



## **What are fine motor skills?**

Fine motor skills involve the small muscles of the body. The coordination of these small muscles are required for small movements like cutting, writing, opening water bottles, tying shoes, etc. Young children benefit from daily practice to help develop fine motor skills in their hands and fingers.

*Strengthening these skills are important because they directly impact how well a child can write as well as increases their stamina for writing.*

## **Home Activities to Strengthen Fine Motor Skills**

- Use a plant sprayer to spray water on plants or play “Monster melt”.....draw monster pictures with a marker and then spray them with water.
- Provide child safe tweezers or tongs and encourage children to pick up small marshmallows or pom-poms and place in empty ice cube trays or egg cartons for counting games.
- Provide spring loaded clothespins and encourage children to clip clothes or pictures on a line.
- Provide small child-sized paper punches that make different shapes.
- Provide Cheerios, Fruit Loops, or macaroni and encourage children to lace them on string or yarn.
- Provide small tops to spin.
- Spread cards, coins, or buttons on the floor and encourage children to turn them over.
- Make shadow puppets on the wall.
- Mix food coloring and water and use eyedroppers to decorate flattened coffee filters.
- Play with finger puppets.

- Sing chants and finger plays that encourage the use of the fingers such as 5 Little Pumpkins, 5 Green and Speckled Frogs etc.
- Provide small pieces of chalk or broken crayons for children to write or draw with.
- Provide old greeting cards for children to cut, the thick paper provides the resistance they need to be more successful. Cut any thick paper. Cut play dough with plastic scissors. Cut plastic, disposable straws or shredded paper.
- Spread sand or salt in a shallow pie pan and encourage children to use their fingers to draw in it.
- Place clear hair gel and food coloring in a sandwich bag. Force all the air out of the bag and seal tightly with packing tape or duct tape. Place the bag on a flat surface and encourage children to use their index fingers to write on the bag.
- Play with play dough. Use a rolling pin to roll play dough. Roll “snakes” with play dough using palms of hands. Roll play dough into tiny balls using only the finger tips. Insert feathers or golf tees into play dough.
- Tear paper and make a collage.
- Write your child’s name on a piece of paper and have them decorate it with stickers, beans, or any small object they need to grasp with their thumb and index finger.
- Build a paperclip link necklace.
- Crumple paper with fingertips into a ball. Make 5 large balls and 5 small ones.
- Search “Fine Motor Skills Activities” on Google, Bing, or Pinterest for more ideas.