

Fine Motor Play

The following ideas will help your child to carry on exploring the variety of movements that his/her arms, hands and fingers make when carrying out tasks such as; using a pencil and dressing. Practise the following skills just by playing every day games, playing with toys and singing nursery rhymes and songs. The aim of these skills and games is to develop and strengthen grip and encourage use of the thumb, index finger and middle finger as well as range of movement in the shoulders.

Reaching - Encouraging reaching in all directions – up, down and to both sides. Practise reaching in all positions e.g. lying on back and tummy, floor-sitting, sitting on your lap. This will build up strength in the arms in order to support writing, and dressing. Examples of games for reaching:

- *Reaching for toys*
- *Reaching for a ball or bean bag and placing it on or in a target.*
- *Reaching to tap your hand; placing your hands at different levels for your child to tap changing the height of your hand to encourage stretching and more movement.*
- *Ask for a High Five or a High Ten (with both hands) after he has done something you are pleased with not only works as a motivator but as another opportunity for your child to practise reaching.*

Whole Hand Grasp – Encourage your child to hold and handle toys of different sizes and shapes. Encourage reaching with each hand separately and both hands together.

- Wheeling toys back and forth, e.g. cars on the floor.
- Playing with sponges or flannels etc in the bath/bowl of water; encourage your child to Squeeze sponge between his hands or ring out the flannel during bath time.
- Sand play
- Helping plant things and dig in the garden.
- Painting and/or colouring.
- Using stacking cups or blocks.
- Activities in the park, such as climbing frames.



Poking – Encourage use of 1 finger to poke and point during the following activities. This then helps your child to use their pointing finger (index finger) when holding a knife and fork and a pencil.

- Point at pictures together in books at story time and/or point out people in family photos together.
- Place tiny objects in a tray and encourage your child to poke or trace the finger through them (closely supervised in case he tries to put them in his mouth).
- Poke and squeeze playdoh.
- Make and play with finger puppets (this could be a summer project in the holidays)
- Popping Bubbles
- “Two Little Dickie Birds” Song.
- Pressing buttons to activate cause and effect toys.
- Games on a tablet that involve using the touch screen.

Pincer Grip – A pincer grip is essential to developing skills such as dressing and handwriting.

- Turning the pages of a book at story time.
- Pick up as many cotton wool balls as you can in a set amount of time, this can be adapted by picking up pompom balls.
- Pick up pompom balls with kitchen tongs then grade down to tweezers and place them in another container or down toilet tube/kitchen roll tubes (see image for example).
- Poking pipe cleaners through the holes in a colander or cheese grater.
- Pinching Play dough – hide treasure in the playdoh and challenge your child to find it.
- Popping bubble wrap.
- Use Chunky chalk when drawing on the chalk board.
- Use chunky pencils/crayons when drawing and colouring at home.
- Threading beads onto a string or you can use cheerios or dried penne pasta. You could also use a strawberry lace to make a necklace.
- Threading pasta (penne) on to pipe cleaners.



Posting – Encourage your child in posting games and change the size and shape of the object being posted. This will encourage them to use thumb, index finger and middle finger, which are required to carry out pencil skills, knife and fork skills and dressing;

- Posting items into boxes or old margarine pots.
- Posting coins into a piggy bank.
- Posting letters into the letter box for you.
- Playing games such as 'Pop up Pirate' or connect 4.

Throwing and Catching – Use different sizes of balls to encourage your child to change their grip. Play catch or try 'target practice' where they have to see if they can throw the ball onto a target either on the floor or wall of a play area. These games will help develop range of movement for dressing (just as the 'Reaching' section).