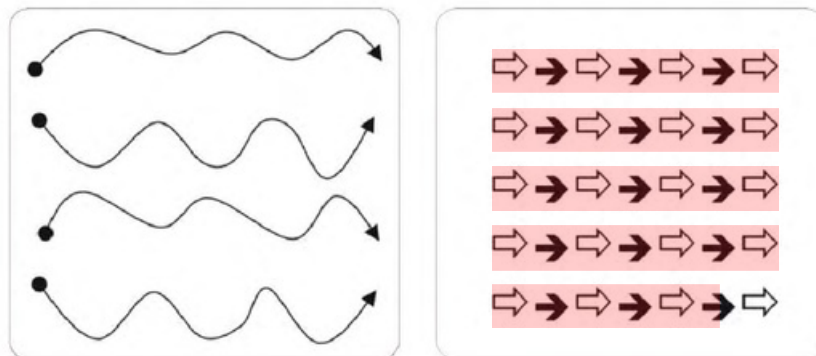


Step 2: Teach the child to track the correct path leading to the house with his/her finger.

Step 3: If the child does correctly, appreciate him/her. If not, lead the child by finger and help the child trace the correct path. While doing so, you can purposefully take the child through wrong/closed paths and show the child how it is blocked, and then lead the child to the correct path. Marking the correct path with crayons or pencils will also be helpful.

Activity V: Visual Tracking in Writing/Print

Step 1: Make some simple written or printed pattern like the ones shown below:



Step 2: Teach the child to follow the sequence of written or printed patterns visually from left to right, while tracing it with hand also, line after line.

Step 3: If the child finds the activity monotonous, you can add variation by making the child describe the process in simple terms; like 'start - - - go-o - o - o - o - - - stop', or 'white - black - white - black ...' for the block arrow pattern.

Step 4: You can also combine counting the number of arrows from left to right along with tracking.

Step 5: Appreciate the child if s/he does correctly. If not, help the child to track by holding his/her hand in yours. Make sure that the child is visually following his/her hand movements.



DEVELOPING RELATED MOTOR SKILLS

While the primary skills necessary for reading is visual-based there are also some related motor skills like:

1. Holding the book with both hands



2. Lateral grasp of holding book with one hand



3. Turning pages gently without folding or creasing them.



4. Developing good postures for reading



DEVELOPING MOTIVATION FOR READING

Many children do not try to read naturally or enjoy reading. Therefore, some special effort is required to make them interested in the task. An easy and effective way to do this is to combine the activity of story or rhymes which the children enjoy very much.



For this purpose, select books with lively pictures that will immediately draw the child's attention, which includes minimal information in print or writing. Keep the pages open with appropriate pictures, while you narrate a story which the child already knows and enjoys much. Or, you could recite a rhyme with good rhythm and accompanying actions. Whether the activity is telling a story or a rhyme, use a lot of accompanying actions and facial expressions to keep the child interested. Frequently and in-between point to the relevant pictures in the book also. Over a period of time, make the child realise that a good rhyme or story telling time accompanies every reading session.

GENERAL TIPS FOR PREPARING & SELECTING MATERIALS FOR PRE-READING TRAINING

When you start training the child for pre-reading skills, you can begin with single pages made of thick chart paper approximately of 20 x 30 cm. Later you can make your own books by folding papers of this size into 2 and stitching/pinning at the center to make small books that children could hold comfortably with both hands first. Later you could train them to hold them with one-hand grasp. Whether you make books of your own or buy them from shops, make sure that:

- Their size is manageable. That is, the child should be able to hold them and turn their pages easily.
- The paper is durable and not easily tearable (books with laminated pages are more durable).
- The print size is big enough for the child, in the beginning at least.
- The colours of the letters or pictures are bright and appealing and in good contrast with the background colour. Letters printed or written with colours like black, dark red, dark green, deep blue, violet are readily visible on white paper.
- Writings and drawings should be neat and legible.
- It is better if the reading content is familiar to the child and related to daily life of the child.
- Books with accompanying music or pop-up features which you get in the market are very helpful in keeping the child interested in the reading task. If you are a little creative you could make your own pop-up book.

PREREADING ASSESSMENT SHEET

Sl. No.	Questions	Response
1.	Is the child able to identify similar objects among various objects?	Yes/No
2.	Is the child able to identify similar pictures among various pictures?	Yes/No
3.	Is the child able to identify similar shapes or lines among different types of shapes or lines?	Yes/No
4.	Is the child able to identify similarities in objects (that is same type of objects that might look slightly different like a big and small apple, or different objects with some similarity like a red cup and a red spoon)?	Yes/No
5.	Is the child able to identify similarities in shapes and lines (that is, same type of shapes or lines that may differ in colour, size, etc.)?	Yes/No
6.	Is the child able to visually match/identify parts in larger picture?	Yes/No
7.	Is the child able to identify/recognise a particular shape or line in a larger pattern or picture?	Yes/No
8.	Is the child able to find out minute differences between similar objects (for example, two similar toothbrushes but of different colour)?	Yes/No

9. Is the child able to find out minute differences between similar pictures or patterns (for example, picture puzzles where you have to find out 3 to 5 differences between two pictures with minute differences)? Yes/No
10. Is the child able to solve/fix picture puzzles of 6 or more pieces? Yes/No
11. Is the child able to sequence 6 or more pictures depicting a familiar sequence of action or common day happening? Yes/No
12. Is the child able to match relevant pairs of objects or pictures depending upon their kind, category or use (for example, table with chair, different types of fruits, animals & young ones, pictures of objects with their shadows, etc.)? Yes/No
13. Is the child able to recollect 6 or more objects/pictures that were shown to them simultaneously (at one time)? Yes/No
14. Is the child able to recollect 6 or more objects that were presented to them sequentially (one after the other)? Yes/No
15. Is the child able to visually track moving objects? Yes/No
16. Is the child able to visually track continuous lines, or sequential symbols written on paper (left to right & top to bottom)? Yes/No

17. Is the child able to hold book properly using two hands? Yes/No
18. Is the child able to turn pages of books without difficulty and / or tearing them? Yes/No
19. Is the child able to identify the right orientation (top & bottom) of books/printed pages (in the language that s/he is being trained)? Yes/No
20. Is the child able to recognise/read at least 5 or more common logos, signs, words (including his/her own name), etc.? Yes/No

Dear parent, for every 'Yes' in the above checklist award 1 mark. If the child has scored 80% or above, then s/he is ready for training at school level. If not, please train the child on the skills that are lacking in the child before moving to the next level of training.

SECTION - II

PRE-WRITING SKILL TRAINING



Pre-Writing Skill Training



TRAINING IN PREWRITING SKILLS

Dear parent,

We hope that you have already started training the child in pre-reading skills. Simultaneously you could also start preparing them for writing. As you have understood, in pre-reading tasks, we were trying to help the child perceive various lines, shapes, figures and patterns properly and understand the meaning conveyed by them. In pre-writing training, we would be helping children to make/draw/write such lines, shapes, figures, patterns, etc. and if possible convey meaning through them. Here are some activities that will help the child get trained in these skills. This section includes:

- A) Activities for strengthening hands and fingers
- B) Activities to create interest in pattern making/drawing/writing/printing

A. ACTIVITIES FOR STRENGTHENING HANDS AND FINGERS

Writing is basically a muscular activity that we carry out with our hands and fingers guided by our eyes. You can start preparing the child for the writing task by first making the child's hands strong and nimble to work.

ACTIVITY I: WORKING WITH DOUGH/CLAY/MUD

Applicable to children between 2 to 6 years

We can start with clay play that children enjoy very much. Plasticine (artificial) clay is available in the market in several attractive colours.

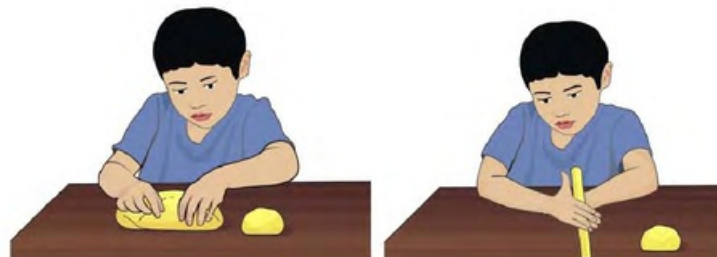
Make sure that the children do not swallow it while playing. A best alternative to clay is the chapati/poori dough/mud we make at home. You can also make them colourful by adding natural colours obtained by boiling beetroot (for pink), palak leaves (for green), turmeric (for yellow) in water, and mixing the strained colour water to the dough. Here are some activities that the child could do with this dough/clay



Step 1: Let the child simply pat and knead the dough/clay/mud that you have already mixed into good pliable consistency.



Step 2: Next, you can help the child roll it in to balls or long string like pieces.



Step 3: The child could try stretching the dough/clay/mud into various sizes and thickness you ask for, and also try rolling it out with a pin.



Step 4: Next, help the child to cut shapes out of the dough/clay/mud with moulds and also make specific shapes by rolling it out with hands. As the child progresses, you can help him/her make shapes like cups, plate, tumbler, etc. which are used in our daily lives.



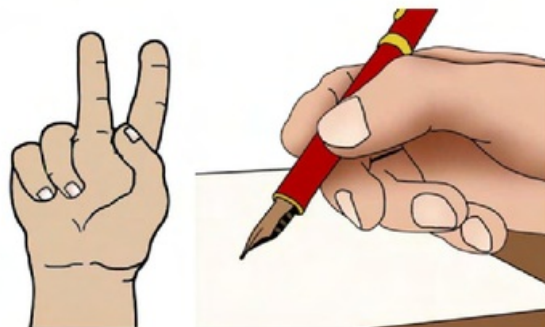
Step 5: The child can try to work only with his/her fingers. Like s/he can make simple impressions like lines and crosses with the index finger.



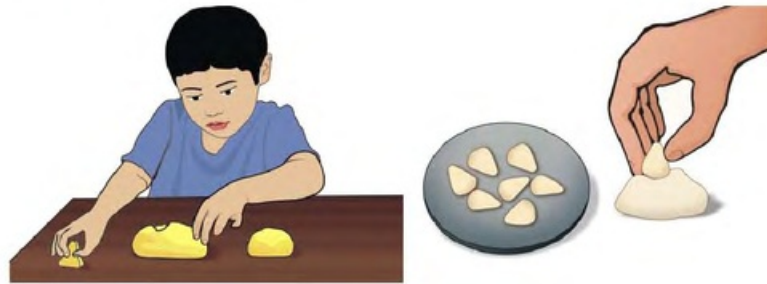
ACTIVITY 2: WORKING WITH 3 FINGERS - THUMB, INDEX AND MIDDLE FINGER

Applicable to children between 3 to 6 years

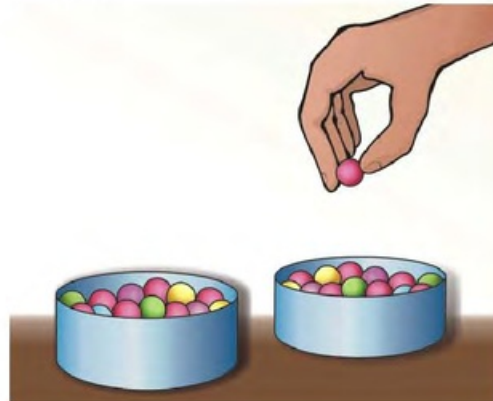
The purpose here is to train the child to work only with 3 fingers, namely, the thumb, index and middle finger. These 3 fingers are used to hold pen, pencil or crayon to write.



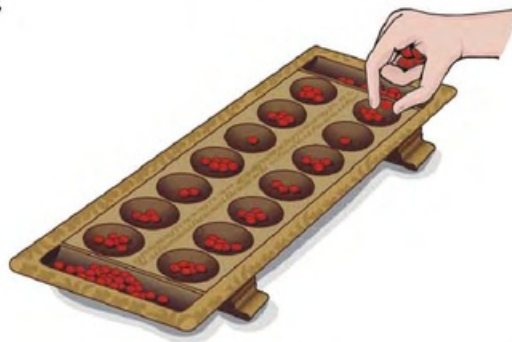
Example 1: This could be continued from the previous activity working with dough/clay/mud. The child can pinch out some dough/clay with three fingers (index/pointing finger, middle finger and the thumb) and set them aside in some patterns.



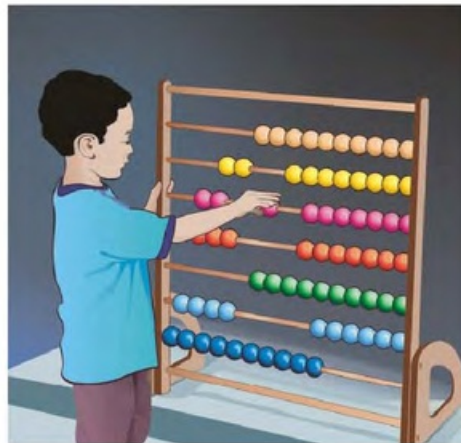
Example 2: The child should be trained to transfer beads/marbles/seeds/vegetables from one container into another. For this, the beads should be attractive and colourful (but not toxic). They should be big enough so that the child cannot swallow. Train the child to pick and hold the beads with the three fingers only.



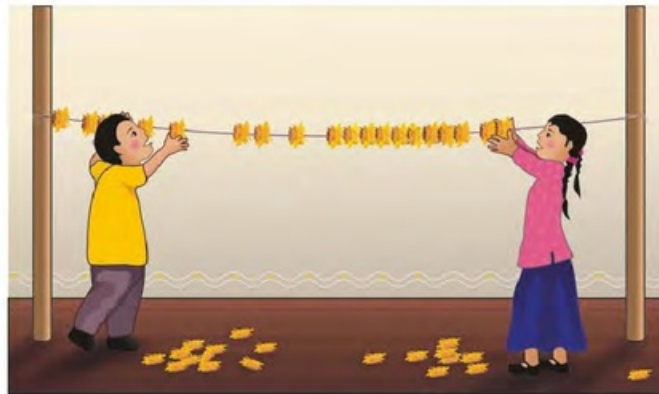
Example 3: The traditional game 'Alugulimane/Chennamane' can also be used. Initially, the child could be made to put 5 or 7 seeds or stones in each cup (mane) and then take all seeds/stones from a cup and drop them one by one into the following cups. The child could be trained to do such pick and drop activities even before s/he meaningfully starts to play the game



Example 4: Make the child push beads on an abacus from one side to the other. It will be better if the child starts working on a big abacus with stand. The beads are to be moved from left to right.

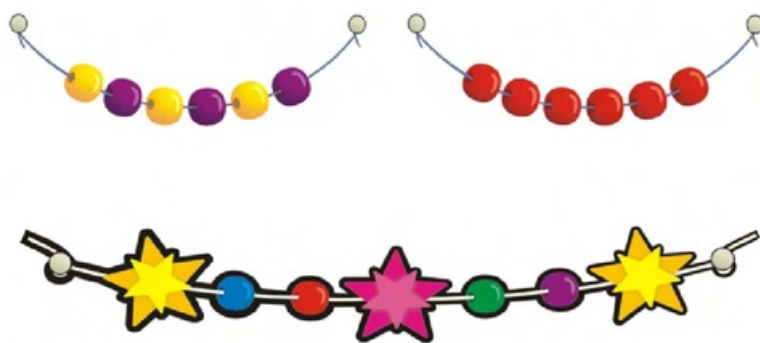
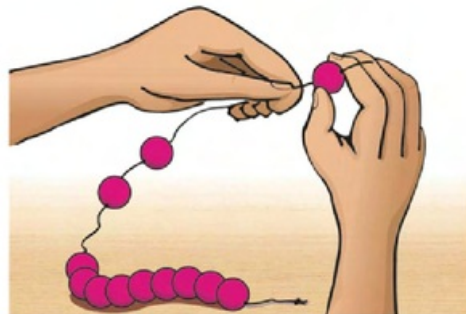


Such activities can be done even without abacus. Flowers, leaves or beads could be strung loosely across a thick string like twine or a thin stick like the midrib of a palm leaf in the form of a 'thorana' or garland. The child could be made to push the flowers, leaves or beads from one side to the other.



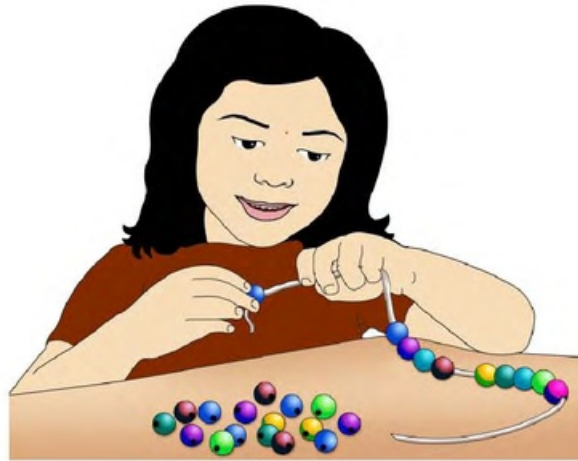
Example 5: The child could be made to string beads. To begin with, select beads with big holes in the centre. And take a string that is thick without splintered ends, so that the child could easily insert them into the beads.

First the child could start making simple strings with same types of beads. Next, you can teach the child to make patterns with two different kinds of beads (differing in color, shape or size). When the child independently carries out this activity, you can start teaching complex patterns with beads in varying order and patterns. Such pattern making with beads not only strengthens the three fingers that are essential for writing, they also train children in making systematic patterns which forms the basis for writing.

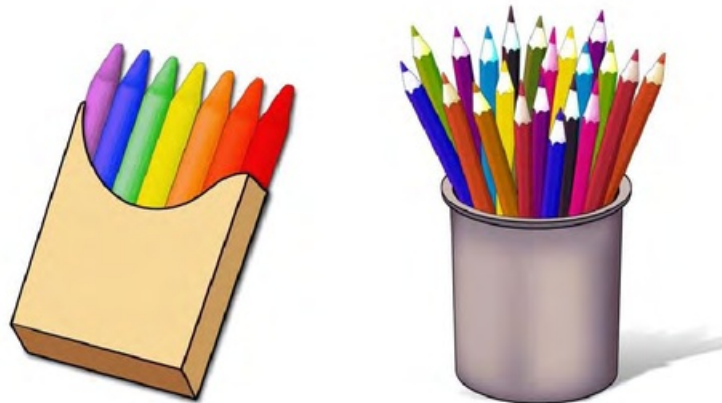


Example 6: The next step would involve teaching the child to work with smaller beads/flowers. If possible you can get big blunt needles (which will not hurt) with which children can thread the beads/flowers. In this step also, the child could be made to make different patterns with beads and other stringable/threadable objects.

Make the child thread strings of beads or flowers that they can wear or present to others, so that the task becomes enjoyable for them.



Example 7: Then slowly you train the child to hold chalk, crayons or pencil and try to scribble, draw or write. Details of scribbling and similar activities are discussed in detail under the 4th activity of this unit.



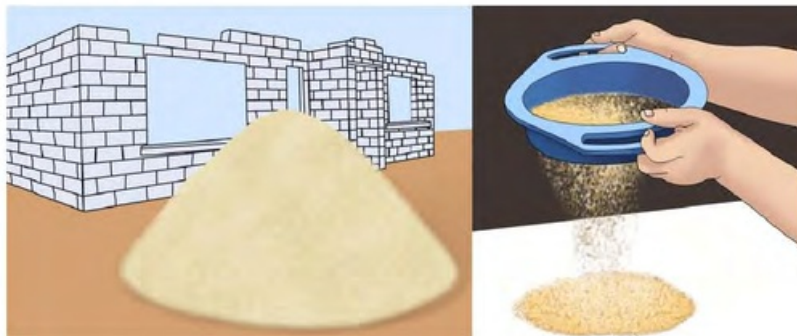
ACTIVITY 3: SAND PLAY

Applicable to children between 3 to 6 years

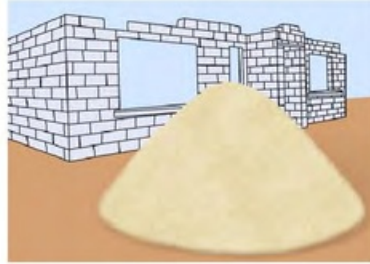
Another activity that the child might like very much and at the same time is helpful in training him/her in writing is playing in sand. To begin with, you can carry out activities for strengthening hand and finger movements, and then you can try printing and writing activities.



You can arrange a space for sand play in the garden of your house. But if you do not have enough outdoor space at home you can make a small portable sand pit with a big sized basin or tub at your home. Make sure that the sand used is sieved to remove sharp objects and washed/cleaned.



Example 1: The simplest activities are patting on sand and digging into the sand. You can use slightly wet/damp sand for the purpose. If the sand is dry you could wet it by sprinkling water.



Example 2: You can bury things in the sand and make the child search for them. Start with big seeds (tamarind or any fruits) or plastic bangle piece which the child is fond of. Gradually, the treasure hunt could include small colourful beads and marbles. Take care that the child does not swallow them, or put the sand into the mouth.



Example 3: You could help the child fill in sand into containers of different sizes. First you can start by filling in larger containers like buckets with hands or shovels. As the child progresses, move to smaller containers like mugs and then bottles. At this stage, the child has to be helped to use funnels in pouring from larger to smaller containers.



Example 4: You can help sieve out fine sand. You will have to use dry sand for this purpose. Initially, the child can practice sieving sand through his/her fingers so as to filter out large stones, leaves and other objects. Then you can teach to use sieves/sifters/strainers and filter out very fine sand.



Example 5: Help children make mounds and hills out of the sand. In order to make these activities interesting you can make theme-based scenery of these hills and holes and include it as part of the story that you narrate to the child.



Example 6: You can help the child mould shapes out of sand. For moulds you can make use of toys at home, or even kitchen utensils and spoons.



Example 7: Help the child to trace over lines and shapes that you make on the sand. Slowly help him/her make his/her own lines, shapes and patterns first by holding his/her hand in your hand. Then encourage them to draw on their own. This activity could be slowly extended to drawing with a stick.



ACTIVITY 4: WATER PLAY

Applicable to children between 6 months to 6 years

Playing with water is another activity that will be useful in strengthening the hands and fingers of the child and help to improve fine motor/small movements of fingers that is necessary for writing. But, before you start with water play for the child, there are certain precautions you need to take.

- If you are trying this with a child wearing a hearing aid, be careful that water does not get into the child's hearing aids.
- Ensure that the child does not get drenched for too long or does not swallow water.
- Wipe the child dry soon after the play.



Water play kits and inflatable tubs are also available in the market. You can create your own space for water play with the large tubs, buckets and mugs you have in the bathroom or in any outdoor/open space. Along with it you could use measuring cups and clean toys made of plastic and other water endurable materials.

Example 1: The simplest form of water play is splashing water by hitting it with hands or other objects. Even young babies do it on their own when they are in water. This activity helps them strengthen hand movements. It also stimulates their touch sensation.



Example 2: The child can take water from a bucket or tub using small containers like mug and pour them back into the same bucket/tub or another.



Example 3: The activity of pouring can be continued. At this level, you can make the child pour into slightly small containers. Like from one mug or bowl into another mug or bowl.



Example 4: Once the child progresses in the pouring activity, you can help him/her to pour from a larger mug or bowl into a very small container like bottles. If necessary you can help him/her to use a funnel to pour into the smaller container.



Example 5: You can purposefully spill some water on the floor, or on any other waterproof surface like table top, wide plastic or any other water proof trays. Give the child a small piece of sponge/cotton/cotton cloth in hand and help him/her absorb the water with it. Also help them notice how the sponge has become heavy after absorbing the water. As the child progresses in this activity, you can help him/her to squeeze out the water that has been absorbed in the sponge.



Example 6: As the next step of activity, help the child absorb water from one container/surface and squeeze it into another container. You can even have competitions between small children as to who fills in the container with sponged-water first.



As the child progresses, you can continue involving the child in various sponging activities that you come across in your daily life like mopping the floor, cleaning kitchen top, etc.



Example 7: The next level in water play is with the floaters. This activity is useful to improve the fine motor as well the perceptive-cognitive ability for differentiating between objects that would float in water from the heavier ones that sink in water.

Step 1: Collect assorted set of different objects, some that would float in water, and some that would sink in water.



Step 2: Give one object at a time to the child and encourage the child to explore it in hand. All the while you keep talking about the object, like its weight, whether it is light or heavy; its texture, whether it is smooth, rough, hard, porous, compressible/ squeezable and so on.



Step 3: Now let the child drop it one by one into the water, and observe what happens to the object. Help them observe and note whether the object floats or sinks in the water. Explain the concept in simple words that s/he could understand like 'it goes down, down...', 'it stays up, up... '.



Step 4: After some time, you can slowly encourage the child to guess whether an object will stay up or go down even before it is dropped. Explain that the heavy and hard ones will go down; and the light ones will stay up; and so on. When the child has understood the concept well you can introduce appropriate words like 'float' in place of 'stay up', and 'sink' in place of 'go down'.

Step 5: As the child progresses you can also help the child to identify objects that would absorb water, like cloth, sponge, etc, and help them squeeze the water back.



ACTIVITY 5: STIRRING ACTIVITY

PART 1:

Another activity that helps improve fine motor as well the perceptive-cognitive abilities in children is stirring activity. You can provide objects of different variety and help the child put them in water and stir them. Stirring is a good fine motor exercise. In the process, the child will realize that some objects dissolve in water, while some do not.

Step 1: Collect assorted objects, some that would dissolve and some that would not, and take care that for each day's activity, you take two types of material, that are almost similar to look but one would dissolve and another would not. For example, you can take fine white sand and salt/sugar on one day. Another day, you can take sugar or ice cubes with building blocks or plastic cubes that are similar to look at.

Step 2: Take one pair of objects/materials for each day. Let the child explore the object while you describe it. Then ask the child to drop one object/material at a time into the water and stir it with a small spoon or any other stirring tool.

Step 3: Guide the child to observe what happens to object/material. Help them orally report what they see, like 'it is gone!', or 'it is there!'. As the child becomes familiar with the task, you can introduce appropriate words like 'it dissolved' instead of 'it is gone' and 'it does not dissolve' instead of 'it is there'. The child could be encouraged to guess whether an object or material will dissolve in water even before it is dropped by looking and feeling its texture.

PART 2:

In the stirring activities, move from lighter, dilute liquids like water, soups to dense/thicker liquids like stews, batter, etc. which require more strength to stir.

PART 3:

Stirring and churning activities could be combined with meaningful

1-Train Your Child Pre-Academic Skills

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