



# Fine Motor Skills

Ideas to help improve your child's  
handwriting



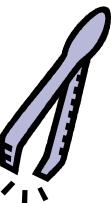
Simple everyday tasks that we do automatically are paramount in helping improve your child's hand writing. The strength and dexterity children have in their fingers determines how they control a pencil and how they form their letters. We have included a few fun activities for you to try with your child to build up muscles in hands and fingers and develop the "pincer grip".

Can your child rip a piece of paper? Some children can't do this. Take a piece of paper or newspaper between thumb and first finger and just rip into little pieces. Great fun to do!



 Use paper-clips to make a chain. It takes a lot of concentration and dexterity to link the paperclips together. Keep the completed chain when made and another day get your child to separate the paper-clips.

Using tweezers pick up beads, beans or anything tiny. Pick them up out of one container and place them in another. You could use ice-cube trays. Remember no using fingers!



 Place a row of coins on the floor or table head side up. Using a timer see how fast your child can turn them over using just their first finger and thumb. Another idea is to place coins on the table in a square shape, half 'heads' up, half 'tails' up. You and your child decide who will be 'heads' and who will be 'tails'. Set a timer for 1 minute and on the command "go" the one who has chosen 'heads' must turn all the coins so 'heads' is upwards whilst the other person at the same time must turn the coins so 'tails' is facing upwards. At the end of the minute see who has won by counting who has the most coins facing upwards. Remember only use your first finger and thumb to turn the coins.

See how many clothes pegs your child can peg around the edge of a box or on the bottom of a curtain in 3 minutes. Remember get them to use only their thumb and first finger. How long does it take them to get them all off again?



When you blow bubbles for your child have him/her pop them using "beak fingers". Use first finger and thumb again in a pecking beak like motion to pop the bubbles before they pop on the floor or furniture.

Playdough is a very good tool for increasing the strength of fingers. stretching, rolling little balls, sausage shapes, pinching, squashing-all really help work those fingers.



Pulling, these actions



Using a small piece of elastic or an elastic band hold between the first fingers and thumbs of each hand and pull hands apart and release again. Careful not to let go .....it hurts! Maybe you could do it in time to music?

Pretend you are playing the piano! Use the edge of a table and move the fingers one at time up and down just as you would on a piano. Put on some music and play along!



Small padlocks and keys are brilliant for undoing and relocking again and again. Little, tiny finger movements builds up their strength.

Cutting – any work with scissors is beneficial. Can your child cut in a straight line? Can he/she cut a simple picture out of a magazine? Many children struggle to even hold a pair of scissors correctly. Using scissors is something that we tend to think just happens when but it is a very complex movement and tricky to master. Spending time with your child showing how to cut using a pair of scissors is a valuable exercise.



Bubble wrap is great fun to pop, but encouraging your child to use the thumb and first finger to pop the bubbles also helps strengthen fingers.

**If you would like any more information or any further ideas for you and your child to work on please do not hesitate to contact any of the Reception Team we will be happy to help.**

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