

## Alcott School Toy Guide

### Contents

Fine Motor Skills.....	2-7
Visual Motor Skills.....	8-11
Sensory Processing Skills.....	12-14
Handwriting Tools/Games.....	15-18
Resources.....	19

## Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor skills are the skills required to be able to work with your hands. They require precision and good strength of the hands in order to manipulate objects such as wind-up toys, gears, construction toys, game parts, puzzle pieces and shape sorters, stringing beads, scissors and crayons, markers and other arts and crafts mediums.

- Baby City Maze



- Develops fine motor skills (grasp) and eye-hand coordination by moving the items along the red and yellow maze.
- Modify the activity to be more challenging by having your child lie on their stomach (prone position).
- Appropriate for ages 6 months and up.
- Available at Target (See Resources)

- Poppity Pop Musical Dino



- Works on fine motor skills (grasp), gross motor skills (by having to retrieve the balls that come out of the dino's mouth), and eye-hand coordination for putting the balls into the dino's body.
- Lively music, fun sounds, and bright colors will help develop your child's auditory and visual skills.
- Appropriate for ages 6 months- 3 years.

- Available at Target

- Musical Lion Walker



- Works on fine motor skills (grasp), eye-hand coordination, balance, and cause & effect skills.
- There are various activities that promote fine motor skills (grasp and strength) as well as lights, sounds, music, and various textures to introduce a sensory experience.
- Walking and pushing lion along exercises your child's gross motor skills.
- Appropriate for ages 6 months- 3 years.
- Available at Target

- Learn to Dress Monkey



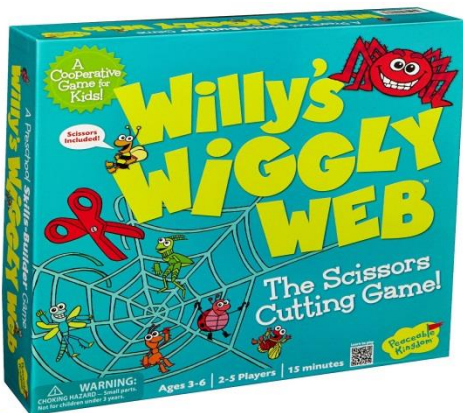
- Develops fine motor skills (pincer grasp) and bilateral hand skills by using both hands to button, snap, zipper, buckle, and tie (stabilizing with 1 hand while using the other hand to perform the action).
- Start by practicing the simplest self-help skills. First start by unzipping, unbuttoning/buttoning, then snapping, hook and loop, engaging zipper and zipping, buckling, and lastly, tying.
- Appropriate for ages 18 months and up.
- Available at Beyond Play (See Resources)

- Counting Stacker



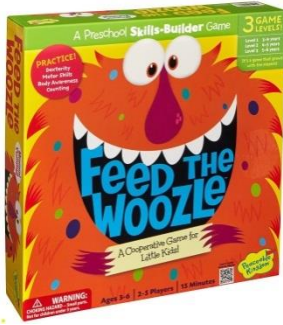
- Works on fine motor skills (grasp) by picking up the pieces and stacking them.
- Modify the activity by having your child stack the pieces as desired rather than following the colored pattern.
- Appropriate for ages 1-3.
- Available at Target

- Willy's Wiggly Web



- Works on pre-cutting skills by cutting along the spider web while trying to free the bugs that are on the spider web.
- Can modify the activity by having your child use adapted scissors (see handwriting section) to better assist their performance.
- Appropriate for ages 3 years and up.
- Available at Amazon (See Resources)

- Feed the Woozle



- Improves fine motor skills by maintaining a grasp using a spoon. Also works on visual motor skills by having to place the food inside the woozle’s mouth (target).
- Modify the activity by having your child use a smaller spoon, which could be easier to manipulate. To increase the demands of the activity have your child feed the woozle with pom-poms (colorful fluffy small circles sold at any arts and crafts store) or cotton balls using tongs (see handwriting section). To decrease the demands of the activity have your child scoop the pom-poms with the spoon or easier yet, finger-feed the pom-poms .
- Appropriate for ages 3 years and up.
- Available at Amazon

- Design and Drill Activity Center



- Develops fine motor skills (strength, grasp, and manipulation) and eye-hand coordination by inserting bolts into a patterned board.
- Modify the activity by having your child start without following a pattern. Start by putting the bolts into the board using fingers (pushing and twisting into openings on the board). Increase the demands by having your child use the tools to insert the bolts into the board (screwdriver, wrench, and power drill).
- Appropriate for ages 3 years and up.

- Available at Beyond Play, Learning Express (See Resources)

- Froggy Feeding Fun



- Works on fine motor (strength) and bilateral hand skills, squeezing the frog's mouth open with one hand while inserting an object into mouth with the other hand.
- Modify the game by eliminating the rules and just have your child feed the frog. If your child hands are too small, instruct your child to use both hands to squeeze the frog while you feed the frog.
- Appropriate for ages 3 years and up.
- Available at Learning Resources (See Resources)

- Alphabots



- Works on fine motor skills (strength and manipulation) by manipulating the letters into robots.
- Can modify this activity by assisting your child with the first 2 manipulations and have them complete the last step. Can increase demand by manipulating the robots into letters.

- Appropriate for ages 3 years and up.
- Available at Lakeshore (See Resources)

- Sguiqz



- Works on fine motor skills (strength) and bilateral hand skills by pushing the objects together and pulling them apart. Sguiqz has a suction feature where it can stick to surfaces as well as each other.
- Modify the activity by having your child stick the objects to a vertical surface to promote optimal position of their upper extremity.
- Appropriate for ages 3 years and up.
- Available at Beyond Play and Learning Express

## Visual Motor Skills

Visual Motor Skills (Integration) is commonly known as eye-hand coordination. This is a complex skill that allows us to complete complicated tasks by using our eyes and hands together, such as completing a puzzle or inserting a key into a key hole. It is a combination of visual perception (allows us to think about how we can manipulate objects) and motor skills (learned sequence of movements that combine to produce a smooth action).

- Stack and Roll Cups



- Works on visual motor skills by stacking the cups on top of each other.
- Can modify the activity by having your child stack 3 roll cups and once successful increase the amount of roll cups. Can also modify by having the parent stabilize (hold) the roll cups while your child stacks them on top of each other.
- Appropriate for ages 6 months and up.
- Available at Target



- Baby's First Blocks



- Works on visual motor skills and eye-hand coordination skills by sorting various shapes.
- Modify the activity by having your child work on the simpler shapes first (circle, square, and triangle), covering the rest of the shapes.
- Appropriate for ages 6 months and up
- Available at Target

- Caterpillar Gears Toddler Toy



- Works on fine motor skills (grasp and manipulation).
- Modify the activity by having your child first insert the head (front) and tail (back) then you can have your child work on manipulating the pieces next to each other.
- Appropriate for ages 1 year and up.
- Available at Melissa and Doug (See Resources)

- Large Jumbo Knob Puzzle



- Works on visual motor skills and eye-hand coordination by making sense of shapes and assembling an inset puzzle.
- Modify the activity by decreasing the amount of visual stimuli by having the child assemble the top row only (3 simplest shapes). Cover bottom two rows with your arm.
- Appropriate for ages 1 year and up.
- Available at Melissa and Doug

- Smart Snacks Sorting Cupcakes



- Works on visual motor skills by making sense of basic shapes and sorting them.
- Modify the activity by starting with three shapes before attempting all six. Start by assembling the simplest shapes (circle, square, and triangle), followed by sequentially more complex shapes.
- Appropriate for ages 2 years and up.
- Available at Learning Resources and Beyond Play

- Button Art



- Develops eye-hand coordination and fine motor skills (strength and grasp).
- Great for small hands, as the buttons are large and easy to hold.
- Modify the activity by having your child insert the button-pegs into the board without using the pattern cards. To promote crossing midline you can place the button-pegs off to the sides and have your child reach across their body.
- Appropriate for ages 2 years and up.
- Available at Beyond Play

- Scoop 'Em Up



- Works on eye-hand coordination (stacking ice cream scoops on top of each other), fine motor skills (grasp and index finger isolation), and motor planning (figuring out how to stack the ice cream).
- Modify the activity by scooping the ice cream and placing into a bowl rather than stacking on top of each other. Increase the demands by having your child follow a specific pattern (stacking the vanilla, strawberry, then chocolate ice cream).
- Appropriate for ages 4 years and up.
- Available at Beyond Play

## Sensory Activities

Sensory processing skills refer to the way the nervous system receives messages from the senses and turns them into appropriate motor and behavioral responses. Sensory processing is the body's ability to take in sensory information and organize the information to make sense. The sensory systems include: vision, auditory (hearing), olfactory (smell), tactile (touch), tasting, vestibular (movement information/balance), and proprioceptive (where your body is in space).

- What's inside? Soft Feely Box



- Improve sensory processing tactile (touch) skills by putting your hand inside the box to feel and explore various sensory objects.
- Modify the activity by only having 1 item inside the box at a time for your child to explore rather than all 10 objects. You can also modify by having your child put the objects into the box rather than having their vision occluded.
- Appropriate for children from birth to 4 years.
- Available at Lakeshore

- Play dough and Play dough Tool Set



- Play-dough can be used for many outcomes. Works on improving tactile experience to texture (play-dough). Works on improving fine motor skills (strength) and bilateral hand skills by using the play-dough tools to cut, roll, and slice and the hands to manipulate the dough.
- Play-dough is appropriate for ages 2 years and up
- Play-dough tool set is appropriate for ages 3 years and up
- Available at Lakeshore

- Bilibo



- Improves sensory processing and self-regulation skills by providing your child with vestibular (linear and rotary) input that could help calm/organize your child or arouse your child for activities.
- They can sit in it, rock in it, or spin in it.
- Appropriate for ages 2-7.
- Available at Beyond Play

- Sands Alive



- Improves sensory processing and tactile experiences by making shapes and structures with the sand.
- Appropriate for ages 3 years and up.
- Available at Beyond Play and Learning Express

- Melissa & Doug Shopping Cart



- Improve sensory processing skills and self-regulation by having your child push the shopping cart around the house while he/she fills it up with play food.
- Increase the demands of the activity by having your child push the cart on a rug (more resistance) and provide your child with a shopping list to retrieve play food items, books, bean bags. Decrease the demands of the activity by having your child push the cart on tile (less resistance).
- Appropriate for ages 3 years and up.
- Available at Melissa and Doug.

### Handwriting

- Finger Crayons



- Works on grasping skills for toddlers, finger isolation, and fine motor skills.
- Perfectly sized for little hands to hold in their palms or place on their fingertips.
- For higher level grasping put cotton balls in the hole of the crayon to promote holding the crayon instead of sticking their finger into the hole.
- Appropriate for ages 2 years and up.
- Available at Beyond Play and Learning Resources

- Gator Grabber Tweezers



- Helps develop the pincer grasp and scissor skills needed for fine motor skills.
- Assists in development of eye-hand coordination by picking up small items.
- Appropriate for ages 2 years and up.
- Available at Learning Resources and Learning Express

- Handy Scoopers



- Helps develop eye-hand coordination, pre-cutting skills, and hand separation by scooping small objects.
- Modify the activity by having your child catch bubbles. This will promote proper upper extremity positioning (arm in extension/up). You can also incorporate a water

table since there are tiny holes in the scooper (have child fill up their scooper with small water toys).

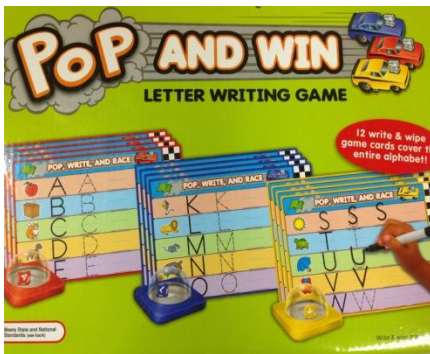
- Appropriate for ages 2 years and up.
- Available at Learning Resources

- Triangular Crayons



- Promotes a tripod grasp (crayon held between thumb and index finger while the crayon rests on the middle finger).
- Easy to hold and stronger than regular crayons. Can modify by breaking the crayons in half (easier to manipulate a functional grasp).
- Appropriate for ages 3 years and up.
- Available at Learning Resources, Learning Express, and Beyond play

- Pop and Win



- This is a highly motivating letter formation and recognition game. Also works on fine motor skills (grasp).



- The popping dice adds to the excitement as your child has to find and print the letter. Children race their “cars” to the finish line when they have completed the letter.
- You can modify this activity by using the game as a writing center. Set out one of the colored poppers (red, blue, yellow), 1 corresponding game card (red, blue, or yellow), and the thin line write and wipe markers. Your child will complete 1 game card as they work on mastering letter formation. You can also modify this activity by taping the cards to a vertical surface to enhance your child’s positioning and grasp.
- Appropriate for ages 3 years and up.
- Available at Lakeshore.

- Mini Easi-Grip Scissors



- Adaptive scissors that are lightweight and operated by squeezing gently with your thumb and fingers, or fingers and palm of the hand.
- The scissors automatically reopen when pressure is released (child’s grip is eased), which makes these ideal for those who are new to pre-cutting skills.
- Can modify by keeping the paper on a vertical surface as this is the easiest position to cut, e.g. paper taped to an easel.
- Great for smaller hands (preschool children)
- Available at Beyond Play

- Spring Action Scissors



- Works on pre-cutting skills and hand separation.
- Excellent training scissor.
- Can modify by keeping the paper on a vertical surface as this is the easiest position to cut.
- Available at Amazon

Resources:

**Lakeshore:** A range of toy products for the infant/toddlers, early childhood, kindergarten and early elementary.

<http://www.lakeshorelearning.com>

**Beyond Play:** A range of early intervention products for young children with special needs.

<http://www.beyondplay.com>

**Learning Resources:** An educational resource for PreK – 6th grade. A look into products used in the classroom.

<http://www.learningresources.com>

**Learning Express:** A range of toy products for infants/toddlers, early childhood, kindergarten, and early elementary. Also has a big emphasis on toys appropriate for special needs. Store locator in Westchester County (Rye and Scarsdale)

<http://www.learningexpress.com/>

**Melissa and Doug:** A range of toy products for infants/toddlers, early childhood, and early elementary.

<http://www.melissaanddoug.com/>

**Target:** Click on the “toys” tab

<http://www.target.com/>

**Amazon:** Scroll down to the “toys and games” tab

<http://www.amazon.com/>