

Fine Motor Skills

What are fine motor skills and why are they important?

Good fine motor skills gives us the ability to control small movements of the arms hands, and fingers.

In the preschool years, being able to colour with crayons, cut with scissors, paint with a paintbrush, and play with small toys like Lego, beads and puzzles are integral to a child's development. Self-care activities like: tying shoelaces and using a knife and fork, all require a degree of fine motor control.

Once formal schooling starts good fine motor skills will enable a child to learn to write with minimal effort. Many bright children struggle in the early school years because of poor fine motor skills which affects their pencil control.

Poor pencil grasp can lead to difficulties with letter formation, fatigue, reduced speed, increased/decreased pressure when writing, all of which impact on school performance.

The aims of fine motor activities are to develop in hand strength, in hand manipulation, and fluid movement, all of which are essential for pencil manipulation.

Fine motor activities often require the use of both hands, but the focus is on the dominant hand, as good hand control is required for fluency and speed when using a writing tool. The non-dominant hand is the supporting hand, for example, to support the paper when writing.

Fine motor skills activities

<p>Theraputty</p>	<p>Exercise hands by squashing, rolling, moulding, pulling, pinching and digging. Hide gems to dig out.</p>	
<p>Posting coins or buttons</p>	<p>Using a money box, the child holds a few coins in her hand and pushes them through the slot one at a time. Alternatively use 1 coin at a time and ask child to manoeuvre it from palm to finger tips. Watch how the muscles of the hand have to work to hold the coins as well as manipulation in hand</p>	
<p>Tweezers</p>	<p>Encourage the child to hold plastic tweezers or tongs in a tight tripod grip and pick up small items like pompoms ,cotton balls, seeds, and gems, then sort them and deposit into containers</p>	
<p>Mr Tennis Ball</p>	<p>Cut a slit in a tennis ball (about 2-3 inches). Draw a face on the ball with the slit being the mouth, show the child how to help 'feed' him small gems, coins, marbles, and beads by squeezing the mouth open and using the opposite hand to put 'food' in, swap hands and continue practising. To work on finger translation pick up 2-3 items in the feeding hand and 'feed' the tennis ball 1 piece at a time, using a pincer grip.</p>	<p>Fine Motor Fun with Tennis Balls!</p> 
<p>Lacing board</p>	<p>Lacing cards or sewing cards, are an activity that develops both fine motor and visual perceptual skills. Lacing cards develop the child's ability to locate the next hole (visual tracking), manipulate the string through the hole, turn the card over or feel the string come through the back, and then repeat the process from the back.</p>	