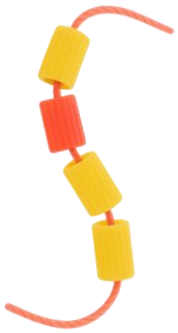


Fine Motor Activities

Here are some activity suggestions designed to support your child's fine motor skills development. They will help strengthen the small muscles of the hands and fingers, and encourage thumb and finger coordination, which are important for developing an effective and comfortable pencil grasp.

You may find it motivating for your child to use a stopwatch, egg timer or kitchen timer while completing these activities. Turning tasks into a fun challenge – such as trying to “beat the clock” – can help keep children engaged and build confidence while they practise skills.

Most importantly, encourage your child's efforts and celebrate progress, no matter how small. Regular, short periods of practise can make a big difference over time.



Threading pasta

The child threads as many pieces of straight pasta onto the string or shoelace as he/she can in one minute. The pasta is picked up between the thumb and index finger, or thumb, index finger and middle finger. The task can be varied in difficulty by the size of the pasta and the stiffness of the string (a piece of sellotape on the end provides a suitable stiffener). The task can also be varied by which hand is used to hold the string.

Equipment

- A piece of string or shoelace
- Pieces of straight pasta



Posting peas through a narrow neck bottle

The child holds a bottle firmly on a table with their non-writing hand. He/she picks up peas one at a time and posts them through the top of the bottle. He/she picks up the peas between thumb and index finger. Progression is using thumb and middle finger and then (and this is hard for adults too!) thumb and ring finger and then thumb and little finger (this is really hard for adults too!)

Equipment

- Plastic bottle and dried peas (or beads)



Making paper footballs for table football

The child places his/her 'handwriting' hand flat and stretched out on the piece of paper and the other hand behind his/her back. The child has to scrunch the paper into a ball by turning it in his/her hand to make it round. Both hands can then be used to make a really tight ball. Progression is using alternate hands. The task can be varied in difficulty by the thickness of the paper. Thin paper e.g. tissue paper will be easier and thicker grade paper will increase difficulty.

Equipment

- Paper



Flicking the paper balls

The child lines up the balls on the table and flicks the balls with each finger in turn to shoot at a target (this can be an ice-cream tub, washing up bowl, target on the wall). The child keeps his/her wrist flat on the table. Progression is alternating hands, then both hands at once and flicking with each finger in quick succession.

Equipment

- Use the paper footballs made in the previous activity.



Flicking marbles

As previous activity (flicking the paper balls)

Equipment

- Marbles



Flicking rice

The activity involves the child picking up the grains of rice by placing his/her wet hand palm down onto the rice. The child then turns his/her palm over and using each finger and thumb, tries to flick the rice until none remains (adults enjoy this activity too!)

Equipment

- Rice on a tray or in a container



Clipping pegs around a box

The child has to see how many pegs he/she can clip onto the box in one minute. The child uses thumb and index finger and progresses to each finger in turn on each hand. The child can reverse the process as part of the activity (the box may need a weight in the bottom to stop it falling over if all the pegs are removed from one side).

Equipment

- Springy clothes pegs and a cereal box



Posting coins through a slot in a box lid or money box

The coins are posted one at a time through the slot making sure the child uses thumb and one finger.

Equipment

- A box lid with a slot or a money box and coins



Squeezing sponges

The activity requires the child to empty the tub with the sponge by soaking it and squeezing the sponge with either or both hands. Clearly, the task can be varied by the volume of water in the tub and/or by setting a time challenge.

Equipment

- Water, an ice-cream tub (or similar) and sponge

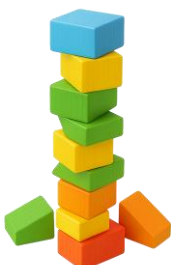


Roll and pinch pots

Make coil pots by rolling the dough/clay into strips. Make pinch pots by making a ball of dough, pushing the thumb into the centre and pinching round in a circle to form a pot.

Equipment

- Clay or dough



Building a tower

The child, using thumb and index finger or middle finger, builds a tower as tall as he/she can before it falls down. Progression requires the child to build a tower as tall as possible in one minute using one hand. Ensure the child gets to practice with both hands.

Equipment

- Building blocks and lego bricks

Play dough Recipe

1 cup of plain flour
2 tsp cream of tartar
½ cup salt
1 tbsp cooking oil
1 cup water
Food colouring



1. Mix food colouring with your water first.
2. Then add the vegetable oil and water with food colouring to a large pot.
3. Add the dry ingredients to your pot and mix well.
4. Cook over a low to medium heat until the dough starts to form and become dry.
5. Once it starts to form a ball take off the heat.
6. Once cool, knead for five minutes or until smooth.

The mixture can also be cooked in the microwave but keep stopping, checking and mixing every couple of minutes.

Once cooled keep in an airtight container.

Tip – if the dough is sticky, it may be under cooked, if it is crumbly, it is probably overcooked.

