

THERAPY IDEAS - COGNITIVE, SPEECH, COORDINATION

Once our loved one was at home with us, we immediately tried to incorporate cognitive therapy, speech therapy, as well as activities to promote coordination skills into his daily schedule. All activities were guided by therapists and doctors to ensure that we were creating the proper therapy. We also created an exercise program for our loved one, which was guided by therapists and doctors for specific conditions. You can find this outline in the "Resources". However, always consult a medical professional before starting any new exercise or any new cognitive or speech therapy!

Fidget Supplies (Rancho Levels 4 and 5)

Our loved one exhibited anxiety, fidgetiness, brain fever, confused state, and other behavior that seems bizarre. But, it is part of the brains recovery process. To assist our loved one with not focusing on pulling out tubes, removing briefs, urinary bags, and hurting himself by some of the confused behavior, we offered many calming fidget items, such as also used by individuals with ADHD or Autism. This proved to be very helpful. Our items were either handmade, such as beanbags, or we bought simple fidget items at the a dollar store. Little hint, don't use anything that resembles food as your loved one could mistake it for real food and try to eat it. Here are some examples:



Squirly Ball



Pop Toys



Stress Balls



Bean Bags



Liquid Motion Bubbler Plastic Maracas Acrylic Shower Sponges Sensory Balls

If you are inventive, you can also create a "bussy blanket" by attaching a variety of items to the blanket. During this stage of the brain many things are rediscovered, so you can also add safe items / materials that feel different from each other. For example:



Crochet Granny Squares



Faux Fur



Burlap



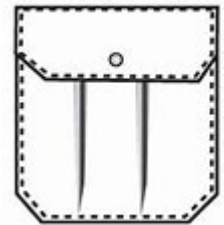
Faux Textured Leather



Velcro Pads



Zippers



Shirt Pocket

Fidget / Busy blankets can also be purchased on line. Prices depend on size, as well as handcrafted ones are more expensive. Recommendation: Nothing with small parts that can come off and be



swallowed. Here are some examples:

Stacking game (Rancho Levels 3 and 4)

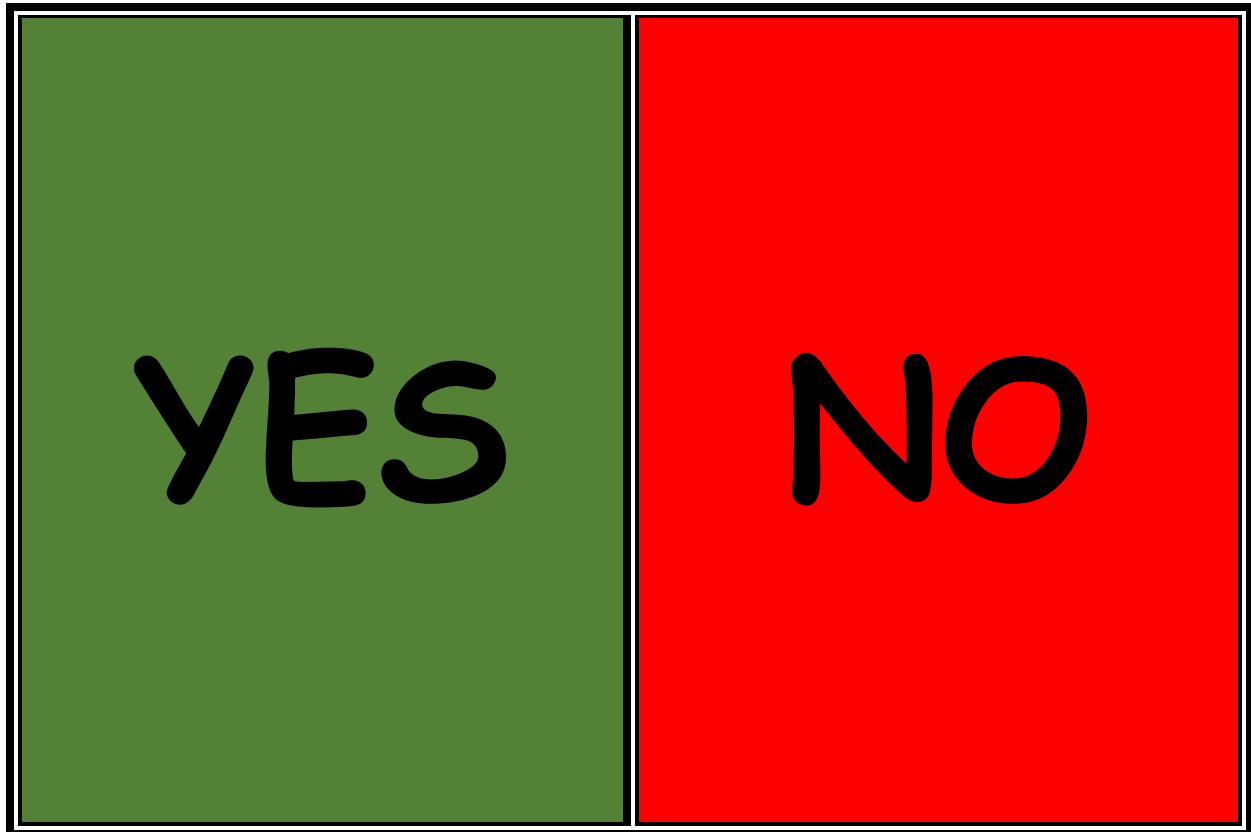
Our loved one deals with "Spastic Paralysis" (see Resources) and was not able to move very much upon arrival at home. The brain damage is more severe on the left of the brain, therefore causing a larger problem on the right side of the body. For this reason we started out with retraining the left hand first and getting the brain to connect to that part of the body. Our first cognitive exercise that also used the left arm and hand, was a simple stacking game. We used a variety of recycleables in different sizes that could be stacked inside of each other and would encourage our loved one to stack them in order to fit all items into the largest container. In the beginning this was a challenging assignment, but the brain caught on fairly quickly. A few weeks down the line our loved one surprised us by wanting to close the container by himself by screwing on the lid. This was a wonderful accomplishment because not only did the brain now think ahead to the next logical step, but also this was accomplished with the left hand by a right-hander. Switching dominance is very difficult.



Yes and No Cards (Green and Red - Rancho Levels 3 and 4)

Our loved one was not able speak upon coming home, so it was necessary for us to create a system for appropriate responses. Early on we used a "green"

rectangular card for "Yes", and a "red" rectangular card for "No". Our loved one's brain instinctively understood those designations. Later we still used green and red cards, but we added the words "Yes" and "No". You can print this page and use the cards shown here if you'd like. They can also be glued to a popsicle stick to make things easier. Our loved one first nodded to acknowledge and later pointed to the desired answer.



Shape Cube (Rancho Levels 4 and 5)



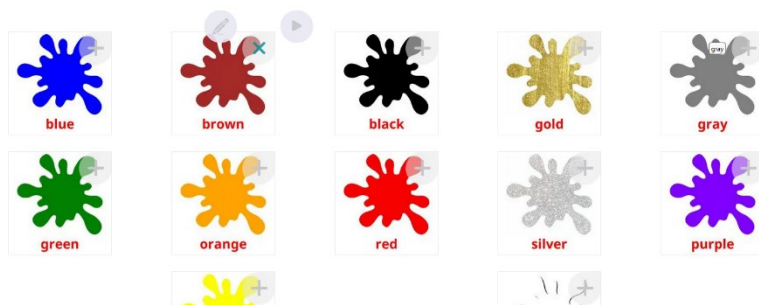
After our loved ones left hand became a little more mobile, we expanded our daily activities to include a shape cube. This was to train the brain to recognize shapes and also coordinate that with motor function by placing the shape into the correct slot. In the beginning this task was very difficult and certain shapes were often misidentified, especially if they looked similar to another shape. But with time this our loved one mastered this activity as well and often opened the cube to empty out the shapes and play again. (Current cost between \$13 and \$25 depending on style.)

Common Objects Flashcards, Simple Fruit Flashcards, Simple Shape Flashcards, Alphabet Flashcards, Number Flashcards, Color Flashcards (Rancho Levels 3, 4 and 5)

Our loved one had been exposed to interacting with flashcards early on at the skilled nursing facility by the speech therapist. It was recommended that we continue this form therapy. Before our loved one began speaking again, we would use the flashcards in conjunction with the "Yes" and "No" cards. We would hold up two cards, and ask "which one of these cards is ...". Our loved one would nod the head to one side or the other, or later point. The sites I am mentioning below allowed downloads without any sign-up, membership, or adding a "download" option to the computer. When looking for flashcards, please consider if your loved one has sight issues. If you do not want to download, print, and cut flashcards, they are available at any store that sells educational materials. Dollar Stores often have a variety of these also (current cost between \$1.25 and \$1.50). Here is a link for some available cards:

<https://www.dollartree.com/learning-educational-supplies/flash-cards>

Color Flashcards - We first began with color flashcards. We used a free downloadable set from "Kids Flashcards". This website allows not only a free download, but also language customization. In the beginning we cut the color words off of the cards as not to as the brain to handle too many cognitive functions at once. Later, as the cognitive functioning improved, we printed another set with the words as well. Here is an example of the cards, as well as a link to download the cards.



<https://kids-flashcards.com/en/free-printable/base-colors-flashcards-in-english#gsc.tab=0>

Alphabet Cards - Super Simple - Our next addition of cards were large alphabet flash cards that used only capital letters. We downloaded and printed these for free from "Super Simple". These also came in a saveable format. You can find them in the "Resources" tab, or

access them here: https://supersimple.com/downloads/supersimple_uppercase-alphabet-flashcards.pdf

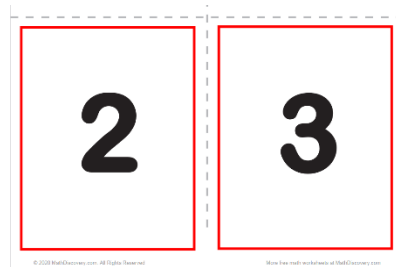


A short time later, we added lowercase flashcards from the same site. Also in our "Resources".

https://supersimple.com/downloads/supersimple_lowercase-alphabet-flashcards.pdf



Number Flash Cards - We then continued with number flashcards. We obtained these online from Math Discovery. Once one set of numbers was mastered, we progressively added more numbers. They came in printable and saveable format. You can find them in our "Resources" or download them for free here:



<https://mathdiscovery.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Printable-Numbers-1-20-Flashcards-f.pdf>

<https://mathdiscovery.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Printable-Numbers-20-40-Flashcards-f.pdf>

<https://mathdiscovery.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Printable-Numbers-40-60-Flashcards-f.pdf>

<https://mathdiscovery.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Printable-Numbers-60-80-Flashcards-f.pdf>

<https://mathdiscovery.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Printable-Numbers-80-100-Flashcards-f.pdf>

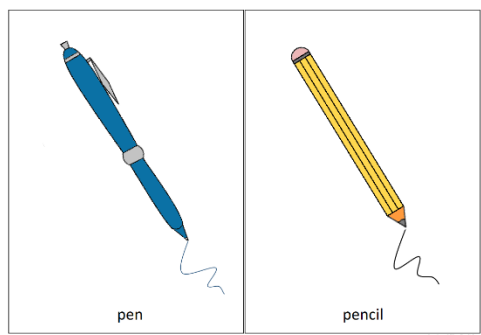
As our loved one progressed, we added more difficult flashcards. They are listed below:

Common Objects Flashcards - from Widgit Software. This download can not only be printed, but also saved for repeated printing. Each object comes in three formats; 1. Picture only; 2. Picture with word; 3. Word only. This is a natural progression and we used all three versions over time. Here is an example and a link to access the site, or you can access them from our "Resources" tab:



https://www.widgit.com/resources/home-early-years/common_objects/common_object_flashcards.pdf

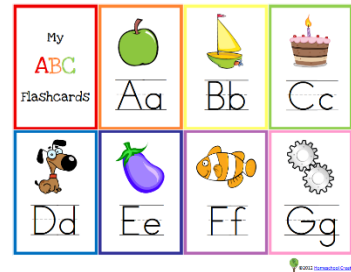
Classroom Objects Flashcards - a free download from "Speak-and-Play". These are very large cards only two to a page. However, they can be printed and saved as well. You can access a set from our "Resources" tab, or go here for a download:



<https://speak-and-play-english.com/classroom-objects-flashcards-free-printable-flashcards>

Advanced ABC Flashcards -

Slightly more advanced ABC cards with both lower case and upper case letters, as well as a matching object. Free download by Homeschool Creations, which can be printed and saved. Also available in our "Resources".



http://www.homeschoolcreations.com/files/Alphabet_Flashcards.pdf

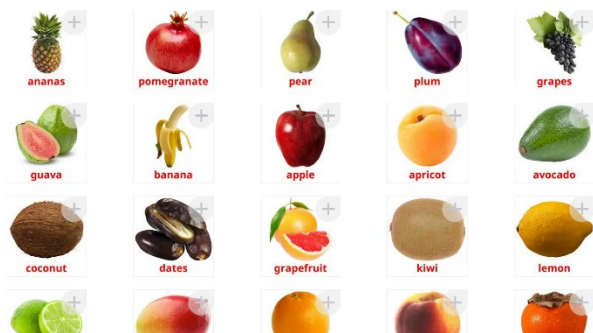
More Comprehensive Flashcards (Rancho Levels 6 and 7) - At this time our loved one was speaking, so it was time to introduce more comprehensive flashcards. We chose the following:

Kitchen Flashcards - free download by Kids Flashcards. Printable and saveable. You can access them from here or from our "Resources".



<https://kids-flashcards.com/en/free-printable/kitchenware-flashcards-in-english#gsc.tab=0>

Fruit Flashcards - free download by Kids Flashcards. Printable and saveable. You can access them from here or from our "Resources".



<https://kids-flashcards.com/en/free-printable/fruits-flashcards-in-english>

Furniture Flashcards - free download by Kids Flashcards. Printable and saveable. You can access them from here or from our "Resources".



<https://kids-flashcards.com/en/free-printable/furniture-flashcards-in-english#gsc.tab=0>

Once we started "re-educating" our loved one with homeschool curriculum, we also added curriculum specific flashcards when available.

Painting / Coloring Activities

Watercolor Coloring Books (Rancho Levels 4 and 5) - These were the kind that come with a paintbrush and one dips the brush in the water. The watercolor appears once the page becomes wet. We purchased these from the Dollar Store and they were a very fun and effective therapy tool. (Current cost between \$1.25 and \$5.)



Calendar Activity (Rancho Level 4 and forward)

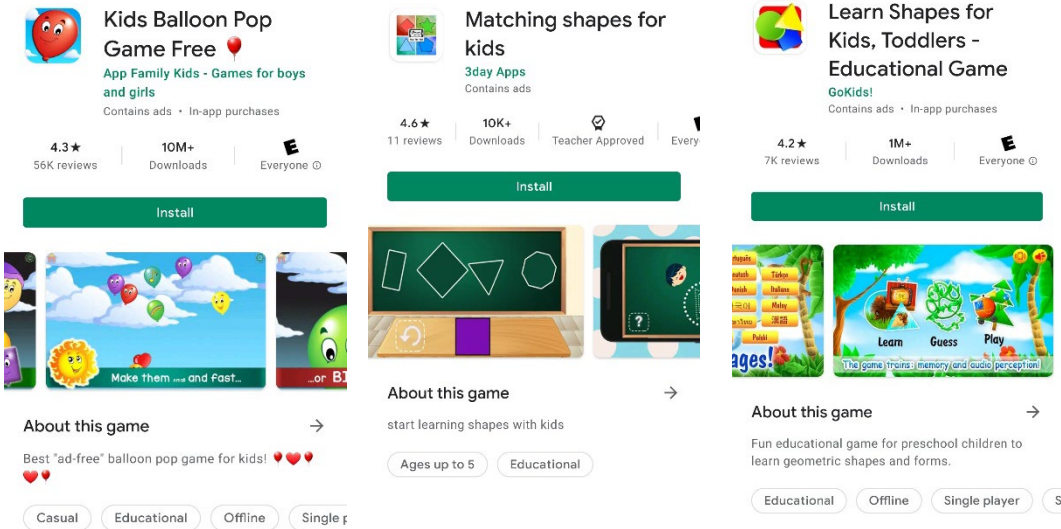
We fashioned a calendar for our loved one that interchangeable. By providing the daily calendar activity of changing day, month, and day as needed, it was much easier for our loved one to orientate himself towards time. Once the calendar was changed



every day, it was hung on one of the walls in our loved one's room where it could be clearly seen. The template for the calendar cut-outs is provided in the "Resources" tab. If you are not a thrifty sewer, you can purchase a "classroom organizer" at one of the Dollar Stores and use it instead for inserting the day, month, day, and year. These are called "Chart Schedulers". (Current cost around \$1.50 to \$8 depending on where purchased.)



Simple Free Digital Games on Tablet (Rancho Levels 4, 5 and 6) - Our loved one could accomplish these with one hand. At first much concentration was required and our loved one could only complete one game at a time with much assistance. But as coordination improved the success rate became much higher, until the games were outgrown all together. Here are some examples:



Once our loved one became more proficient with the games, we purchased a special phone / tablet clamp so the games could be played in a sit-up position without assistance. (Current cost between \$9 and \$60 depending on style.)



Communication Board (Rancho Levels 4, 5, and 6) - As mentioned before, we created a communication board to communicate with our loved one since speech development was a little slow after the TBI. You can find the basic template for this board in our "Resources". We glued our cut outs on a foam board. This form of communication worked very well. As our loved one advanced the board became more involved.



Magnetic Writing Board with Magnetic Letters and Numbers (Rancho Levels 5, 6 and 7)

We still owned a magnetic writing board and magnetic numbers and letters. This toy proved to be very valuable to our loved one's therapy. Writing was very difficult until Rancho Level 7 and so this gave our loved one a way to express himself as well as practice hand dexterity. (Current cost between \$20 and \$60 depending on style.)



Flannel and Sticker Boards (Rancho Levels 5 and 6)

To teach more vocabulary and promote cognitive thinking, we asked our loved one to identify specific items or animals on flannel or sticker story boards, and then create a sequence. This way our loved one could create a story without being able to speak which we would then try to interpret. It was a very fun activity for all of us. And often there was much laughter involved. We obtained these boards from a Dollar Store, as well as we found some



of them at thrift stores. (Current cost between \$1.25 and \$20 depending on style and size.)

Set of Teether Ring Links (Rancho Levels 4 and 5)



We used these rings to build coordination in our loved ones mobile arm and hand by asking him to snap them into rings we were holding. This was a very good game for coordinaiton and concentration. (\$1.49 at Dollar Store.)

Wendy's Building Sets (Rancho Levels 5 and 6)

If you have any Wendy's building sets left from way-back-when, these work really well also. We also used them to build coordination by having our loved one snap them into each other while we were holding one of the pieces. Later, as our loved one became more cognitive, there was a desire to use them to build things.



Large Size Building Blocks (Rancho Levels 5 and 6)



Large size building blocks worked very well to regain coordination in the hand, but it also served as a counting and color recognition tool. We obtained our set from a Dollar Store. (Current cost about \$4 to \$10 depending on style.)

Puzzles (Rancho Level 5 and up)

Puzzles worked extremely well to hold our loved one's attention and promote cognitive thinking. We started out with puzzles that had large pieces to make it easier, starting with 24-piece puzzles and worked our way up to 500-piece puzzles. All of our puzzles were purchased at a Dollar Store (\$1.25 each.)



Board Games, Card Games, and Other Games (Rancho Level 5 and up)

Board games became a favorite activity for all of us and challenged our loved one in many ways to develop better cognitive skills. We have



plenty of them at the house, but you can often find smaller versions at the Dollar Store or used games at thrift stores. If you purchase full size new versions, they can get a little costly. (Current cost \$1.25 to \$25.)

Play Dough, Cloud Dough, and Therapeutic Putty (Rancho Levels 4 and up)



Our loved one, as mentioned before, experiences spastic paralysis on the right side of his body and movement on the left side took a while to redevelop. To develop muscle tone and coordination in his left hand and fingers, we used different forms of dough. First a very soft, sticky, slimy dough (like Super Cloud - current cost about \$5 each), then a modeling dough (like Play-Doh - current cost about \$1 each), then finally graduating to a variety of therapeutic dough (Thera Putty - current cost between

\$18 to \$35 for a set). Then we moved on to do the same for the right hand. (Also see "Resources" for therapy ideas.)

Bubbles and Kazoos (Rancho Level 4)



To enhance lung capacity, which also assists with speaking, we played kazoos and blew bubbles. (Both Dollar Store finds.) This was very difficult in the beginning but then became easier with practice and better lung function.

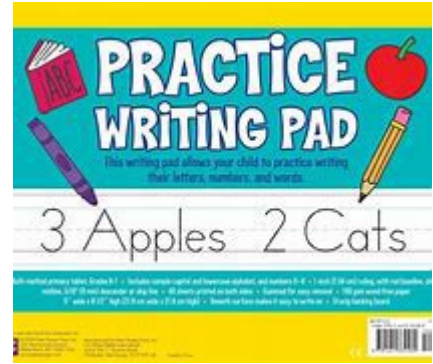
Breathing Trainer (Rancho Level 5 and up)



To continue enhancing lung capacity, we were advised to use a breathing trainer, which has up to six settings. This tool proved to be very helpful, when used on a daily basis. (Current cost between \$25 and \$60 depending on where purchased. Also see Resources.)

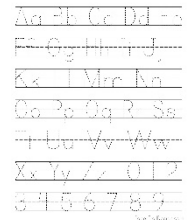
Writing Practice (Rancho Level 5 and up)

Our loved one had to learn how to write with the "non-natural hand". We used a variety of tools and supplies. We first began by asking our loved one to practice simple numbers and letters on a practice writing pad. (Available at the Dollar Store for \$1.25.) We then graduated to worksheets that specified a special item, animal, etc. and then gradually moved on to sentences. This was also a great vocabulary learning tool as well as challenging cognitive functioning.



Free Printable Worksheets by Paper Trail Design:

<https://www.papertraildesign.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ABC-Handwriting-practice-with-lines.jpg>




UPPERCASE LETTER TRACING ALPHABET WORKSHEETS



<https://www.papertraildesign.com/letter-tracing-worksheets/>

Free Printable and Savable Sentence Writing Worksheets from Henry School k12. Also provided in our "Resources".

Sentence Writing	Name: _____
	Directions: Write each sentence correctly. Make sure to use an capital letter, finger spaces, and punctuation.
1. I like my red bike.	
2. Can you come over?	
3. The dog was barking.	

<https://schoolwires.henry.k12.ga.us/cms/lib/GA01000549/Centricity/Domain/14784/Sentence%20Writing%20Worksheets%20Copy%20%20the%20Sentences%20Practice%20Worksheets.pdf>

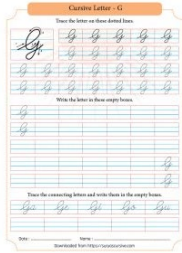
Once your loved one has mastered printing, you can move on to cursive writing.

Free downloadable, printable, and savable lowercase cursive alphabet worksheets by Suryas Cursive. Also available in our "Resources".



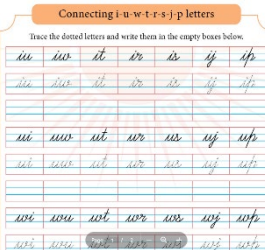
<https://suryascursive.com/cursive-lowercase-letters-worksheets/>

Free downloadable, printable, and savable cursive capital case letter worksheets by Suryas Cursive. Also available in our "Resources".



https://drive.google.com/file/d/1V7DraIjTOzBV6V5815-iPq_9TeYChTNV/view

Free downloadable, printable, and savable cursive connecting letter worksheets by Suryas Cursive. Also available in our "Resources".



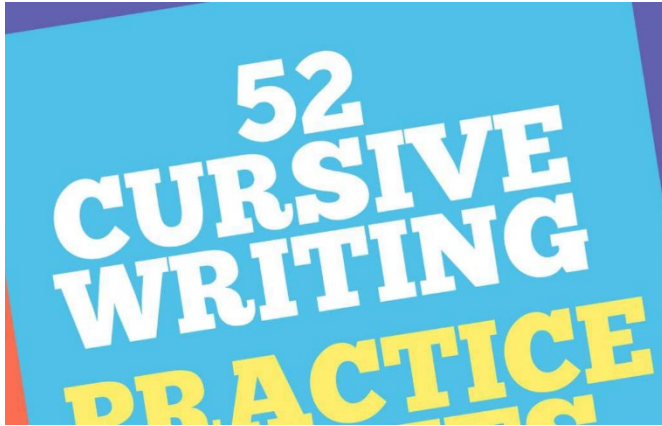
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jbxhDq20qnaHmaBqvUNT9sGemT2fEU-2/view>

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VtfIqDO3HczH2V2P_sejkB4pUhpVG8_-/view

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SF7bk6cSlpYB-8NtKNSOVOvcvfyAe1qF/view>

https://drive.google.com/file/d/15f194e3p4c9sZEzZ_8k_EJMTLslwSLOI/view

Free downloadable, printable, and savable 52-Page "My Cursive Practice Workbook" by MyCursive.com. Also available in our "Resources".



<https://mycursive.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/My-Cursive-Practice-Workbook.pdf>

Math Practice (Rancho Level 5 and up)

Our loved one's daily lesson time included math practice sheets. As with writing, we began with simple worksheets and continued on with more difficult assignments as our loved one's math skills returned. Here are some free resources:

Free downloadable, printable, and savable math worksheets of all levels by Homeschoolmath.net. There are too many to share, but you can go here:

<https://www.homeschoolmath.net/worksheets/>

For free a downloadable, printable, and savable more advanced workbook (some algebra and geometry), we can recommend the "Home Math Workbook" by the NWT Literacy Council. It is also listed in our "Resources".



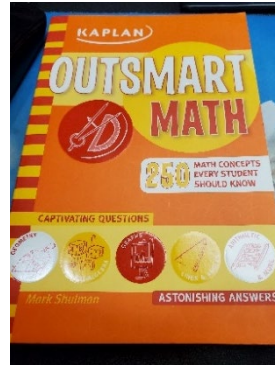
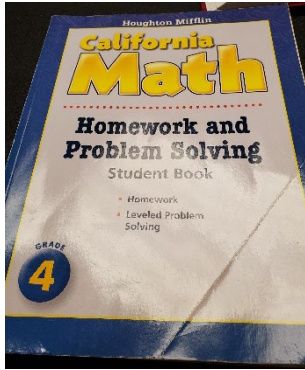
Home Math

Everyday Math Skills | 2009



http://www.mathematicshed.com/uploads/1/2/5/7/12572836/home_math_wrkbk.pdf

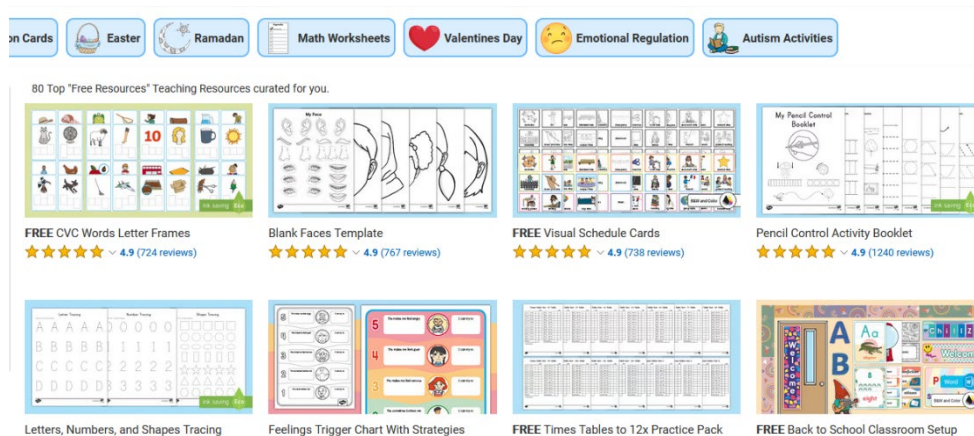
We also shopped for resources and bought workbooks second hand at thrift stores. Usually there were only a few pages missing or used.



Complete Lesson Plans (Rancho Level 6 and up)

Once our loved one no longer attended daily therapy sessions at a neurological facility, we expanded to daily lesson plans. Here again, beginning with more simple concepts and moving on to more difficult lessons. The daily plan would include writing, math, reading, and comprehension around a subject that our loved one wanted to explore. Most of our writing, math, and behavioral resources came from "Twinkl.com" This is a Canadian teaching site with great material. Once signed up with an email, there are many free worksheets, as well as complete lesson plans. These can be filtered by subject, grade level, or special needs. You can go here to sign up.

<https://www.twinkl.com/>.



We used free resources from this website to complete or assist with creating the following lesson plans and many more geared for high school learning:

Ancient Egypt

Ancient Greece

Ancient Rome

Dinosaurs

Medieval History

Our State

Paleontology

The Stone Age

The Rainforest

Another great resource was to find free videos on the subject to make the curriculum more fun. Usually from YouTube.

Here are some other free lesson plans we used that were terrific.

Turtles:

Free "Teaching Tools About Sea Turtles And Oceans", by the WWL. Informational packets with printable classroom presentations and an educator's resource guide.

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/teaching-resources/toolkits/sea-turtle-toolkit>

Free printable worksheets from the "NOAA" which include coloring pages.

<https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/teachers/sea-turtles/lesson-plans.html>

Free printable "Come Out Of Your Shell: All About Turtles" lesson plan by Wisconsin Water Library.

https://waterlibrary.aqua.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/LP_Turtles_aug16.pdf

Dinosaurs

Free printable worksheets, and great handouts for a variety of dinosaur related activities from American Museum of Natural History. "Dinosaurs: Activities and Lesson Plans".

<https://www.amnh.org/learn-teach/curriculum-collections/dinosaurs-activities-and-lesson-plans>

Solar System

Free printable and savable "Planets Worksheets" from Aiken County School District.

<https://www.acpsd.net/cms/lib011/SC02209457/Centricity/Domain/3613/PlanetsWorksheets.pdf>

Free printable and savable "Solar System Packet" with worksheets and lectures, by Liesl at Homeschoolden.com.

<https://homeschoolden.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Solar-System-Packet-Update-2.pdf>

Free printable "Solar System" worksheets by Beverly Hernandez offered at Thoughtco.com. <https://www.thoughtco.com/solar-system-printables-1832458>

Medieval Times

Free downloadable, printable and savable "European Middle Ages" by Laura Byrd offered at Tickettolearning.com. Also available in our Resources.

<https://tickettolearning.files.wordpress.com/2021/10/european-middle-ages-activity-book-ticket-to-learning.pdf>

Cognitive Therapy (Rancho Levels 5 and up)

There are many great resources to obtain free cognitive worksheets and activities.

Happy Neuron

Happy Neuron is a company that specializes only on neurological cognitive training, so their product is truly geared to working with this issue. Once signed up, the user can get monthly packets for free via an email notice. There are, of course, many others for sale as well, but we chose to only download free material. You can



go here to sign up:

<https://worksheets.happyneuronpro.com/free-worksheets/>

In-Home Cognitive Stimulation Guidebook

This free guidebook, published by the University of Alabama at Birmingham Traumatic Brain Injury Model System, is available in a downloadable, printable, and savable format. It is a great tool that follows a cognitive outline during various

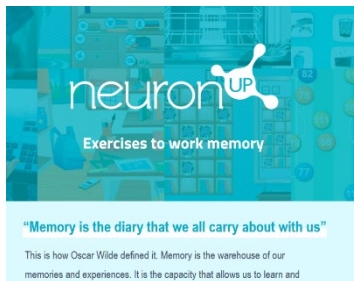
Rancho Levels and lists appropriate activities associated with each level. Many great games and activities with minimal supplies. You can download it here or from out "Resources".

In-home Cognitive Stimulation Guidebook
Activities to Stimulate Thinking Skills of People with Brain Disorders

Developed By
The University of Alabama at Birmingham Traumatic Brain Injury Model System

https://www.uab.edu/medicine/tbi/images/TBIMS/PDF/In-home_Cognitive_Stimulation_Guidebook_-_Final.pdf

Neuron Up Memory Exercises



The memory exercise pamphlet by Neuron Up is also available as a free downloadable, printable, and savable document. It has several worksheets to enhance memory function. You can download it here or find it in our "Resources".

<https://neuronup.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/5-free-printable-memory-exercises-downloadable.pdf>

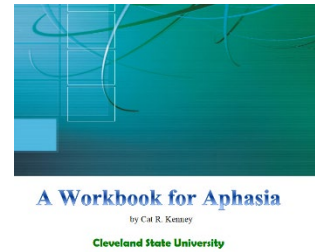
Speech Therapy (Rancho Level 5 and up)

Earlier on in this segment, we shared about all of the flashcards we used to increase our loved-one's use of vocabulary. While this was an early form of promoting speech, we were also guided by speech therapists and speech pathologists in other ways. This included the breathing trainer mentioned above to increase lung function, which is needed for speaking, as well as working on swallowing abilities. Once our loved one was at a Rancho 6 Level, we were asked to incorporate speech drills and mouth exercises into the daily routine. To assist our loved one with seeing how the mouth movements can affect speech, we purchased a simple mirror from a dollar store. The mouth exercises are included in our "Daily Exercises" pamphlet. If you are asked to do this, here are some wonderful resources you can use:



A Workbook for Aphasia

This is a free downloadable, printable, and savable workbook for aphasia (see Conditions Outline in the Resources) by Cat R. Kenney at Cleveland State University. It has many worksheets for speech therapy labeled with the grade of competency (easy, hard). If your loved one is ready for this type of therapy, consult with your speech therapist, you can download it here or find it in our "Resources".



<https://therapistsforarmenia.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/A-Workbook-for-Aphasia.pdf>

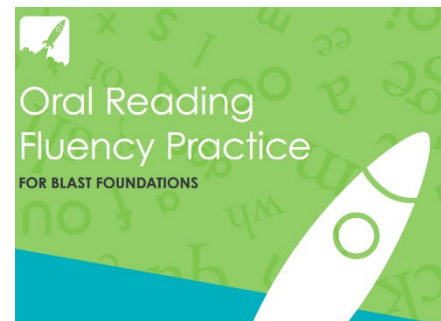
Vocal Loudness Exercises

Advocate Aurora Health offers a free downloadable, printable, and savable worksheet for vocal loudness exercises. You can download it here or find it in our "Resources".

<https://ahc.aurorahealthcare.org/fywb/x26031.pdf>

Oral Reading Fluency Practice

This pamphlet offers read-out-loud stories. Created by Blast Foundations, it is a free downloadable, printable, and savable workbook. You can download it here or find it in our "Resources".



https://www.reallygreatreading.com/sites/default/files/Oral_Reading_Fluency_Blast_v5_04032020.pdf

Fluency Drills

Murietta.k12.ca.us offers free curriculum for fluency drills. This workbook is filled with lots of worksheets. It can be downloaded, printed, and saved for free. You can get it here or find it in our "Resources".

https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/cms/lib5/ca01000508/centricity/domain/140/decoding_fluency_drills.pdf

English Professor Chad - Practice Paradise

English Professor Chad is an online program designed for learning conversational English. Meant for individuals that wish to learn English as a second language, it proved to be very helpful for our loved one. Segments are set up with a simple "repeat after me" system and give ample time to repeat and practice. Sentences and phrases also appear in written format on the screen. Hearing, seeing, and vocal practice was helpful to achieve a better speaking outcome for our loved



one. The program currently comes at a cost of \$98.00 for an entire year. Lessons are set up to begin with very basic communication skills and then

move up from there. There are literally hundreds of lessons to choose from. Super cool! Here is a link if you are interested in checking it out: <https://practiceparadise.mykajabi.com/> To assist our loved one to be more successful with accessing this type of online program, we purchased a keyboard with very large oversized, yellow letters and numbers. Having some vision problems this was very helpful. (These type of keyboards currently cost between \$13 and \$27.)



Smart Speaker

To encourage our loved one to practice speaking while laying in bed, we purchased a smart speaker. Since the smart speaker could turn on the light, play favorite music, play the radio, etc., this was a fun way of having our loved one engage and practice. (Current cost of a smart speaker ranges between \$25 and \$600, depending on model and capabilities.)

