

Fine Motor Skills

INTRODUCTION

This leaflet contains advice and gives activity ideas which promote fine motor skills. Fine motor skills are important for every day tasks such as playing with toys, eating with cutlery, cutting with scissors, pencil skills and dressing e.g. buttons and zips. The following activities will help to develop hand and finger strength.

Suggested Activities

Show the child how to build a tower with building blocks. This can be made more challenging by building a wall and then progress onto different building materials such as Stickle-bricks, Duplo and Lego.



Play games that involve small pieces within them, e.g. peg boards, basic inset puzzles with a handle on each piece – progressing onto jigsaw puzzles, Frustration, spinning tops etc.



Threading activities – Using large beads initially, make snakes and jewellery by threading the beads onto a lace. Progress onto smaller beads, dried pasta tubes and buttons etc as the child develops.

Clothes Pegs – Put up a pretend washing line and hang up dolls clothes or small items of the child's clothing, using clip type pegs. Always remove the 'clothes line' after play is over to avoid accidents. Or place pegs onto a shoebox or piece of card.



Play with finger puppets together. Initially you may have to do the acting but the child can then be encouraged to join in with another puppet



Play games such as 'Incy, Wincy Spider' or 'This Little Piggy' or "Tommy thumb" with your child.

Exploratory Play

Hide toys and objects in different materials such as sand, crazy soap, shaving foam, dried beans, rice, pasta, oatmeal, jelly and custard.

Water play – fill the kitchen sink with soapy water and various whisks, plastic bottles and toys.

Playdoh - practice kneading, pinching, rolling and cutting out shapes. Make a hedgehog by pinching the spikes, roll out to make a snake, curl up to make a snail.

Blow bubbles - for the child to pop. Encourage them to do this with their pointy finger.

Finger Painting – let the child explore the paint with their hands and draw shapes using one finger on a big piece of paper.

School Age Fine Motor

Continue to practise pre-school fine motor tasks.

More advanced fine motor practise could include -

Open packets, plastic bottles and jars. You could put marbles or small toys inside the bottles and jars, then the child has to unscrew the top to get them out. Also practise unscrewing and screwing nuts and bolts.



Pop bubble wrap using a neat pincer grasp (thumb and index finger)

Play games such as Connect 4, Guess Who, Operation and Jenga to help develop a neat pincer grasp and encourage finger isolation.

Make pictures/collages by sticking on pasta shapes, little beads, lentils, sequins, cotton wool balls, scrunched up tissue paper etc.

Card games— shuffle the playing cards and deal out one by one.

Use tweezers to collect little objects such as buttons and beads or cotton wool balls.

Practice dressing skills— collect pieces of clothing with fastenings like zips and buttons. The clothes should be laid out in front of the child and not wearing them at the time of practise. Progress to the child doing up the fastenings whilst wearing the garments.

Hand dominance is the preference of one hand to perform fine and gross motor tasks, such as writing, cutting or catching and throwing a ball. Though hand dominance means tasks are performed more efficiently by the dominant hand, the non-dominant hand also plays a significant role in completing tasks e.g. the non dominant hand holds the paper while the dominant hand is cutting with scissors, the non dominant hand holds a bowl while the dominant hand mixes ingredients. Some children may swap hands during tasks. Children develop hand dominance at around 3-5 years but this can be later.

Useful links/Websites

www.therapiststreetforkids.com

www.therapyfunzone.net

www.tts-group.co.uk