



Motor Activity 1: Working with the Horizontal Dowel

Primary Goal

Strengthening arm and wrist muscles; developing fine motor skills and the pincer grasp; developing hand-eye coordination.

Secondary Goals

Increasing focus and concentration; developing hand dominance.

Material

Work mat.

Work tray.

Horizontal Dowel.

The Horizontal Dowel has two variations: the straight dowel and the serpentine, or wavy, dowel. The material has a green disk that the child can move freely along a thin horizontal dowel. The dowel is fixed in a wooden base and has a stopper on the other end to prevent the child from removing the disk. The child works with the straight dowel first and progresses to working with the serpentine dowel when he/she is ready.

Presentation

- This activity appeals particularly to the interests and abilities of toddlers 12–15 months old.
- In advance, get the Horizontal Dowel and the work mat.
- Put the work mat in place and put the material on the work mat, positioning it so that end of the dowel points to the child's right. Encourage the child to help.
- Sit facing the child with the work mat between you.
- Name the material: "Today, we are going to work with the Horizontal Dowel."



Extension 3

- Using the pincer grasp, slowly and deliberately slide the green disk all the way to the stopper at the end of the dowel. Use your entire forearm, not just your wrist, keeping your upper arm and shoulder still.
- Remove your hand and pause.
- Using the pincer grasp, slowly and deliberately slide the green disk back to its original position.
- Repeat the activity.
- Invite the child to take over when he/she shows interest.
- As soon as the child is focusing on working with the material, quietly move aside and allow him/her to work undisturbed.
- When the child has finished the activity, involve him/her in putting the Horizontal Dowel on the work tray, then returning the work mat and material to their proper places. This completes the activity.
- Make sure that the materials presented stay available — on a low shelf, for example — for the child to work on again when he/she wishes.

Extension 1

- Once the child has developed some experience and skill, reverse the direction of the dowel and invite the child to work with his/her non-dominant hand.

Extension 2

- Once the child has developed some experience and skill, invite him/her to complete the activity with his/her eyes closed.

Extension 3

- Invite the child to complete the activity using the Serpentine Horizontal Dowel.