



Suggestions to Improve Fine Motor Skills



Vertical surface: Draw or paint on paper taped to the wall, use an easel, chalkboard, dry erase board, place Colorforms on the window, and play Lite Brites.

Playdough: Mold and roll playdough into balls, snakes, use cookie cutters to form animals/shapes, cut playdough with plastic knife, use toothpicks to make designs. Using modeling clay is even better. Hide objects in the clay for your child to find.

Tearing paper: Holding paper with thumb, index, and middle fingers, tear paper into strips, make collages with various colors, crumple into balls and use to stuff a dinosaur, snowman, or other art creation. Two large pictures of an animal can be made which can be taped or stapled together back to back, and stuffed with crumpled newspaper to create a 3-D creature.

Spray bottles: Sprayers with large handles are wonderful for developing hand strength. Children love spraying plants (indoors and outdoors) and dry erase boards and chalkboards. Food coloring can be mixed with water and sprayed onto snow.

Tweezers and tongs: Oversized tweezers such as the ones found in the "Bedbugs" game can be used to pick up and release small objects such as Cheerios, cotton balls, etc. as part of a counting activity or art project. Regular tweezers and clothespins are good for picking up small objects and moving them from one place to another. Try picking up cotton balls, beads, cocoa puffs, marbles, skittles, etc. Chopsticks are also fun to try.

Lacing activities: String cut-up straws, beads, Cheerios, and other small objects. Felt and cardboard lacing activities are also great for developing eye-hand and fine motor coordination. Lacing beads on pipe cleaners to make a bracelet may be fun.

Eye-droppers: These can be used at the water table, in the bathtub, or for art projects to drip food coloring onto paper towels.

Cooking activities: Children often love to help make cookies. Stirring the ingredients in the bowl and using a rolling pin helps to develop strength in the arms. When putting sprinkles onto cookies, the sprinkles can be poured into a bowl so that the children have to pick them up with their fingertips.

Counting Games: Roll a die or spin a spinner and have your child pick up (pinch & hold) that many objects into one hand using the same hand. Use M&Ms, skittles, smarties, pennies, etc.

Scissors: Save coupons, ads, magazines, newspapers, and other scrap paper into an empty box. This box can be a "cutting box". Allow your child to cut up everything in it. Kids love the fancy scrapbook scissors to cut fun designs with, but any scissors will do. Hole punchers are great, too.

Board Games/ Card Games: Look for games where small pieces are picked up and moved around. Any games where finger muscles are used will help develop motor skills.