

Activities to Developing Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor skills can be defined as small muscle movements; those that occur in the finger, in coordination with the eyes. Activities to improve the hand strength and eye coordination also prepare your child for handwriting and cutting. (Encourage the isolation of thumb, index and middle finger for these activities.)

- Cut fringe on a piece of paper.
- Cut along curved lines.
- Cut out figures that have curves and angles.
- Use scissors to cut straws, play dough or thick paper.
- Place a variety of forms (blocks, felt, paper, string, yarn, cereal or cotton) on outlines.
- Match shapes, color or pictures to a page and paste them within the outlines.
- Tear paper into small pieces and paste the different colors onto simple pictures from a coloring book or make your own design.
- Trace then color shapes, increasing the size and complexity gradually.
- Trace a pattern in sand, cornmeal, finger paint, pudding or shaving cream. Texture give your child kinesthetic feedback.
- Make confetti using a hole punch.
- Hole punch around a picture drawn on cardstock and have your child lace yarn through the holes.
- Write your child's name in large print and have them draw bubbles along the letters.
- Connect dot-to-dot drawings or trace mazes.
- Practice typing.
- Have your child try simple origami or other folding activities.
- Practice fine coloring.
- Jump rope.
- Practice volleyball-like activities where hands/paddles are in the palm up position.
- Squirt bottles.
- Use a Slinky, shifting the toy back and forth with palms up.
- String beads using the tip of the index finger against the thumb.
- Practice pouring from a small pitcher to a specific level in a clear glass.
- Inch a pencil or chopstick, positioned in a tripod grasp (a pencil held with the tip of the thumb and index finger and resting against the side of the third finger), toward and away from the palm.
- Draw on the driveway or sidewalk using sidewalk chalk.
- Use water and a paintbrush to "paint" on the driveway or sidewalk.
- Practice screwing and unscrewing lids.



- Practice opening and closing glue sticks.
- Use Playdough or homemade dough (see recipe below) to hide small objects (pennies, beads, beans) and have your child pick them out.

Homemade Play Dough

2 cups plain flour

2 cups of colored water

1 tablespoon of cooking oil

1 teaspoon cream of Tartar

1 cup salt

Place all ingredients in a medium sized pan. Cook slowly on medium-high, stirring until the dough thickens. Keeps best in the refrigerator in a sealed plastic container

- Use a turkey baster or nasal aspirator to blow a cork or ping pong ball back and forth. These can also be used to squirt water to move floating objects.
- Paint large murals or put together floor puzzles while lying on the floor.
- Use tongs or tweezers to pick up small objects, then sort and count them.
- Put coins into a piggy bank or a slot cut into a plastic lid. Coins can also be put through slots cut into foam.
- Use small clothespins and clip them onto the rim of a coffee can, on paper/cardboard, etc.
- Squeeze sponges to wipe off a table, clean windows or wash a car.
- Work on upright, vertical surfaces, especially above eye level. Examples include: vertical chalkboards; easels for painting; flannel boards; Lite Brite; magnet boards or refrigerators; windows/mirrors; white boards.
- Make sticker pictures, do rubber ink stamping; use reusable vinyl stickers to make pictures; use a Magna Doodle or Etch-A-Sketch. The benefits of working upright include having your child's wrist positioned to develop good thumb movements, help develop good fine motor muscles and promote the use of the arm and shoulder muscle.