

Occupational Therapy at Quakers Hill PS

Pencil Grasp

- Place pom pom in palm and ask student to squeeze with pinky and ring finger. This will encourage child to use the correct fingers when writing. (Please refer to pic 1.)
- Wrap rubber band around wrist and add pencil into rubber band. This will force pencil to sit on students web between the thumb and pointing finger. (Please refer to pic 2.)
- Students tend to have incorrect pencil grasps when they have poor hand strength. Try hand-strengthening activities before students are needed to use their pencil such as play-dough, squeezing pegs, twirling the pencil between their fingertips (like a windmill, pressing their fingertips down onto the table for a few seconds).

Scissor Skills

- Remind students that their thumb is the 'captain' of the scissors and always has to be on top. This will help students hold their dominant hand in the correct position, instead of turning their hands into awkward positions.
- Educate students that the thumb on their other hand is also the 'captain' as it is the only finger that should be seen on top of the paper when cutting. If the students have multiple fingers on top of the paper when holding it, remind students of where their 'captain' is.
- Allow students to cut thicker pieces of paper such as cardboard and magazines as this is easier to manipulate in the beginning stages.
- Make sure students' elbows are tucked in, this allows for better control. Students tend to extend their elbows out when they have difficulty cutting.

Sitting

- Watch for students who 'W' sit (please refer to pic 3.) Students tend to 'W' sit due to poor core strength and rely on the wide base of the 'W' to compensate. Try different sitting options for these students so they can eventually sit with their legs crossed. The first sitting option includes putting both legs to one side (Please refer to pic 4.) or sitting with their legs out straight.
- Students who are extra 'wiggly' can benefit from a wobble cushion. These can be purchased from K-Mart in the exercise section. Wobble cushions can improve core strength and postural support, develop a better sense of balance as well as increase the time a child can tolerate sitting on the floor while paying attention.
- When sitting at a table, it is important for students to feel supported, this means to make sure a student can place their feet firmly on the floor. When a child cannot reach the floor, this will decrease attention time, increase distractibility and decrease quality of handwriting.

Attention and concentration

- Plan lessons with intervals: this can be from one-on-one work, shifting to paired work or writing to sharing what you have written.
- Allow for regular movement breaks, this can be from a simple wiggle of the body to a 'Just Dance' video or even a few seconds of chair hold (please refer to pic 5.)
- Considering the visual environment. Just like an adult may have difficulty completing work on a busy and cluttered desk, students may have difficulty concentrating where there is a lot of visual stimulation. Try and limit how much art goes onto the walls or limit how many informative posters you have pinned up.
- Plan to run a 5-10 minute mindfulness practice each and every day, at a time that you know students need a little extra something to help focus and get the most out of the learning experience that is about to occur.
- Try a movement cube dice. When students are starting to lose their attention and concentration, ask a student to roll both die – one of for the action and the other is for the repetitions/ duration.

Picture 1: Pom pom pencil grasp



Picture 2: Rubber band



Picture 3: 'W' Sitting



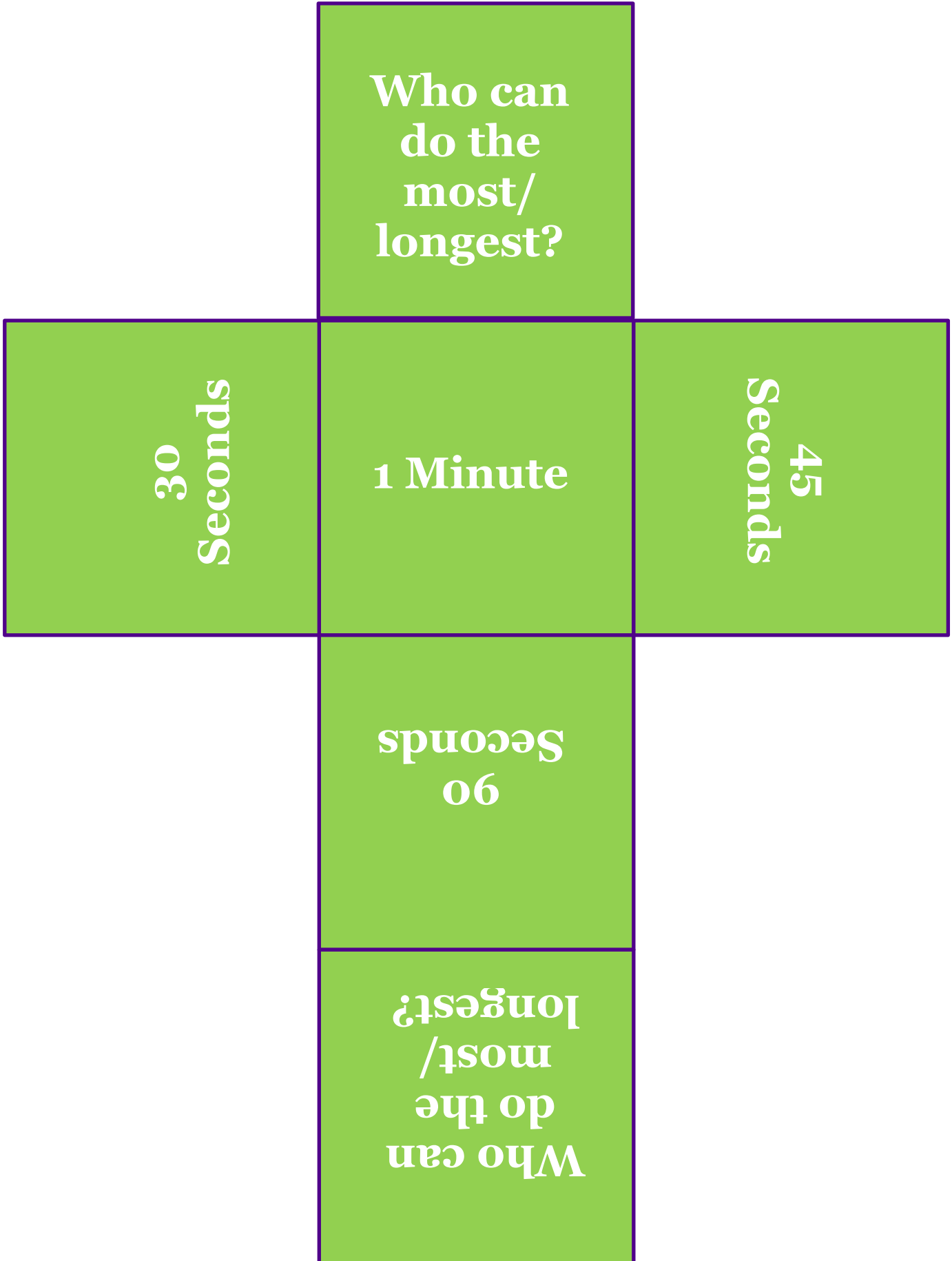
Picture 4: Sitting Alternative (legs to side)



Picture 5: Chair Hold



Movement Dice: Please change/edit to your liking



**Chair
Hold**

Dips

Wall Sit

**Leg
Ups**

**Facilitate a
few
stretching
exercises.
(student**

**Star
Jumps**