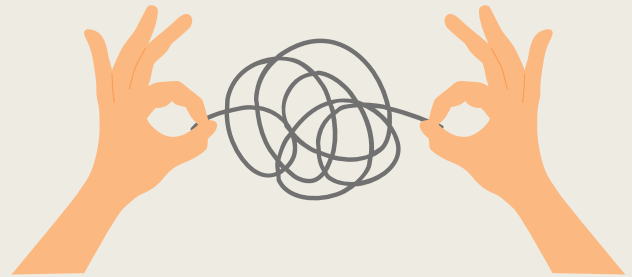


# Alfie and the button challenge





**Alfie was an energetic 7-year-old in Year 3 who loved football.**

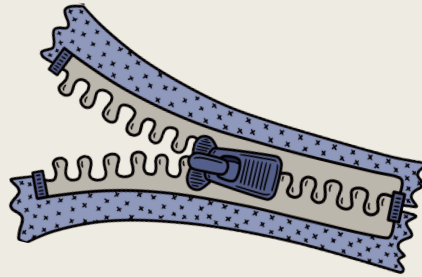


**But when it came to tasks like writing or using his hands, he found these tricky.**





**His teacher noticed he struggled with buttoning his coat and zipping his pencil case.**



**That's when the occupational therapist came in to help.**



**One afternoon, the OT visited Alfie in his classroom for a fine motor skills session with a box of fun activities.**



**She introduced a game where Alfie used tweezers to pick up small dinosaur figurines and placed them into cups.**



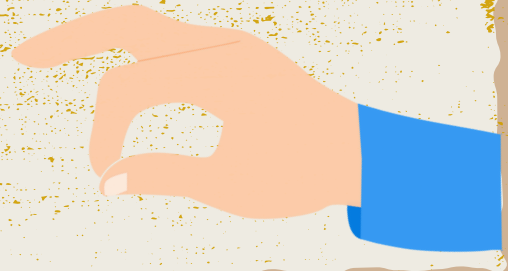
**Alfie enjoyed this game, especially when he was timed to see how many he could do in a minute!**

**1 2 3**





**This fun activity helped strengthen his  
finger muscles, in preparation for  
practicing buttons.**

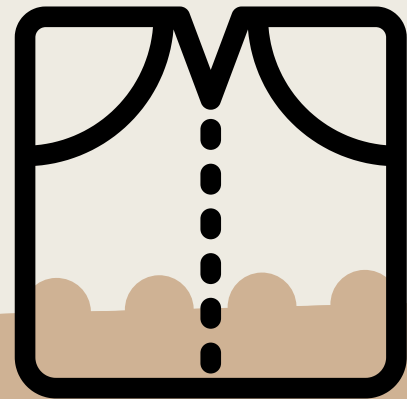




**Initially, Alfie was not sure about practicing his buttons. They were small, fiddly and he often gave up.**



**The OT first brought out a “button board” with lots of different brightly coloured button sewn on- some big and some small.**





**The OT started by giving Alfie the last step of the buttoning process to do, which was pulling a large button through the hole.**



**As Alfie got more confident, he started to do more of the steps including holding the fabric steady with 1 hand and focusing on pushing the button through with the other hand.**

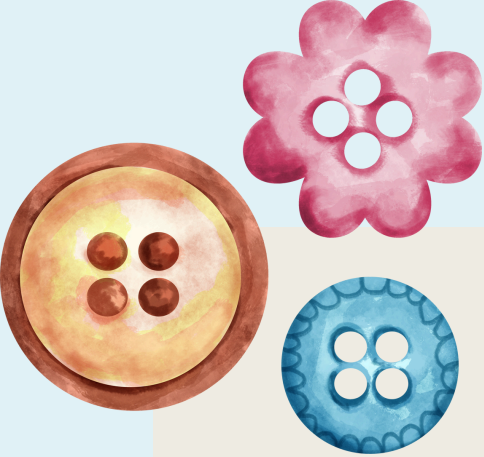


**Alfie practiced with the OT,  
pinching and pulling the  
buttons through the holes  
using his thumb and index  
finger. He was encouraged  
by his lovely OT.**



**Alfie remembered the  
mantra:**

**PINCH**  
**push & PULL**



**At the end of the session the OT gave Alfie some extra buttons to practice at home and showed his teacher some strategies to help him strengthen his hands during the school day.**



**Over the next few weeks, with his OT's, teachers and parents support, Alfie started buttoning his coat more confidently.**

**He learnt many strategies to help him such as doing his buttons in front of the mirror and starting with the button at the bottom first to help with alignment.**



**He even began zipping up his pencil case without help, all thanks to the fun, patient way the OT broke down the tasks.**





**Alfie still loves football, but now he is proud of his new skills—especially as he can button his own shirt before P.E.**

