

Fine Motor Activities for Home and School

Fine motor skills are the things that we do with our hands. Fine motor skills require us to use our arms and hands while we keep our balance. We also need to use our eyes and hands as we undertake the manipulation of tools/ activities in our hands. The use of our arms develops in the first 6 months of our early life when we start to bring our hands into the middle. We then start to experience weight bearing in propping and crawling. Initially we use both hands equally to reach and play but by 18m – 2yrs we typically show a preference for one hand. This hand will usually develop into our dominant hand and become more specialized and accurate. Our non-dominant hand has the supporting or stabilizing function.

Our fine motor skills are influenced by the stability of our upper limb joints and the stability of their base (the trunk)-i.e. where our arms attach.

STRONG SHOULDERS

The correct movement and placement of the hand is dependent on the stability of the shoulders. In the classroom promote:

- “Good sitting” position with feet flat, back straight, head up and bottom back.
- Correct height table/ chair for the child.

1. Sitting press-ups – hold the edges of the chair (2 hands) and push self up/ down.
2. Standing press-downs – on able and take weight onto 2 flat hands.
3. Wall press-ups.
4. Working at a vertical surface – whiteboard, tic-tac-toe, hangman, patterns and lazy 8's, painting on large paper.
5. Hand squeezes – place hands together palm to palm and press together as hard as you can for the count of 10 and repeat 5 times
6. Hanging out washing or pegging work on number/ alphabet line.
7. Working on all 4's
8. Push and pulling activities e.g. tug-o-war, palm to palm push with partner.
9. Carrying shopping bags or 'heavy' book boxes.
10. Play ground art with chalk.
11. Aerobic exercises – star jumps, windmills (turning arms at shoulders)
12. Play ground equipment – monkey bars, climbing frames, ropes, see- saws, swings, rope rigging.

13. Using dance streamers or cheerleaders pom-poms
14. Keeping a balloon up in the air above head height
15. Racket games that involve swinging the arms to hit a ball
16. Twirling a skipping rope.
17. Throwing / catching a large ball
18. Pouring water/sand between containers to fill them up
19. Stretchy toys that can be pulled apart.
20. Crab walks and other animal walks

DEVELOP THE WEB SPACE

This is the circle that can be formed when the index and thumb tips are put together. This is needed to hold a pencil correctly.

1. Popping plastic bubbles or plastic wrapping material.
2. Opening / closing zip lock bags.
3. Winding small wind-up toys with knob.
4. Use an eye dropper / teat pipette to drop coloured water onto blotting paper or paper towels.
5. Use tweezers to pick up objects.
6. Spin spinning tops.
7. Sewing with large needles. If you wish to discuss Any issues please
8. Rolling paper tissue balls.
9. Small ink stamp sets.

IN HAND MANIPULATION

This is the ability to hold, manipulate and position objects in the hand. This skill is needed every time a child picks up a pencil, ruler, eraser or sharpener.

1. Picking up a selection of coins one at a time but holding them with the last 3 fingers against palm while picking others up.
2. Hold a coin in a fist and move it into a purse only moving your fingers. Find all the pennies from the purse.
3. Find hidden items from a bag e.g. ruler, eraser, paper clip, hair clip from a large pencil case
4. Twist and twirl a pencil in a circular motion between tips of fingers, or using a pencil with eraser on the end draw and erase a sequence of simple shapes or dots (dot-erase, dot-erase....)
5. Find a specific marble from the marble jar
6. Play cards e.g. snap.
7. Dust dry sand stuck to wet hand only using fingers of that hand.
8. Use a dice or cube picture puzzle to rotate the shape to find the number or picture.

DEVELOP FINGER & HAND STRENGTH

The strength needed to hold and guide tools e.g. pencil and scissors.

1. Encourage activities with the palm down e.g. hand prints, polishing/cleaning/dusting the board or white-boards
2. Work with clay, "fimo", play-dough to pinch and squeeze shapes.
3. Use a water pistol or plant spray trigger to spray a paper towel.
4. Find hidden marbles pushed into play- dough; push the marbles into dough.
5. Clothes pins as counters or a math aid.
6. Use a stapler/ hole punch for art activities.
7. Tear and crumple different thickness of paper for trashcan ball, or collages
8. Ink and stamp sets 13. Stress ball.
9. Template rubbing. 15. Dig in wet sand.
10. Construction and Pop-together toys – nuts, bolts, hammer, Popoids, Lego, Duplo, K-Nex
11. Hoppy frogs / grasshoppers.
12. Elastic bands – stretch the band between thumb and fingers (two at a time e.g. thumb and index finger; thumb and middle finger or thumb plus 4 fingers). Stretch the band to place over a pot or raised peg boards.

DEVELOP A PINCER & TRIPOD GRIP

1. Using small salad tongs and clothes pins to pick up small objects e.g. cotton balls, leaves
2. Pouring water, rice, sand into the palm to see how much you can hold
3. Sealing zip lock bags to find items
4. Cupping hands for dice games or for math
5. Using the side of a crayon to 'brass rub'
6. Use sock puppets to talk
7. Using play dough to roll and squeeze