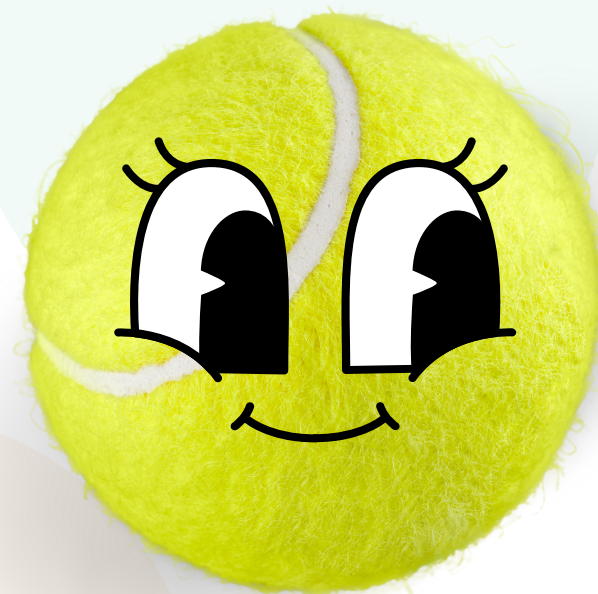


We had a ball in Occupational Therapy TENNIS BALL MAN



Feeding the Tennis Ball Man:

Materials: Small pom-poms, beads, buttons, beans, any small toy/object

Activity: Have the child "feed" the tennis ball man by squeezing the ball to open its mouth and placing small objects inside. This activity helps develop finger strength and coordination. Have them use their dominant writing hand.

Stick a spoon inside the tennis ball mans mouth (spoon part out) to encourage scooping and balancing objects on the spoon

Here are some small objects that are excellent for fine motor activities:

Beads and Buttons

Pony Beads: Great for threading onto strings or pipe cleaners.

Wooden Beads: Often larger than pony beads, good for younger children.

Small Buttons: Perfect for sorting, threading, and gluing onto craft projects.

Small Toys

LEGO Bricks: Encourage precise placement and connection.

Mini Erasers: Often come in fun shapes and can be used for sorting and counting.

Tiny Figures: Small plastic animals or people can be manipulated for imaginative play and fine motor development.

Household Items

Paper Clips: Can be used for linking together or for small-scale building projects.

Coins: Sorting, stacking, and handling coins can enhance fine motor skills.

Keys: Old keys can be used for sorting or for creating keychains.

Craft Supplies

Pom-Poms: Available in various sizes and colors, good for picking up with tweezers or fingers.

Sequins: Small and shiny, perfect for gluing onto art projects.

Feathers: Light and delicate, useful for precision gluing and decoration.

Natural Items

Small Shells: Can be used for sorting, counting, and crafting.

Pea Gravel: Small, smooth stones that are great for sensory bins and sorting.

Acorns: Fun to collect and use in various craft projects.

Office Supplies

Binder Clips: Small and easy to manipulate, good for pinching and releasing.

Rubber Bands: Useful for stretching around objects, enhancing finger strength.

Staples (with supervision): Handling and placing them in a stapler can be a careful precision task.

Kitchen Items

Dry Pasta: Small shapes like macaroni or penne can be used for threading or sorting.

Dried Beans: Good for sorting by type or color, and for sensory bins.

Rice: Handling small grains helps with tactile skills, especially in sensory play.



Adult/parent cut a long straight line for the mouth opening with a box cutter or sharp knife. The longer the mouth, the easier to squeeze open.

The fine motor activity ideas provided on this sheet are intended for educational and recreational purposes. Please consider the following guidelines to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience:

Supervision: Always supervise children during these activities, especially when using small objects that could pose a choking hazard.

Age Appropriateness: Choose activities and materials that are suitable for the child's age and developmental stage. Adjust the complexity of tasks accordingly.

Choking Hazard: Many small objects mentioned (such as beads, buttons, and coins) can be choking hazards.

These activities are not recommended for children under three years old or for children who still mouth objects.

Sorting, Counting, Letter Matching/Naming:

Materials: Different colored beads, small objects, letters

Activity: Have the child sort objects by color or size and place them inside the tennis ball man. They can also count the objects as they go, reinforcing both fine motor skills and basic math concepts.

Creative Play/Storytelling/Emotions

Materials: Paper, markers, and other craft supplies.

Activity: Encourage the child to create a story involving the tennis ball man. They can draw scenes, make additional characters, and act out the story using their creations. This promotes creativity and fine motor skills through drawing and manipulation of craft materials.

Sentence or word paper slips (place words or sentence writing prompts on paper and stuff them into the ball: child pulls out to read or write them)

Sensory/Tactile Matching Game:

Materials: Small objects with different textures; hidden objects in various textures (rice bin, kinetic sand, etc.)

Activity: Place objects inside the tennis ball man and have the child feel and identify them by touch, improving tactile discrimination and fine motor skills; Hide objects in sensory bin; allow child to locate objects and feed the tennis ball man. This promotes visual scanning, sensory processing, and can include multi-step directives and sequencing based upon what you instruct the child to find. "Find 4 named items in that order".

Obstacle Course:

Materials: Small household items like cups, spoons, and blocks.

Activity: Set up a miniature obstacle course for the tennis ball man. The child can navigate the tennis ball man through the course, picking up and moving objects along the way. This helps with planning, sequencing, and motor coordination.

Have a fun summer!