

DEVELOPING FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Supporting your child at home



- Spray bottles, squirt games.
- Sticker books.
- Inset puzzles and jigsaw puzzles.
- Chalkboard activities – copying shapes I – O \ / X +
- Finger painting, collage work, cutting and sticking.
- Sticking activities using a glue stick.
- Baking and cooking.
- Duplo, Lego, modelling etc.
- Manipulating play dough/putty/blutac: rolling it into small balls, long rolls etc.
- Tearing papers into fine strips – uses them for collage or crumple them into balls. Maybe have a game of table top football (flick the paper balls in a goal).
- Screwing up whole pieces of newspaper in one hand at a time to develop strength, throw them onto a target to develop aiming skills.
- Cutting out with scissors.
- Manipulating clothes pegs to pick up small objects.
- Performing finger plays with finger puppets.
- Water play – pouring from one container to another, squeezing water out of sponges.

**THE FOLLOWING ARE ACTIVITIES TO TRY
WITH YOUR CHILD AT HOME TO DEVELOP
THEIR HAND STRENGTH, GRASPS AND IN
HAND MANIPULATION SKILLS.**

General hints and tips:

- Playing games with blocks and peg boards.
- Play games with cards, allow the child to be the dealer or make a house of cards.
- Work on stringing/lacing activities; lacing cards, lace projects, sewing or cross-stitch.
- Use tweezers to sort coloured various sized buttons into boxes.
- Games such as Jacks, Pick-up Sticks and marbles.
- Dot to dot games, mazes, tracing, colouring in within the lines.
- Travel games (Ludo, Snakes and Ladders etc.) – small pieces help to develop a pincer grasp.
- Domino rallies – setting up and knocking down.
- Origami – Paper folding into animal, boats etc. There are lots of designs available online.
- Dice games.

WHAT ARE FINE MOTOR SKILLS?

Fine motor skills refer to the ability of a child to control the small muscles of their body in order to perform certain functions, like writing or tying a shoelace.

It includes the small muscles in the hands, fingers, eyes, tongue and toes.

The Difference Between Fine and Gross Motor Skills

GROSS MOTOR REFERS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LARGE MUSCLES OF THE BODY WHICH ENABLE A CHILD TO WALK, CLIMB, BALANCE, ETC.

FINE MOTOR REFERS TO SMALL MUSCLE DEVELOPMENT WHICH ENABLES A CHILD TO HOLD A PENCIL OR BUTTON A SHIRT.

IT INCLUDES EYE-HAND COORDINATION, EYE-FINGER COORDINATION, FINGER STRENGTH AND CONTROL, AS WELL AS THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSCLES SUCH AS THE TOES, TONGUE AND EYES.



MOTOR SKILLS DEVELOP FROM THE HEAD DOWNWARDS, AND FROM THE BODY OUTWARDS (TO THE LIMBS). THEREAFTER, THE SMALL MUSCLES STRENGTHEN.

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS, THEREFORE, DEVELOP BEFORE FINE MOTOR SKILLS.

THIS CAN BE SEEN IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN WHO ARE SKILLED AT CLIMBING, RUNNING AND WALKING BUT ARE STILL LEARNING TO HOLD A PENCIL OR CONTROL A PAIR OF SCISSORS.

WHY ARE FINE MOTOR SKILLS IMPORTANT?

CHILDREN MUST DEVELOP FINE MOTOR COORDINATION IN ORDER TO LEARN TO PERFORM BASIC EVERYDAY TASKS SUCH AS DRESSING, TYING SHOELACES, PREPARING FOOD, AND OTHER SELF-CARE TASKS.



AT SCHOOL, THEY NEED TO BE ABLE TO CUT, PASTE AND DRAW AND FINE MOTOR SKILLS ARE ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL FOR LEARNING TO WRITE.

BEFORE CHILDREN CAN LEARN TO WRITE LETTERS AND HAVE THE FINGER STRENGTH AND PENCIL CONTROL NECESSARY TO FORM THEM, THEY MUST DEVELOP THEIR SMALL MUSCLES.

THE EARLY YEARS ARE THE TIME FOR DEVELOPING PRE-WRITING SKILLS, MOSTLY BY DOING ACTIVITIES THAT DEVELOP THE FINGER MUSCLES.

