

“HANDY” Activities for Young Children

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Fine Motor

Fine motor development is the refining and coordinating the movements of the small muscles in a child's hands, wrists, and fingers.

Children need to develop the ability to use their hands throughout activities of daily living. (eating, drinking, dressing, toothbrushing etc.)

Eye-hand coordination develops as children learn to use their eyes to guide their hands.

Playing with toys, using writing tools (crayons, markers etc.), cutting with scissors are all fine motor activities in early childhood.

You can help your child “work on” or develop the fine motor skills needed to draw, write, and cut without using crayons, pencils, and scissors.

Using hands throughout *activities of daily living*

When you can, take the time...

- Dressing and undressing
- Eating, drinking, and food prep
- Washing hands and bathing
- Brushing teeth
- Tidying up

Becoming more independent builds self confidence and provides opportunities for fine motor practice.

Be Prepared:

- YOU
- CHILD
- MATERIALS

When choosing materials and tools, think about...

- SIZE

- SHAPE

- WEIGHT

ONE HAND? TWO HANDS?

- One hand working, one hand holding or helping or manipulating
- Do it with this hand, then do it with other hand
- Two hands moving the same way or in a different way

POSITION—*YOU AND CHILD*

You are close by, but giving space

Eye level to foster interactions

Child can...

Sit in chair or on the floor

Lie on tummy and prop

Stand or kneel

**need a steady and strong base*

POSITION--*MATERIALS*

- To the right, to the left, in the middle? Reach across?
- Close by, or farther away?
- On an upright surface, or under the table, or no surface at all?

Manipulating objects in daily life and play

- Things handled out into fingers
- Using thumb in opposition to one or more fingers
- Isolating and refining movements

What can you find?

- Dollar Tree

- Five Below

And look around your home?

paint

- Washable, can add a little *liquid dish soap*
- *Large poster board*, cut into smaller pieces or strips
- Paper up on wall or?
- What other objects can you find around the house that your child can paint?
- Use different sized paint *brushes* with different sized and shaped handles
- Try some stamping—potatoes, *potato masher*, *sponges*, *bath toys* or *foam puzzles*
- Water painting, after *chalking*
- Tire track painting with *cars*
- Find some *little balls* or *marbles*, dip them in water down paint and child tips and rolls them around on paper placed in box lid, *shallow bin*, *baking pan*

tongs and ice cube tray

- You can purchase children's tongs, or try *strawberry tongs*
- Pick up *different sized objects*

- Put paint into *ice cube tray*
- *Small objects* in and out

playdough, a potato masher, and ???

playdough

- ❖ Be prepared—maybe use *plastic placemat*, or *yoga mat*?
- ❖ What toys can you find? Use a *ball* to roll out the playdough, or press *toys* into the dough, or hide *small toys* in a ball of dough.
- ❖ Use a *fork* to poke lots of holes, or *plastic knife* to cut and slice.
- ❖ Of course, *cookie cutters*!
- ❖ Poke, roll, squeeze the dough. Try a *citrus squeezer*.
- ❖ Make a roll of playdough and then cut it with *kid scissors*.
- ❖ Add *rice* or *beans* to playdough to add texture.
- ❖ There are lots of recipes for making your own playdough!
- ❖ *Foam* or *floam*, *silly putty*

little characters

- Favorite ***characters*** may be a way to get your child interested in a fine motor activity
- Manipulating small objects gets those fingers working
- Can Chase run this way and that, or roll over? Can Skye twist and turn and fly all around?
- A wonderful opportunity to encourage imaginative play

blocks

- We LOVE stacking, slow down and be careful
- Push together and pull apart
- Another opportunity for pretend play

stickers and tape

Putting **stickers** and **tape** on—and taking **stickers** and **tape** off

- Different shaped objects and toys
- Body parts
- Cards, paper, boxes etc.

sensory bins

sensory bins

BE PREPARED

- rice, beans, pasta, oatmeal, water, sand, dirt?*
- large and small containers*
- Different shaped containers, deep and shallow*
- measuring cups and spoons, long handled spoons, scoops*

scooping, filling, pouring, dumping, hiding, finding, stirring, concocting

Last, but not least—writing tools and scissors

For fun, naturally occurring, for a reason

Just a few quick ideas about writing tools and scissors

- There are many different adaptive supports to help with pencil grasp.
- Remember that a smaller crayon or differently shaped ones may help your child's grasp and use. We want to get them holding crayons etc. out into their fingers, and their thumb in opposition.
- Adaptive scissors are available. Small colorful note cards can be cut up and used to make a collage.
- When using scissors, try using the cue "thumbs up." Sometimes putting a small sticker on their thumb can be a reminder. You may also want to try having them on their tummies and propped on their elbows.
- If you feel your child is really struggling with fine motor development, you may want to contact one of our Family Resource Specialists to help you find some information and help.

Thank you!