

Motor Skills and Handwriting

Gross Motor

Gross motor skills require the use of large muscle groups to perform tasks like walking, balancing, crawling.

Arm and Shoulder Strengthening

Sports

Any kind of climbing activities (e.g. adventure playgrounds or climbing walls) or use of whole body and shoulder movement, such as swimming and tennis.

Animal Walks

Bear Walks: walking on all fours with legs straight as possible, bottom in the air.

Crab Walks: move from flat on your back, lift arms over head and push against the floor until your body is up in the air and you look like a crab (body, head and neck parallel to floor).

Walrus Walks: lie on stomach on the floor and push body weight onto straight arms, keeping legs straight and on the floor. Move forward 'walking on your hands' with your legs dragging behind you.

Skipping Rope Activities

- Lay the rope on the floor walk forward and back along the length of the rope.
- Lay the rope on the floor and walk over and back across the rope.
- Lay the rope on the floor and walk TOE – HEEL along the length of the rope.
- Crawl along the length of the rope
- Crawl over the rope and back.
- Lay the rope on the floor and walk criss-cross along the length of the rope.
- Lay the rope on the floor and walk along the rope with feet straddling the rope.
- Crawl straddling the rope.
- Practise jumping over the rope while it is laid out on the floor.
- Practise jumping over the rope backwards while it is laid out on the floor.
- Skipping

Balloon

A few ideas:

- Throw the balloon into the air and see how many times you can hit it back into the air without it dropping on the floor.
- Throw and catch with a friend.
- Throw and catch – see how many times you can clap before catching the balloon.

What is Fine Motor?

- Fine motor skill requires the use of smaller muscle groups to perform tasks that are precise in nature.
- Fine motor skill is the coordination of small muscle movements which occur in body parts such as the fingers, usually in coordination with the eyes.

Finger Isolation

The ability to use one finger separately from the others

- Pointing songs or games
- Popping bubbles
- Finger painting
- Finger puppets-move each finger independently

Pincer Grip

Pincer grip is the ability to grasp small objects with thumb and forefinger

- Pick up small objects with their thumb and first finger, rather than whole hand, or thumb and middle finger.
- Form these fingers into a 'beak' and pretend they are picking up seed, to encourage and promote the idea of tucking other fingers away.

Fine Motor Control – Activities for Outside

Brush and Water

- Fill a container with water and allow your child experiment with the different brushes.
- Painting a fence, gate or pavement
- Writing own name and other family and friends names
- Create different patterns (zig zag, circles, lines, waves)
- Draw pictures (House, boat, animals)

Here are some helpful hints:

- Encourage your child to hold the paint brush with a comfortable grip
- We would suggest that your child starts using the larger brushes first then when they are confident move towards the smaller brushes.

Fine Motor Control – Activities for Outside

Spray Bottle

This activity encourages your child to hold something (the spray bottle) while using a one particular finger to complete the task.

Some ideas:

- Spraying flowers and plants
- Food colouring/paint can be added to the spray bottle for your child to create spray pictures and drawings
- Spray left over shaving foam or washing up liquid from the inside of the sink
- Spray hair to make wet
- Spray dolls hair when washing

Fine Motor Control – Activities for Outside

Glitter Writing

- Empty some glitter onto the tray where your child can practice their letter formation using a finger or paintbrush.
- Glitter can be mixed with normal table salt.

Paint

- Your child can either use their fingers or a cotton bud to practice their letter formation.

Fine Motor Control

Cutting

Your child may need support to cut along the lines

- Encourage your child to follow the lines on the paper with their finger first.
- Encourage your child to practise on some scrap paper first, making random cuts.
- Help your child to hold the scissors with a comfortable grip.
- **Square cutting** – Your child can decorate square shapes and cut them out. They can sort the squares according to size and give them all names.
- **Triangle Cutting** – Your child can decorate triangle shapes and cut them out. They can investigate the different attributes of each of them.
- **Circle Cutting** - Your child can decorate circle shapes and cut them out. They can order them by size and give them all names.

Fine Motor Control

Play-Doh

Here are some helpful hints and activities:

- Encourage your child to pinch (using thumb and finger) small amounts of play-doh. Pull away from the large pile of play-doh.
- Encourage your child to roll different sizes of play-doh in the palm of their hands.
- Encourage your child to roll the play-doh from a ball into a sausage/snake using their hands.
- Encourage your child to pound the play-doh using as many different ways as they can.
- Encourage your child to use the rolling pin to flatten the play-doh.
- Encourage your child to use the cutters and peel the play-doh from the table.
- Allow your child to explore the play-doh independently and see what they can create.

Fine Motor Control

Stencil Pictures

- Encourage your child to make their own picture by using stencils.
- Encourage your child to hold the pencil with a comfortable but effective grip.
- Encourage your child to hold the stencil with their non-writing hand and draw the outline with the other hand.

Threading Pictures

- Encourage your child to complete the picture by threading the lace through the hole in a sewing method (in front, behind, in front, behind).
- This activity will encourage your child to hold the lace how they would hold a pencil.

Fine Motor Control

Tweezers

Use items such as cotton balls, feathers, pompoms, beads, paper clips and buttons.

Your child may need support to hold the tweezers correctly.

- Encourage your child to use the tweezers to transfer the objects from one container to another. They may want to have a competition with a family member or a friend.
- How many objects can you move in 1 minute?
- Give each object a different number of points (the smaller the object, the more points it is worth). How many points can you score?

Fine Motor Control

Nuts and Bolts

- Encourage your child to use their fingers, hands, and wrists, coordinating both hands while grasping and twisting the nuts onto the bolts.

Pegs

- Encourage your child to use their fine motor muscles to squeeze clothes pegs to clip a number to a clothesline for example. Tie the piece of string to a low unit or surface to make a washing line.
- Encourage your child to squeeze the clothes pegs and clip them to the sides of the boxes, containers, paper plates, card books etc.

Fine Motor Control

Spinning Tops

- To spin the top encourage your child to hold it between their thumb and first finger and release by moving their first finger backwards.
- Encourage your child to play with a sibling, friend or adult to see who can spin their spinner for the longest

Some activity ideas:

- Writing own name and other family and friends names
- Create different patterns (zig zag, circles, lines, waves)
- Draw pictures.

Motor Movers

- From the start of term, each class will participate in daily Motor Mover sessions.
- These are a physical warm-up before the children's handwriting sessions.
- Each Motor Movers session is based on a nursery rhyme with actions that the children move their bodies to.
- Studies have shown that developing these gross motor skills improve the children's fine motor skills.

Woodwork

- Once a week, on a rotational basis, one class participates in woodwork activities.
- A number of parent volunteers attend so let us know if you are interested when these begin. A letter will be sent out.
- These sessions promote fine motor control and hand eye co-ordination.

More Ideas

- Take a line for a walk – see how long the pencil can stay on the paper.
- Clipping things together – using pegs, paper clips, etc.
- Dressing up activities – involving the use of clothing fasteners such as buttons, zippers and laces.
- Bead threading – copy the pattern.
- Tracking and maze activities
- Tracing – lines, shapes and simple pictures.
- Copy patterns using chalk.
- Colouring patterns and pictures – using different media.
- Dot-to-dot pictures – using numbers and the alphabet.
- Line-links – following the line from one end to the other (e.g. mouse to the cheese).
- Painting and printing – using different sized brushes and different types of printing materials.
- Jigsaw puzzles – starting with simple peg puzzles with pictures and shapes that need to be slotted into the correct space, then introducing traditional puzzles of varying degrees of difficulty.
- Peg boards – these can be used to make simple or more complex patterns.
- Constructional apparatus – of varying degrees of difficulty (e.g. Duplo, Lego).
- Sewing activities
- Construction activities – involving the use of plastic nuts, bolts and screws.
- Games such as Pop up Pirate, Chairs (stacking game), versions of Tiddlywinks, Steady hand, buzzer games and Jenga.
- Whiteboards and chalk boards.