



# Your Therapy Source News

Digital magazine for pediatric  
occupational and physical therapists.

Issue 3 - July 2009

[www.YourTherapySource.com](http://www.YourTherapySource.com)

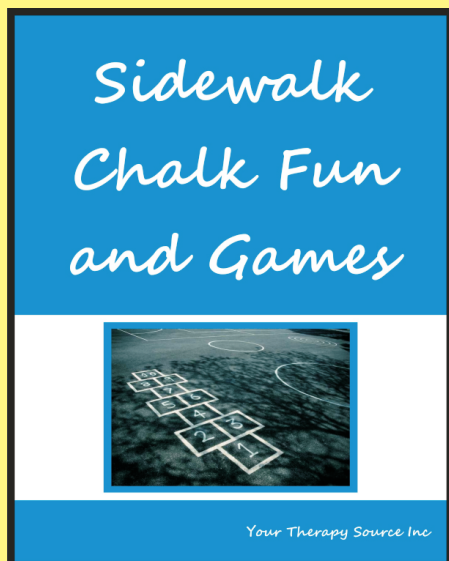
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# New and Popular Products



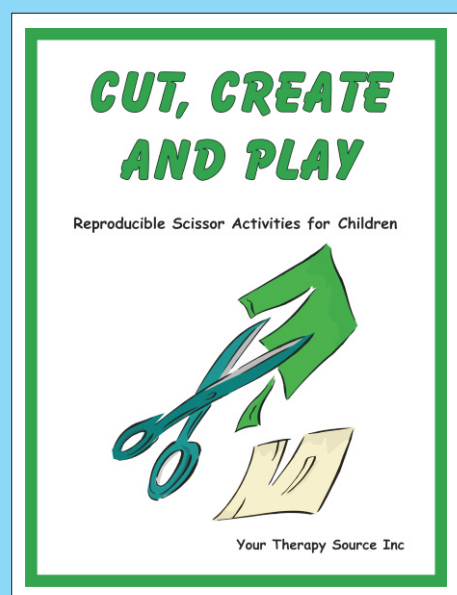
**Sidewalk Chalk Fun and Games** - This is an electronic book of 30 sidewalk chalk games to create and play. Get outdoors and express your creativity while getting some physical activity. Sidewalk Chalk Fun and Games encourages:

- gross motor skills
- fine motor skills
- sensory processing
- motor planning
- body awareness.

**LIST PRICE: \$4.99**

**Shipping: FREE** - once payment is made you will receive an e-mail with a link to download the book.

[www.YourTherapySource.com/sidewalk](http://www.YourTherapySource.com/sidewalk)



**Cut, Create and Play - Reproducible Scissor Activities for Children:**

This is an electronic book (40 pages) of 23 scissor and fine motor activities for young children. Each of these activities are ready to go. Just print, copy, cut and create craft projects and games to play. These activities promote the development of scissor, fine motor and visual skills by encouraging practice with cutting snips, 1" - 3" lines, paper in half, straight lines, rectangles, squares, angles, curves and circles.

**LIST PRICE: \$4.99**

**Shipping: FREE** - once payment is made you will receive an e-mail with a link to download the book.

[www.YourTherapySource.com/scissors](http://www.YourTherapySource.com/scissors)

[www.YourTherapySource.com](http://www.YourTherapySource.com)

# Self Regulation as a Predictor of Academic Abilities

**S**elf regulation is the ability of a person to tolerate sensations, situations and distress and form appropriate responses to that sensory input. Simply stated, it is the ability to control behavior. In children, self regulation matures just like other developmental processes. Children get older and learn to think before they act. Research continues to develop in this area of self regulation and how much it effects other aspects of development. A recent article in *Developmental Psychology* reports that self regulation in children is a predictor of academic abilities. The researchers used the Head-Toes-Knees-Shoulders Task (HTKS) to evaluate 343 kindergartners ability to self regulate. The HTKS task measures the ability to listen, remember instructions and follow motor commands. It does not measure emotional responses. Children with higher levels of self regulation in the beginning of the school year achieved higher scores in reading, vocabulary and math at the end of the school year. The researchers concluded that improving self regulation in children can improve academic achievement and behavioral responses.

Now, for any therapist, teacher or parent who has knowledge of sensory integration knows how much deficits in self regulation effect behaviors, social skills and motor responses. We need to continue to educate school staff on the importance of this skill being developed in all children. Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten curriculum has changed it's focus to reading, writing and math skills at an earlier age. There is not enough practice time to learn self regulation during these early formative years. Now it appears as if this complex academic curriculum in the early years needs to slow down. This study provides significant evidence to support teaching self regulation skills.

Here are 5 simple tips to encourage self regulation in all children:

1. Therapists, teachers and parents should model good self regulation and self control. Use a calm tone in stressful situations. Model self control during disruptive classroom or home time.
2. Partner children who lack self regulation with children who exhibit better control to act as appropriate role models.
3. Play fun games that require children to wait for directions before they act (i.e. Simon Says).
4. Play fun games that require turn taking.
5. Keep activities structured and predictable.

**The authors of this research study have supplied a list of the activities that they used to practice self regulation skills. This can be found at [www.YourTherapySource.com/selfregulation](http://www.YourTherapySource.com/selfregulation) .**

References: Ponitz, Claire Cameron; McClelland, Megan M.; Matthews, J. S.; Morrison, Frederick J. A structured observation of behavioral self-regulation and its contribution to kindergarten outcomes. *Developmental Psychology*. Vol 45(3), May 2009, 605-619.

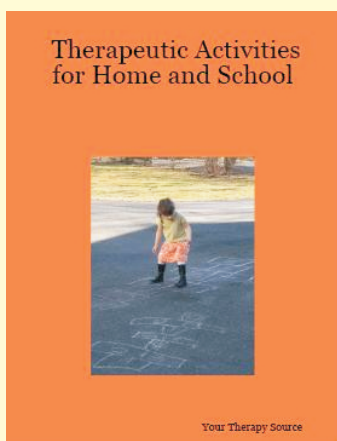
Oregon State University (2009, June 9). Self-regulation Game Predicts Kindergarten Achievement. ScienceDaily. Retrieved June 9, 2009, from <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/06/090608162547.htm>

# 5 Ways to Get the Most out of a Therapy Session

**P**ediatric therapy sessions last for only a short period of time. A common frequency of pediatric therapy is one visit per week for 30 minute sessions. It is very difficult to make substantial change during 30 minutes. Therefore, during each therapy session, therapists should be offering techniques to ensure carry over of skills to the classroom and home. Here are 5 ways to get the most out of a therapy session:

1. Teach strategies that are appropriate for the child's level and the care giver's level. Certain techniques require several teaching lessons for an adult care giver. In addition, once a technique is taught do not forget to review it in the future.
2. Children learn new skills through multiple practice sessions. Offer suggestions on how specific skills can be practiced over and over during the course of a regular day.
3. Provide visual directions and hand outs that offer more information on specific techniques or activities. This can provide predictability for the children and review for the adults.
4. Be very specific with your expectations and suggestions by setting realistic goals for the week until the next visit. Teachers and parents have other children that they are responsible for on a daily basis. Make sure the goals set are achievable. For example, "Johnny will practice putting his shoes on at least one time per day each day this week".
5. Remember to allow children to be children. This might sound obvious but children enjoy playing and having fun. Boring tasks may result in non compliance or behavioral issues. Keep practice tasks fun and unique. Vary tasks when able and allow children to choose what activities to practice. Act like a child yourself and you may get better results. Follow the child's lead. You may end up learning more than the child.

For simple activities to carry out throughout the day check out [Therapeutic Activities for Home and School](#).



***Therapeutic Activities for Home and School*** provides pediatric therapists with over forty, uncomplicated, reproducible activity sheets and tips that can be given to parents and teachers. The therapist is able to simply mark the recommended activities for each child. By providing parents and teachers with these handy check lists, therapists will be encouraging therapeutic activities throughout the entire day.

[www.YourTherapySource.com/therexbook](http://www.YourTherapySource.com/therexbook)

These pages are not intended to provide medical advice or physician/therapist instruction. Information provided should not be used for diagnostic or training purposes. Consult a therapist or physician regarding specific diagnoses or medical advice.

# Early Physical Activity and Body Fat Mass

**M**ore and more research continues to be published supporting the idea that children need to be active. The benefits of physical activity are numerous. The *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* recently published research on early physical activity in young children and its effects on body fat mass. Boys and girls (333 children) physical activity levels were measured at age 5 and body fat mass was measured at age 5, 8 and 11. Moderate to vigorous physical activity at 5 years old was a predictor of body fat mass at 8 and 11 years of age in boys and girls.

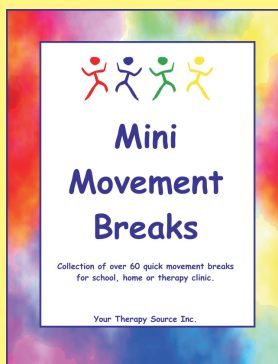
Therapists need to continue to encourage all children to participate in physical activity. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that all children should participate in 60 minutes or more of physical activity. You do not need fancy or expensive equipment to encourage physical activity. Here are several suggestions to encourage unstructured physical activity in children:

1. Get outdoors whenever possible. Being outdoors usually creates movement automatically for children.
2. Stuck inside on a rainy day? Play freeze dance, musical chairs or create an indoor obstacle course.
3. Go bike riding.
4. Give children simple equipment to play with such as balls and jump ropes.
5. Walk to school, library or errands.
6. Plan a family outing such as hiking, swimming or boating. Active parents are excellent role models.
7. Visit a park with playground equipment.
8. Blow bubbles and chase them.
9. Run through the sprinkler, wade in a stream, jump in a kiddie pool or swim in a lake.
10. Plant a garden - digging, squatting and carrying watering cans is a work out.

Not only will children benefit from the physical activity you will be creating memories to last a lifetime.

Need more activities? Check out all of our titles that encourage [sensory motor skill development](#).

**References:** Kathleen F. Janz EdDa, b, , Soyang Kwon MSb, Elena M. Letuchy MSb, Julie M. Eichenberger Gilmore PhDc, Trudy L. Burns MPH, PhD, d, James C. Torner PhDb, Marcia C. Willing PhD, MDd and Steven M. Levy MPH, DDSb, Sustained Effect of Early Physical Activity on Body Fat Mass in Older Children American Journal of Preventive Medicine Volume 37, Issue 1, July 2009, Pages 35-40



## Mini Movement Breaks -

**This download is a collection of 60+ quick sensory motor activity cards. The mini movement breaks are quick, require no equipment and can be done indoors. Video tutorial available on website at [www.YourTherapySource.com/minimovevideo](http://www.YourTherapySource.com/minimovevideo) .**

**LIST PRICE: \$3.99**

**[www.YourTherapySource.com/minimove](http://www.YourTherapySource.com/minimove)**



# Written Language Disorder

**P**ediatric occupational therapists have vast experience in working with children who have written language disorders. Symptoms of written language disorder can include problems with grammar, spelling, organization and handwriting. School based therapists see how far reaching this problem can be. In many school districts, teachers and administrators primary focus is how to improve reading skills. Why is it that reading is the focus? Perhaps because previously there were no epidemiology studies on written language disorders. In the May 2009 issue of *Pediatrics*, researchers report on the "forgotten learning disability...written language disorder".

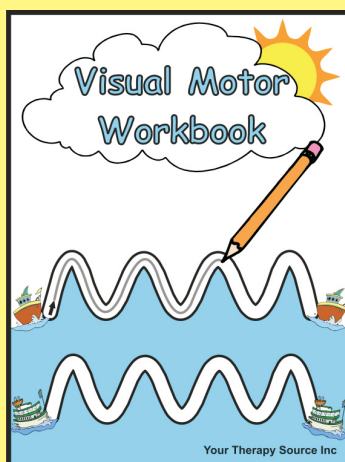
The researchers found that written language disorder was present in 6.9% to 14.7% of the 5718 children followed depending upon the formula used. Boys had written language disorder 2-3 times more often than girls. Of the children identified with written language disorder, 25% did not have a reading disability.

This study reveals that a large amount of children are affected by this disorder. Although there are some limitations - the children had similar demographics (white, middle class Minnesota children). Regardless, this indicates that written language disorder is more common than society perceives it to be.

Pediatric occupational therapists can help to spread the word about written language disorder by:

1. Educating school staff on the signs of written language disorder.
2. Teaching staff how to prevent some of these problems early on through different handwriting instruction methods.
3. Encouraging school staff and parents to address written language disorders along with reading and math disabilities.
4. Introducing assistive technology at an early age to help students with severe written language disorder.

References: Katusic, Slavica K., Colligan, Robert C., Weaver, Amy L., Barbaresi, William J. The Forgotten Learning Disability: Epidemiology of Written-Language Disorder in a Population-Based Birth Cohort (1976-1982), Rochester, Minnesota  
*Pediatrics* 2009 123: 1306-1313



## Visual Motor Workbook

This download is a collection of visual motor practice worksheets. Practice pencil control for vertical, horizontal, diagonal and curved lines. Practice drawing circles, squares, rectangles, triangles and hearts. Most of the visual motor worksheets are available in easy or more difficult versions - great for differentiated instruction in group settings.

[www.YourTherapySource.com/visualmotorworkbook](http://www.YourTherapySource.com/visualmotorworkbook)

# Ideas for July

## ***July is National Recreation Month:***

Encourage the children that you work with to enjoy the parks during National Recreation Month. Try to compile a list of appropriate parks for the children on your caseload. For example - create lists based on age range or physical abilities. This would be very helpful for parents and for teachers to plan field trips.

## ***July is National Ice Cream Month:***

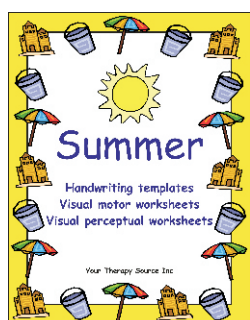
Need a simple sensory activity? Try making home made ice cream. There are numerous recipes on the internet to make your own ice cream. It requires vigorous mixing and shaking to create it - great proprioceptive input and upper extremity muscle strengthening. Taste test different flavors - sweet, sour, fruity. Let it melt a little and try sucking it through a straw for an oral motor activity.

## ***July 4th:***

Plan a parade through the school to celebrate July 4th. If your summer programming started after the fourth still celebrate with a parade for summer time. Creating your own musical instruments is an excellent fine motor task. March around the school playing the home made instruments.

## ***Plan a Picnic:***

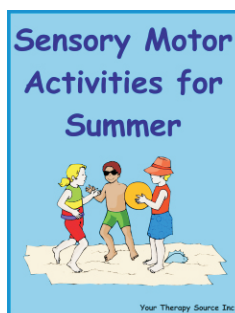
All children love picnics. Have the children help to create a menu for the picnic with all foods that they can make themselves. On the day of the picnic, the children can make the food and pack it up. Go outdoors and lay a blanket down. Let the children serve the school staff. If this task is too difficult, allow the children to plan the location of the picnic and some picnic games to play.



**Summer Handwriting Activities** has over 30 pages of handwriting templates, visual motor exercises and more.

\$4.99 for download

[www.YourTherapySource.com/summerhandwriting](http://www.YourTherapySource.com/summerhandwriting)



**Sensory Motor Activities for Summer** has over 35 ideas and activities for Summer time fun.

Only \$4.99 for the download.

[www.YourTherapySource.com/summeractivities](http://www.YourTherapySource.com/summeractivities)

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# Hot Topics...

## Can you name one simple activity that encourages 6 developmental skills?

The answer is...MUSIC! Most children love to listen and dance to music. Music and dance are a great avenue to promote motor skills, listening skills and sensory processing skills. There are few movement activities that incorporate all of the 7 senses with minimal to no preparation. Therapists, parents and teachers love how easy it is to carry out simple movements to music using interactive songs. All the adult has to do is simply turn the therapeutic music on and the fun begins. This type of fun encourages:

- 1. Sensory Processing Skills** - Children have to use their auditory sense to listen to the directions. Children model other children in the room therefore using their visual sense. The proprioceptive and vestibular system are activated while jumping and spinning. Don't forget the tactile sense - touching hands to knees, dancing in bare feet, etc.
- 2. Motor Learning** - Children learn gross motor skills through practice. Through the use of interactive songs, the children have opportunities to listen, follow directions and move over and over again.
- 3. Socialization** - Children are able to play together while dancing to the music.
- 4. Learning** - Children can learn how to follow multiple step directions.
- 5. Motivation** - Music is motivating and fun!
- 6. Positive behavior** - Interactive songs usually have structure and a routine. Children are able to know what to expect.



Music is one activity that covers many developmental areas all by just pressing the play button. It does not get any easier than that! We have a nice selection of interactive songs available at [www.YourTherapySource.com](http://www.YourTherapySource.com).

**Tuned Into Learning** has created music with simplified song lyrics, simplified instructions and additional response time. Children with autism will really learn and enjoy the specialized songs and visual cues from Tuned Into Learning at [www.YourTherapySource.com/tunedintolearning](http://www.YourTherapySource.com/tunedintolearning).

## Management of Congenital Hemiplegia

The current issue of *Pediatrics* has published a systemic review on the therapeutic management of congenital hemiplegia in children. Twelve studies and 7 systemic reviews were analyzed. Intramuscular Botox A injections and occupational therapy, neurodevelopmental therapy and casting, constraint induced movement therapy, and hand arm bi-manual intensive training all showed small to medium treatment effects. There were large treatment effects from the botox A injections and upper limb training.

Reference: Sakzewski, Leanne, Ziviani, Jenny, Boyd, Roslyn Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of Therapeutic Management of Upper-Limb Dysfunction in Children With Congenital Hemiplegia *Pediatrics* 2009 123: e1111-e1122

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# More Hot Topics and FREE Stuff

## OT Blogs from Africa

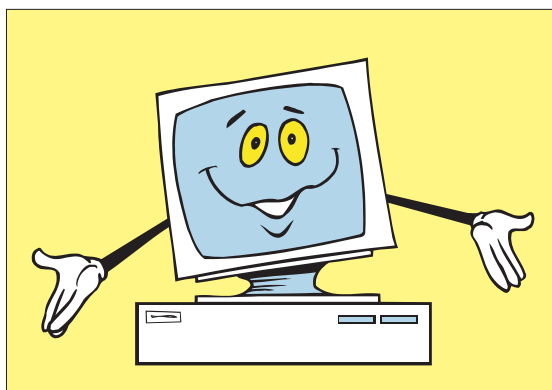
OT Ghana 2009 - <http://vcuotghana.blogspot.com/> is a collection of blogs from an OT professor and several OT students who traveled to Ghana. They blog about the people they meet, the culture and of course OT. There are several student blogs on it as well. These are listed on the right side of the page. It is very impressive that they all took the time to share their knowledge. Sounds like they all gained more from giving. Way to go! Thanks to [@AOTAInc](#) on Twitter for letting us know about this blog.

## Website for Life Skills

This website, [www.gcflearnfree.org/everydaylife/](http://www.gcflearnfree.org/everydaylife/), offers interactive lessons for daily life skills such as cooking, banking, shopping, schedules and more. The lessons allow learners to practice life skills to be successful in everyday life. This is definitely worth a look for any occupational therapist especially those that work with older children and young adults. Best part...all free!

## Free Communication on the Go

Came across this website with free communication software downloads for smart phones and PDA's (personal digital assistant) for autistic children. According to the website, it has been developed by a team of researchers and funded partially by Microsoft. It is meant to be used with young children or children with severe autism. You download the software of the picture images to your computer and it can then be transferred to a PDA or smart phone. Once on the PDA or Smart Phone the pictures can be moved around on the touch screen to create sentences. There are more than 400 picture cards that can be downloaded for home and school use. You can even upload your own photos. Another additional bonus, is that parents, teachers and therapists can track what symbols are being used to gather data on what is working. There is one catch though - the PDA or smart phone has to be able to run the Microsoft Mobile Windows operating system (therefore no Blackberries or Palm). Visit [www.communicationautism.com](http://www.communicationautism.com) for more information and to get the free downloads.



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[www.YourTherapySource.com/sidewalk](http://www.YourTherapySource.com/sidewalk)

## Put Out The Fire!

**Goal:** Encourage physical activity, coordination, motor planning and gross motor skills.

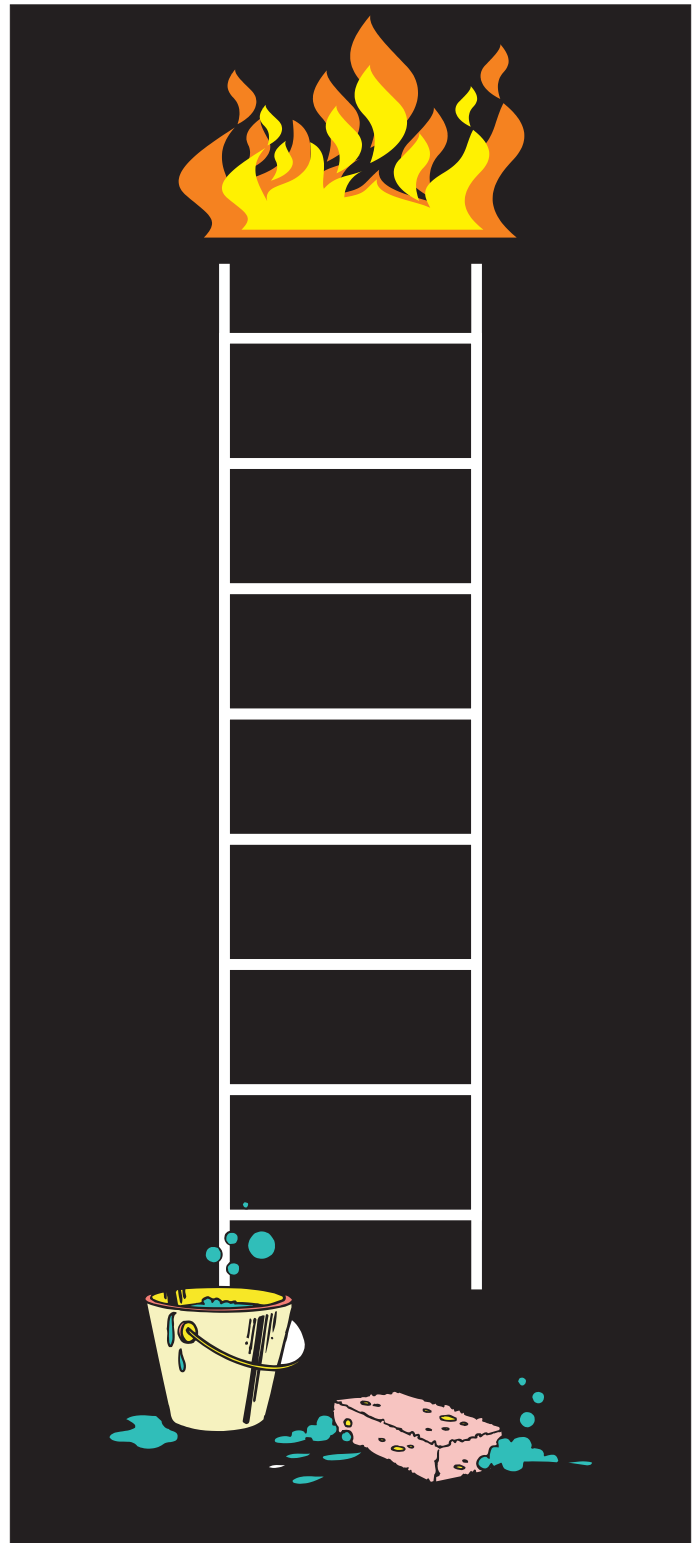
**Materials:** Sidewalk chalk

**Preparation:** Draw a ladder on the black top with the sidewalk chalk. Draw a simple fire with large flames. Place bucket with water and sponge at bottom of ladder.

**How to Play:** The child wets the sponge in the bucket. The child holds the sponge and climbs up the ladder (by walking, jumping or hopping). At the top of the ladder, the child squeezes the sponge. This will erase the sidewalk chalk flames to put the fire out. The child walks back down the ladder, gets the sponge wet again and climbs back up. Repeat until the entire fire is put out (erased).

**Modifications:** For wheelchair users, place the bucket on a table. The child must drive wheelchair between the railings to bring water to put the fire out.

Watch a **VIDEO** of this activity on the website.



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**Visit  
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