

Hand/Finger Strength

- Games with clothes pegs - Open and close strong clothes pegs up to 10 times with index finger and thumb. This can be repeated using other fingers. Try on each hand and then on both together.

Clothes Peg Race - Have a race to see how many pegs the child can peg onto their/your clothes, string etc in 20 seconds. Try using each hand and try to break your record!

- Use tweezers to pick up dried peas or small objects.
- Squeeze a stress ball repeatedly.
- Make a slit in a tennis ball. Make a face using the slit as a mouth. Squeeze the ball to open its mouth and pick up small objects such as pegs.
- Make a hole in the top of a plastic bottle. Squeeze the bottle to spray water. You can play target practice!
- Use a safe, cleaned out spray bottle with water or water pistols.
- Scrunch paper into small balls and throw them into a nearby container. You can move the target further away to make it more difficult. Paper thickness can be increased to make it more difficult.

- Water & Sponge Race - play a game whereby emptying one container of water into another container by using a sponge. Encourage the child to squeeze all of the water out of the sponge on each emptying (it could get messy, probably one for outside or in the bathroom!)

Try and carry out activities frequently for short periods.

Always seek the "JUST RIGHT CHALLENGE" for the child. Activities should not be too easy as this will not progress their development but should not be too challenging that they perceive they have failed.

It would be beneficial if these tasks were carried out in an environment free from distractions to encourage concentration.

Give plenty of opportunity to use toys/equipment available to them.

*Activities should be fun!
Always think safety first!*

Produced by the Motor Skills Therapy Service (July 2014)

Suggestions of active play activities to help develop children's fine motor skills



Fine Motor Skills

Well developed fine motor skills are important for a variety of activities in class and at home.

Aims would be to improve:-

- use of two hands together
- manipulating small objects
- finger/hand strength
- placing/judging pressure
- hand/eye co-ordination
- finger isolation
- sequencing & planning

Make sure the child is in a good sitting position, preferably sitting at a table with their feet flat on the floor. This means they can concentrate completely on their hand skills without having to concentrate so much on general balance/posture. Make sure that the child supports the activity with one hand while using the other to play/manipulate objects.

Doing this type of play will help skills required in school and home such as pencil control, cutting and self care activities like buttons and using a knife and fork.

Activity Ideas/Arts and Crafts

- Finger painting - messy! Try to use one finger at a time rather than using whole hand. You could do letters, numbers, shapes and pictures
- Colouring in cutting out/pasting
- Puzzle books i.e. dot to dot, word searches
- Sharpening pencils, rubbing out
- Sewing/embroidery
- Ink Stamp pads
- Making cards
- Paper Collage
- Craft kits
- Hama beads

Kitchen Activities

Cooking/Baking - cooking or baking are great activities and fun, especially one's which involve kneading and stirring etc.

- Spreading/cutting with a knife
- Opening jars and lids
- Stirring mixtures
- Use of kitchen appliances i.e. tin openers, rolling pin
- Pouring, grating
- Kneading
- Cracking eggs

Activity Ideas/Games

Have a good look at what is in the cupboards.

What would motivate the child?

What would suit their functional level?

Play 1:1 or small group?

- Games which have small counters or pieces are great e.g. Battleships/Pop up pirate/ Tumbling monkeys /KerPlunk/Jenga/Buckaroo/ Build a beetle, Connect 4/ jigsaws etc
- Pop bubble wrap using different fingers and different sizes of bubbles
- Pegboard designs
- Playing cards e.g. Happy Families; Memory game
- Construction toys - Lego, Stickle bricks, DUPLO, Knex, Building blocks
- Threading beads / buttons / picture cards
- Access computer, encouraging finger isolation on keyboard and mouse/ I pad games
- Imaginative play - cars, small animals, people