

Fine Motor Activities

It is important to work on building the small muscles of the hands for everyday tasks such as dressing, eating, printing and writing and manipulating small objects. Some fun ways to build the hands muscles are to play with toys and build skills doing activities like:

1. Puppet play with hand and finger puppets to encourage movement with fingers.
2. Work with pegboards. Make lines, designs, shapes and have your child copy what you made on their board. Make designs with coloured inch cubes and have your child copy them. Parquetry games and puzzles are helpful, too, and can be purchased.
3. Marble games - try to get the marbles into a small cup leaning on its side. Try to aim for and hit other marbles. Try to shoot a marble so it follows a specific path through other marbles.
4. String beads, beads or macaroni on shoe laces, or a straw if the lace is too difficult. Copy a sequence of different shapes and colours of beads. Lacing cards are fun, too.
5. Sorting small objects into categories - buttons, paper clips, beads, etc., using thumb and index finger, thumb and middle finger, thumb and ring finger, etc. Place the sorting box (maybe, an egg carton) on child's left and have him/her use right hand, so that s/he crosses their midline.
6. Squishing paper into balls - start with lightweight paper and move onto a heavier construction type paper or tin foil, etc.
7. Finger tug of wars- pinch Popsicle stick or rubber band between finger and thumb. Make sure the child keeps an "O" shape and then tug away.
8. Hand races- line up items (spoons, buttons, pennies) and pick up in one hand as fast as possible.
9. Use squeeze bulbs to blow cork of ping pong balls back and forth. This is also fun when done in water.



10. Use tweezers, strawberry hullers, clothes pins to pick up different small objects and put them in containers.
11. Draw or colour with small pieces of crayon or chalk.
12. Crafts – colouring, cutting, folding and pasting with paper and other materials.
13. Painting e.g. finger painting, house painting strokes (painting with a large brush and can of water on sidewalks/patio etc.), easel painting.
14. Small cars/trucks e.g. draw roads on a large piece of cardboard for the cars to travel on.
15. Playing with magnets and poster board, e.g. one magnet under the board moves the magnet on top to follow patterns drawn on the poster board
16. Cooking with a parent and learning how to chop, stir and knead dough and other foods



Additional Suggestions

- Pulling objects apart, pushing them back together
- Squeezing sponges in water or squeezing a ball
- Opening/closing lids of bottles or jars
- Carpentry activities i.e. – hammering
- Wind-up toys
- Playdough, cookie dough, silly putty, etc.
- Hitting a ball or balloon on string
- Hitting bubbles with:
 - An open hand
 - With one finger
 - With the thumb
 - Between hands
 - Hitting a ball or balloon on string
- Squeezing clothespins on to a box
- Stretching elastic bands over nails or between individual fingers and thumb
- Getting small snacks out of a small cup like a Dixie cup



- Interlocking toys e.g. lego, mega blocks, Lincoln logs, Duplo, puzzles
- Gluing and pasting crafts

Elbow and Forearm Stability

Your elbow provides stability for your forearm, which allows your wrist and fingers to use a pen or pencil. Forearm stability helps wrist extension, which is necessary to get into the proper writing position. You also need to keep your elbow next to your side to prevent your shoulder from moving. Some fun activities to build this skill includes:

- Flipping cards, cans and buttons (without setting them on the edge of a table)
 - Playing with a Slinky®
 - Placing stickers in your palm
 - Walking like a penguin
 - Scooping and pouring water
 - Doing high fives with your palm up
 - Filling plastic eggs with things that make sounds; one hand holds the egg
 - Carrying books or trays with your palms facing up
 - Bouncing a tennis ball on a tennis racket
 - Wringing out a towel by twisting it
 - Turning the pages of a book
 - Playing the “guess-which-hand” game where you turn over your hand palm-up to show a hidden object
- *Ideas adapted from Mary Benbow’s hand skills.

Video Resource

<https://youtu.be/1fszpk5A4lw>