

Fine motor skills

Fine motor skills are the co-ordination of small muscles movements, usually involving the hands and fingers. Fine motor skills are needed to complete daily activities such as writing, cutting with scissors, dressing, brushing teeth and hair, feeding and playing. They require a combination of a number of elements e.g. muscle strength, hand-eye co-ordination, tactile (touch) awareness, grips and grasps manipulation skills and motor planning.

Fine motor skills are generally acquired after a child has mastered gross motor skills.

Fine motor difficulties may impact on

- Writing
- Drawing
- Construction toys
- Cutting with scissors
- Threading beads
- Jigsaw puzzles
- Buttons
- Zips
- Shoelaces
- Using a knife and fork
- Washing and drying hands
- Opening packets
- Messy play and/or touch

Activities

- Play dough, plasticine, pastry. This can be cut, rolled into balls or sausages with the fingers, cut up with pastry cutters into different shapes including letter shapes
- Papier-mâché modelling i.e. around balloon shapes, modelling clay- fun, messy and helps strengthen fingers
- Printing using potatoes or printing sticks or fingers using thickened paint. (Paint thickened with corn flour)
- Puppet play using finger puppets, or draw faces on fingertips. Puppets can also be made very simply out of a sock and these are much easier to manipulate than a bought hand-puppet
- Paper folding games using coloured stiff card i.e. origami techniques, paper aeroplanes
- Gardening - nurturing seeds and seedlings from tiny seeds to a small plant
- Cooking/baking especially with rolling pins and the finger rubbing method to make crumble topping
- Paper chain making, cutting and sticking paper into collages or making a scrapbook for a particular event
- Using sticker books or stickers to make pictures of or cards
- Games of copying peg board designs. Use stop watch to make harder
- Make necklaces out of threading painted macaroni onto wool or by using beads and string
- Make little woolly pom-poms by winding wool around cardboard rings
- Sewing cards
- Simple woodwork using balsa wood or similar
- Apps for tablets include - Dexteria, magic sorter, bugs and buttons, spot the dot.

Games that can be bought include:

- Fishing game – uses magnet on string to pick up metal 'fish'
- Marbles and marble run
- Tiddlywinks
- Jenga
- Pick up sticks
- Solitaire
- Draughts
- Connect 4
- Ludo
- Card games
- Buckaroo
- Dominoes
- Snakes and Ladders
- Monopoly – (Ideally being the banker!)
- Mastermind
- Matching pairs
- Fuzzy felt
- Frustration
- Don't buzz the wire
- Operation
- Puzzles

If a child can hold a pen/pencil correctly any kind of pencil work such as drawing, colouring, dot to dots and mazes etc really help with motor co-ordination skills.