

Hand Skills and Fine Motor Activities

Fine motor skills involve the small muscles of the body that enable such functions as writing, grasping small objects, and fastening clothing. Fine motor development is a very important part of a child's physical skills set. Children need to learn to use their hands competently to manipulate toys and acquire self-help skills such as feeding and dressing.

- Open Web space: Web space is the space created between the thumb and the index finger when the index finger is in proper position of opposition with the thumb when grasping an object.
 - Squirting a water bottle outdoors on the sidewalk
 - Make "A-OK" sign (thumb and index finger in a circle)
 - Holding onto large items
 - Hand puppets
 - Finger Twister game
 - Wrapping hand around small balls or bike handlebars
 - Rungs on the monkey bars in the playground
 - Holding jump rope handles
 - Pencil grip

- Finger Individuation: The ability to move a single finger in isolation from the other fingers.
 - "This little piggy"
 - Counting out loud with fingers
 - Thumb War game
 - Computer games and typing
 - Playing a piano or electric keyboard
 - Peel stickers from a sticker sheet and place them on a piece of paper
 - Beading
 - Play dough or therapy putty
 - Crumpling paper
 - Child touches each finger to the thumb one at a time
 - Page turning
 - Card dealing
 - Twirling a pen around in fingers
 - Spin a top
 - Finger painting

- Precision Activities
 - Cutting straws then bead onto pipe cleaners
 - Beading pipe cleaners or tiny strings through colanders or spice containers
 - Placing marbles on top of golf tees that the child has stuck into Styrofoam
 - Stacking small blocks
 - Folding paper, i.e. basic origami
 - Marshmallow and toothpick structures

- Pinch Grasp Manipulation: The ability to pinch an object between the tip of the thumb and the pointer finger and then manipulate the object in any way needed.
 - Child colors with small broken pieces of crayons
 - Picking up small pellet sized items like beads
 - Using tongs, chopsticks, or tweezers to pick up small objects
 - Tissue paper projects
 - Stringing beads
 - Bead rolling
 - Play dough rolling
 - Small knobbed puzzles
 - Magna doodle boards
 - Wind-up toys
 - Stamps
 - Stickers

- Pincer Strengthening
 - Use a reacher to pick up items off the floor and place them into a bucket
 - Clothespin activities
 - Spray water bottles
 - Water guns
 - Gluing activities
 - Bubble wrap

- Tripod Grasp
 - Clothespins and cotton balls game: pick up cotton balls with the clothespins and put them in a container as quickly as possible.
 - Picking up items with tweezers or tongs

- Hand and Arm Strengthening
 - Crawling or animal walks
 - Wheelbarrow walk
 - Squeeze stress balls
 - Therapy putty exercises
 - Tear out a piece of old phone book, crumple paper with one hand then throw to bin
 - Wrap rubber bands around boxes or containers
 - Pinching and sealing Ziploc bags
 - Legos
 - Pop-beads
 - Kneading play dough
 - Resistive grippers
 - Puff paint projects
 - Hand puppets
 - Coloring
 - Snapping fingers
 - Hole punching

- Manipulating a Pencil
 - Practice erasing: draw a line, flip pencil over in one hand, and erase
 - Rubber band over hand to assist in hold

- In Hand Manipulation
 - Coins into a piggy bank
 - Rolling marbles in palm of hand with fingers
 - Twirling a pencil around in fingers
 - Marble games
 - Therapy putty or play dough
 - Moving key from palm to fingers
 - Pegboard games
 - Pick up numerous small objects and hold them in the hand
 - Attaching paper clips in a chain
 - Nuts and bolts
 - Penny flipping or design making
 - Dominos
 - Card flipping

- Dressing and Grooming
 - Doll dressing
 - Dressing skills and manipulating fasteners
 - Folding activities