***Occupational therapy*** *focuses on helping your child to participate as fully as possible in all aspects of their life. Here are some ideas to incorporate into your day at home!*

**Multisensory Learning**

Try to find ways to engage all of your child’s senses in whatever you are doing throughout the day. Think about:

* Seeing
* Hearing
* Touching
* Smelling
* Tasting
* Movement

For example, if you go for a walk around your neighborhood:

* Seeing: look at different types of trees, leaves, rocks, clouds, house colors
* Hearing: listen to birds, cars, airplanes, voices, the sound of your feet
* Touching: touch leaves, grass, pavement, sticks, rocks
* Smelling: smell the air, leaves, pine needles
* Movement: feel the wind, move forward/backward/sideways/spin around, move fast/slow

Another example could be involving your child while you cook or bake:

* Seeing: look at different ingredients, utensils, containers, etc
* Hearing: listen to sounds as you measure, mix, cut
* Touching: feel a small amount of different ingredients (flour, salt, rice, beans)
* Smelling: smell the different ingredients
* Tasting: taste ingredients if possible
* Movement: help with measuring, mixing, pouring

**Sensory Play**

At school we love getting messy and engaging all our senses! Here are a few of our favorite activities and recipes. Have your child feel and smell the ingredients, choose colors, help measure and mix… and then have fun!

 **Slime**

* Mix 1/2 cup Elmer’s glue with 1/2 cup water. Add food coloring if desired.
* Add 1/4 cup liquid starch and mix. Keep adding a little more starch at a time as needed until the slime comes together.

**Play Dough**

* Mix 1 cup salt and 2 cups flour
* Gradually stir in 1 cup lukewarm water, and mix well
* Knead dough with your hands until it becomes smooth

**Puffy Paint**

* Mix equal parts shaving cream and glue. Add food coloring or paint and mix
* Use this puffy paint to paint with your fingers or with a paintbrush. It will dry puffy!

**Fake Snow (4 different ways to try!)**

* Mix 1 1/2 cups baking soda with 1/4 cup white hair conditioner
* Mix 1 1/2 cups corn starch with 1/2 can shaving cream
* Mix 1 cup baking soda with 1/4 cup water
* Mix 2 cups corn starch with 1/3 cup vegetable oil

Different students at our school have different needs. Please follow any suggestions that are relevant for your child

**If your child has trouble using their hands:**

* Move your child’s arms and hands around as you’re going through your daily routine (dressing, bathing, meals, activities)
* Massage your child’s hands with lotion
* Help your child to use their hands to hold things, manipulate items, and assist with different activities
* Encourage your child to move their arms as much as they can by motivating them to reach in different directions for a favorite

**If your child is working on writing or typing:**

* Try to set aside a few minutes each day for your child to practice working on these skills
* Point out and name letters wherever you see them – on signs, on papers in your house, on TV or the computer
* Make it fun – if your child likes to scribble, or paint, let them make pictures, then work on writing their name on the picture
* With typing, your child can use whatever type of device you have available – computer, tablet, phone. Point to each letter, and prompt them to type it.

**If your child is working on learning how to use items functionally:**

* Involve your child in as many of your regular activities as possible throughout the day
* Help them to do parts of each activity, and talk through what you’re doing using clear, simple phrases
* Use items that are motivating for the child and give sensory feedback when used the right way – things that make noise, move, or have other interesting qualities