Fine motor skills is not equal to writing and drawing. And as we use a framework, we call it the Canadian Model of Occupational Participation and Engagement. It's from Canada, but as occupational therapists, we use that to look at children or people that we work with. So the person is in the middle of that model, surrounded by their occupations. And those are all actually really important, not just fine motor skills. So I'll give you an example. The way we use it is, we look at self-care, we look at leisure, and we look at productivity. And at the outside circle, it talks about all the different environments in which we interact. So when we look at fine motor skills, if we just look at that framework and just refer to three different areas, the self-care, leisure, and productivity, what does that mean for a child?

So if you look at self-care skills, there's a whole lot of fine motor skills, just for self-care. So dressing, toileting, feeding, so their self-care skills are all related to your body functions. So are they managing those things? Can they wear their socks? Can they put their shoes on? Can they do their buttons? Can they do zippers? So all of that is fine motor skills, but all of that is related to self-care. Which is again, very important for the little person to develop further. And what you're doing is you're setting up the environment so that the end result is increased engagement and increased participation. So without the self-care skills, without the fine motor skills for self-care, children will not be able to participate if they go out in other activities. So that's where we have to think about self-care.

Then we talk about leisure. So leisure includes things that you do when you have free time. So for children, it's play and it's participating in sport-like activities, ball skills, swimming, and things like that. So providing them opportunities to get really good at leisure skills would include setting up ball skills, catching, throwing, having some games, like rolling bottles, water painting, doing some artwork. So things like that, all could be related to leisure. Creating little games around fun. So having a fair or something like that, again it's a leisure activity for them, setting up a little tent. So all those are leisure.

And then productivity is where you could really look at drawing and writing. So productivity is something that helps them make a product. So in that you can consider, in the early years, even then we don't really hone in on drawing and writing. But we want them to be able to use a variety of tools with their hands, so brushes and paints and pencils and different, a variety of shapes and sizes so that they can create. So that's productivity. So if you look at that, then there are so many other things that they would miss out if we would only think of drawing and writing, or what about cutting?

So very early on, you get lots of, you get a variety of different scissors that are very safe, and they can cut playdough, or they can cut vegetables. They can use forks and knives very early and experience those different tools and still continue to develop those. So that is one framework you can use when you look at fine motor skills, not necessarily, you have to. But even just looking at that one framework makes you think that there are so many other things that the hands can do. It's not just drawing and cutting and writing, but all this variety of skills. And at the end of the day, it's the holistic child that we are looking at. So it's not just fine motor, but we are looking at how are these fine motor skills actually helping children do things so that they can continue to engage and continue to participate as meaningful people in their life.

My final messages, the hands lead us to learning. So remembering that, and my most favourite Victorian framework outcome is that children have a strong sense of wellbeing. So keeping in mind that using your hands actually helps your wellbeing, because you feel a sense of control. You get to express, you get to create, you get to build, you get to thread, you get to, you know, you do so many things with your hands. Self-care skills, very important again. Are they able to pull their socks up? Are they able to, you know, pull their pants up? Any opportunity that you see because when they pull their pants up, they're using again, they're using the fine motor skills, their fingertips. So all of those activities, when you plan keeping that in mind that you are actually working on those fine motor skills and that you are helping children develop a sense of wellbeing because they're getting more control of their environment. They're getting to imagine, they're getting to play and they're getting to be meaningful participants in every environment.

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