

Finger Gym Activities

Fine motor skills are achieved when children learn to use their smaller muscles, like muscles in the hands, fingers, and wrists. Children use their fine motor skills when writing, holding small items, buttoning clothing, turning pages, eating, cutting with scissors, and using computer keyboards.

Fine motor skills develop after gross motor skills, which control actions like throwing and kicking balls, as well as walking and jumping. It is very important that children develop their gross motor skills with confidence before developing fine motor skills.

How can we help children develop fine motor skills?

Practice, practice. In most cases of fine motor skill development, practice does, in fact, make perfect. Some ways to develop these skills are having children do the following activities:

- Pop bubbles on bubble wrap with just the index finger and thumb.
- Finger painting
- Puzzles
- Lego or small building blocks
- Playdough- recipe below
- Tweezers or tongs- to pick up small items (e.g. pieces of pasta) and place in small pots.
- Scissors- cut different textures e.g. card, paper, fabric
- Drinking straw and cotton buds- have a go at pushing cotton buds into the end of the straws.
- Nuts and bolts- hold a bolt and thread on a nut, twisting it on the top and off again. You can buy a bag of different sized nuts and bolts in Wilkinsons like pick and mix sweets!
- Mark making (early signs of writing) in flour or rice, using fingers, or the handle of a wooden spoon. Encourage your child to make clockwise and anti-clockwise marks, zig-zags or wavy lines. These marks may develop into the first letter of your child's name.
- Threading- there are many threading kits you can buy; however, you could use penne pasta and string.
- Water play- pouring and filling containers of different sizes help develop control and hand to eye co-ordination.
- Golf tees and marbles- push the golf tees into piece of playdough and have a go at balancing the marbles on a tee.

- Clothes pegs on coat hangers- perhaps write numbers on the pegs so you can help with number recognition and order at the same time!
- Spray water bottles- use outside to create patterns or in the bath to squirt floating toys.

If you 'Google' fine motor activities there will be more fun ideas for you to try and use the link below to The Imagination Trees website for fantastic, fun and cheap activities.

<http://theimaginationtree.com/2013/09/40-fine-motor-skills-activities-for-kids.html>

A lot of the resources needed to help develop fine motor skills are around your house so be creative and have fun helping support your child. These skills are crucial for your child's pencil control therefore giving them confidence in their writing in the future. Please talk to a member of staff if you would like any help with these ideas.

Simple no-cook playdough

- 2 cups of plain flour
- 4 tablespoons of cream of tartar
- 2 tablespoons of cooking oil
- 1 cup of salt
- 2 cups of boiling water (straight from the kettle)
- Food colouring of choice
- Place all ingredients in a large bowl and mix well. When mixture has nearly come together place on a board and knead (be careful it will be hot!) well.
- Place in an airtight container between uses.