



1023 South U.S. 27 • St. Johns • MI • 48879
Phone: 800.274.7426
Fax: 989.224.0330
TTY: 989.224.0346
E-mail: matr@edzone.net
Web site: <http://www.cenmi.org/matr>

Now You See It...Now You Don't!

Three dozen cheap tricks.

Compiled by Holly Brock & Barbara Warren

Our sincere thanks to ALL school personnel who have graciously shared their ideas with us throughout the years. Many of these ideas originated from you and your peers.

Cooperate, Collaborate, Communicate!

Remember: Fit the device to the student, not the student to the device.

Low-tech Ideas For:

Reading

- Page fluffers
To make the pages of a storybook easy to turn, just add page fluffers.
 1. Packing peanuts can be glued or paper clipped onto the book pages.
 2. A flattened drinking straw could be paper clipped onto a page.
 3. On cardboard books, a dot of hot glue in the corner also works great.
- Felt board
A store that sells fabric on bolts will be happy to give away the cardboard bolt end. Simply cover with felt (and hot glue) and it's ready for story time.
- Reading guides
Cut see-through colored plastic page protectors into strips. Place on reading material.

Writing

- Rubber stamping letters and numbers
Make a rubber stamp handle using a mini M&M's candy container (or any small container). Stick a rough piece of hook and loop fastener (Velcro) to the end using self-adhesive fastener or a strong adhesive. Add a smooth piece of fastener to the back of the rubber stamp. Put together and stamp! Stamps are easily changeable.
- Raised line writing paper
A variety of options are available when making your own raised line paper. Puff paint (available at a craft store) or glue can be drawn on the paper and allowed to dry. A seamstress's tracing wheel can be rolled across the paper and the raised line is felt on the opposite side of the surface. This same effect can be accomplished by stitching (without thread) the paper on a sewing machine. A software program "Start Write" can be purchased



Michigan's Assistive Technology Resource is an IDEA Mandated Activity Project offered through the Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LAW

The Michigan Department of Education complies with all Federal laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination, and with all requirements of the U.S. Department of Education.

to create personalized lined writing paper.

- Quick pencil grip
There are *many* styles of pencil grips available for purchase. But, in a pinch, grab a thick rubber band and wrap it around a pen or pencil to help keep fingers from slipping.
- No slip grip
Place a foam 'tube' from a foam hair curler around a pencil, toothbrush or disposable razor to make them a little larger and slip resistant. These gems not only come in pink, but also green and black (for the guys!)
- Practice ball pencil grip
Insert a pen or pencil into a practice golf ball. This makes a larger grip and it is lightweight.
- Ball grip
Make a hole through a rubber ball (this is a bit tough). Push a pen or pencil through to desired length. This creates a large and heavy grip.
- Molded grip
Crayola makes "Magic Mold" which is pliable and soft, not to mention fun to handle. Using an appropriate piece of this material shape around a pencil, utensil etc and squeeze your personal grip into the foam. Foam dries in 24 hours but remains soft.
- Magnetic slant board
Slip a magnetic pattern holder into the clear plastic cover pocket of a 3" or 4" binder. The pattern holder may come with a magnetic ruler. If not, stick magnetic strip (available from a craft store) to the back of a wooden ruler.
- Carbon note taking paper
Have the ISD print shop make pads of NCR paper that has a cardboard backing. Use another sheet of cardboard between the NCR sheets as notes are written.

Math

- Easy grip ruler
Slice one side of a pencil grip. Glue opened side to ridge on ruler for easier grasping. Three dimensional rulers are available through Onion Mountain Technologies.

Communication

- Communication board for the pool or tub
Rinse and dry a clear two liter pop bottle. Using "Boardmaker" by Mayer-Johnson or any other symbol program and make a sheet with appropriate language for the swimming experience. Roll the paper and slip into the empty bottle. Secure cap tightly.
- Portable communication board
If using only a few symbols works, attach them to the side of a lunch box. Other symbols can be stored inside.



Michigan's Assistive Technology Resource is an IDEA Mandated Activity Project offered through the Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LAW

The Michigan Department of Education complies with all Federal laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination, and with all requirements of the U.S. Department of Education.

MATR Now you see it...Now You Don't! Three Dozen Cheap Tricks

3/04

Activities of Daily Living

- All purpose hook
Remove the cardboard tube from a coat hanger. Bend two ends together to form a stick. Slide the cardboard tube over the wire leaving the hook exposed at one end. Wrap the tube with black electric tape to secure. This hook can be helpful in reaching for out of reach items, as a zipper pull or dressing stick.
- Built up brush handle
Insert hair brush into gel type bicycle handlebar grip. The grip builds up the size of the brush handle and it is not slippery.
- Tab can opener
Twist a small cup hook under the top cupboard in your kitchen. Grab the tab with the hook and use both hands to pull.
- Large grip utensil holder
Fill a hard, textured bicycle grip handle with putty or plaster. Insert a spoon or fork and allow to dry.
- Lightweight tool holder
Cut around the handle of a "Clorox" bleach bottle (it *must* be "Clorox" because it has an additional small hole which creates a no splash spout). Insert a paint brush, fork or spoon into the small hole. This tool is lightweight, versatile and inexpensive.
- Elastic laces
Elastic can be purchased in a variety of widths from fabric stores or department stores. Lace a shoe with the elastic and tie. Shoe then becomes a slip-on and doesn't need tying again. Elastic laces can also be purchased.
- This device makes transporting bowls of food or warm pans easier and steadier. To one side of a ping pong paddle, attach three small casters. This makes rolling easy.
- Zipper pull
Some zipper tabs are difficult to grasp. So, add an inexpensive key ring, large paper clip or any other hanging object that is easy to find and grab. The photo key ring can hold a student's picture for identification.
- Key turner
Cut a 3/8 " to 1/2" dowel into a 4 1/2 " piece and a 2 1/4" piece. Notch one end of the longer dowel to enable the short piece to lie in the end (looks like a T). In the other end of the long piece slice a groove deep enough to house the head of a key. Drill a small hole through that end and slip a nut and bolt through the dowel, key and then dowel. Tighten to hold key tightly.
- Nosey cup
If you think a nosey cup would be helpful but you hate to spend the money for it until you are certain, try making one. Use a styrofoam cup and cut a dip from one side leaving nose room.
- Built-up wooden spoon handle
Cut an x on the top and bottom of a tennis ball. Slide spoon handle in to desired length.



STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LAW

The Michigan Department of Education complies with all Federal laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination, and with all requirements of the U.S. Department of Education.

MATR Now you see it...Now You Don't! Three Dozen Cheap Tricks

- Tennis balls can also be added to the back legs of a chair to reduce scraping sound when moving the chair.

Leisure

- **Tactile Tic-Tac-Toe**
In a 4: piece of 2"x4" drill 9 holes large enough to hold small dowel. Cut dowel game pieces about 1 1/2 " long. In half of the pegs place a thumbtack or other tactile marker. This allows players to differentiate game pieces.
- **Large knob puzzle**
Using an ordinary children's framed puzzle, secure a cup hook or wooden kitchen cupboard knob to each puzzle piece.
- **Phone book card holder**
A thick telephone book can be trimmed to approximately two inches from the binding edge (your local copy store probably has an industrial cutter that makes a clean, quick cut). Place a large rubber band around the holder to keep pages together.
- **Wooden card holder**
Sand until smooth a 9" to 12" piece of 2"x4". Add a rubber band around the wood the long direction. Slip cards between the wood and the rubber band. Works well with flash cards too.
- **Box card holder**
Turn a shoe box (with a lid) upside down and stand cards in the lip created by the lid. A dark shoe box creates a good background for light background cards.
- **Round card holder**
Place the lids from two "Pringles" cans flat sides together, insert a brass fastener and open flat. If ends of fastener are too rough a piece of tape can be placed over them.
- **Dice roller**
Place dice in a see through disposable plastic container. Glue the lid on and toss those dice! Easy to hold, toss and retrieve.
- **Paint brush handle**
Drill a small hole in both ends of an empty plastic film container. Insert paint brush and it's ready to go!
- **Puzzle gripper and button pusher**
Using a 6" section of 1" wooden dowel, glue (or use a small screw) a suction cup hanger (the kind that stick to a window) to make a puzzle piece gripper. Using a 6" section of 1" wooden dowel, tap a nail in one end and use as a long handled button pusher at an ATM.
- **Planting guide**
Cut a desired length of rope. Tie knots evenly (distance apart according to seed package directions) so planter can feel where to place seeds into the earth.
- **Seed guide**



STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LAW

The Michigan Department of Education complies with all Federal laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination, and with all requirements of the U.S. Department of Education.

MATR Now you see it...Now You Don't! Three Dozen Cheap Tricks

Remove the lid from a cardboard or Styrofoam egg carton. In the bottom in the egg section cut a small hole (Phillips head screwdriver works well). Place on top of soil and drop in seeds.

- **Spill proof vase**
Cut a green two liter pop bottle in half. Turn the top upside down and set into the bottom half. Use duct tape to secure the two halves together. Great for picking flowers and keeping them fresh.

Resources:

Some old, Some new

Independent Living: Functioning with the Use of One Hand in a Two-Handed World Patricia S. Burnett Slack Inc. 6900 Grove Road, Thorofare, New Jersey 08086	Creative Play Activities for Children with Disabilities Lisa Rappaport Morris & Linda Schulz Human Kinetics Books Champaign, IL 61820	Backyards and Butterflies Doreen Greenstein NYS Rural Health and Safety Council 324 Riley-Robb Hall Cornell University Ithaca, NY 14853-5701
Molly Campbell Alex Truesdell 659 Green Street Cambridge, MA 02139 617.924.7520 mollycampbell@mediaone.net	Onion Mountain Technologies Judith P Sweeney 74 Sextons Hollow Road Canton, CT 06019-2102 www.onionmountaintech.com	Low Tech Assistive Devices: a Handbook for the School Setting Lynn Ciampa Stoller Therapro Inc. 225 Arlington Street Framingham MA 01702
StartWrite Idea Maker Inc. 80 South Redwood Road Suite 212 North Salt Lake, UT 84054 http://www.startwrite.com/		



Michigan's Assistive Technology Resource is an IDEA Mandated Activity Project offered through the Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LAW

The Michigan Department of Education complies with all Federal laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination, and with all requirements of the U.S. Department of Education.

MATR Now you see it...Now You Don't! Three Dozen Cheap Tricks

3/04