

# HOME LEARNING: FINE MOTOR ACTIVITIES



The activities below can be used to encourage the development of a range of fine motor skills including pincer grip, tripod grip, finger awareness, finger isolation, in-hand manipulation, 2-handed coordination and manipulation of utensils.

## INDOOR ACTIVITIES:

- Picking up items such as pompoms or cotton wool balls with tweezers, tongs or a clothes peg.
- Pinning clothes pegs around the side of a box/tray or around a paper plate to make a flower or sunshine.
- Use paint or felt pens to colour wooden pegs different colours or use coloured plastic pegs and prepare rectangles of coloured paper or card in the same colours. Encourage the child to clip the coloured pegs to the same-coloured paper.
- Picking up and sorting out small objects from a pile e.g. paper clips, pegs, coins, Lego pieces, erasers etc.
- Tearing newspaper/tissue paper into strips with 2 hands then screwing them up into a ball with the fingers of one hand. Use these for craft activities.
- Cut out a shape from foam and use a holepunch to make holes around the edge. Use a piece of string or wool, a shoelace or a pipe cleaner to thread along the holes.
- Pick up small pompoms with a pincer grip and push them into the opening of a plastic bottle. Practice unscrewing and replacing the lid on the bottle before and after.
- Hide small items like 5ps, googly eyes or beads in playdough or therapeutic putty and encourage the child to find them and pull them out.
- Sticking items with suckers on to a smooth plastic surface and try to pull them off again.
- Playing with spinning tops and windup toys.
- Hide objects in dried beans/pasta/rice/sand and ask the child to try to find them without looking. If necessary hold a piece of paper/card over his/her hands so they can't see.
- Keep items that the child uses regularly in different types of containers e.g. screw-top jars, drawstring bag, grip seal bag, pull off lid etc. Encourage them to use 2 hands to open the containers to remove the items.
- Unscrewing large nuts and bolts.
- Pulling stretchy hair bobbles and scrunchies over their feet and up onto their legs (to practise the 2 handed skills required for putting on socks).
- Playing with a slinky – moving it back and forth between 2 hands.
- String beads on a skewer (with the sharp end cut off) or a piece of uncooked spaghetti. Encourage the child to hold both the skewer and the beads or help them to stabilize it by pushing it into a piece of playdough or blue tac stuck to the table. If the child finds this easy, use a pipe-cleaner or a shoelace for threading.
- Place a variety of shape cookie cutters onto a tray and encourage the child to use a spoon to pick up rice or tiny pasta shapes to fill the cookie cutters.
- Draw the face or body of an animal on paper and use a plastic fork dipped in paint to make the pattern of fur on it.
- Feely box – cut a hand-size hole in the lid of a shoe box. Place familiar items in the shoe box and then encourage the child to reach inside and either guess what the item is before removing it from the box or try to find you a particular item but just feeling for it and not looking. This can also be done by putting items in a draw-string bag.
- Use masking tape to tape down small suitable toys, e.g. plastic animals, to the table and the child has to pull the tape off to 'rescue' the toys. Or put small objects into a muffin tray and tape a crisscross of masking tape over each hole. The child must pull off the tape to remove the items.

- Squash the bugs – make a laminated sheet with pictures of bugs on. Put a ball of playdough on the top of each bug and then the child must use their fingers or a wooden spoon to squash the playdough.
- Simple scissor activities e.g. cut strips of paper and attach them to half a paper plate to make a jellyfish, cut up playdough or therapeutic putty, cut strips of paper to make paper chains, cut up drinking straws to combine with the playdough to make animals etc.
- Putting coins in a money box.
- Make a postbox from a cardboard box. Play at being the postman – posting ‘letters’ through the slot in the box.
- Posting small balls or cars into a cardboard tube and watch them rolling out of the other end.
- Posting pieces of spaghetti or pipe cleaners into the holes of a colander.

## OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES:

- Helping to clean outside furniture or windows using a sponge. Encourage the child to try to wring out the sponge with 2 hands.
- Pulling out weeds in the garden.
- Create a digging spot in the garden if possible and encourage the child to dig using a small spade or a garden trowel, or to make patterns with a hand-held garden fork.
- Drawing on paving with chalks.
- ‘Painting’ walls outside using different size paint brushes and water
- Popping bubbles by clapping hands together or using a pointer finger to poke them.
- Washing small plastic toys – dip them in shaving foam then into a bowl of water to wash off the foam. Use a toothbrush to scrub the toys.
- Hold containers e.g. plastic cups or small plastic bottles, in each hand and pour water back and forth from one to the other. This can also be done in the bath.
- Squirting a squirt gun or using a spray bottle to spray water on plants, wash windows or have a water fight!
- Helping to hang the clothes out on the line. If your line is too high for the child, use string or cord to create another one lower down and encourage the child to hang up small pieces of clothing such as socks and gloves, or dolls clothes.
- Teddy bears picnic – practice pouring water into cups from a jug to serve each of the teddies and opening lunchboxes or other suitable containers to remove plastic or real food.
- Using a pipette to drop coloured water onto paving to make a pattern.
- Squeezing a water filled washing up bottle to see how far you can make the water squirt out.
- Pushing small sticks and stones into the soil to make a mini ‘garden’.
- Making mud pies – use plastic spoons or laundry powder scoops to pick up the soil and put it into a large bowl or bucket. Pour some water in with a jug and use a large spoon to mix the mud. Use hands or other utensils to scoop the mud into small flowerpots or plastic cups and then turn them over and pat the mud pie out onto the floor. Decorate with stones, leaves, petals etc.

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