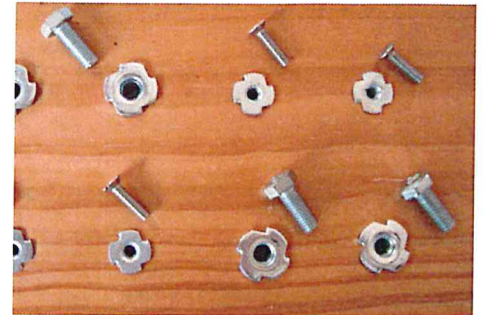


Hand and Finger Activities for Pre-Schoolers



The development of purposeful and precise finger movements is required for the development of many fine motor activities expected of young children in everyday activities.

They are required for the development of pencil skills, scissor skills, playing with toys and independence in self-care skills such as fastening buttons on their coats and using cutlery.

Fine motor skills can be developed by developing a child's sensory awareness and by practicing games involving finger isolation and manipulation.

Children with poor fine motor skills may demonstrate the following difficulties:

- Overly rely on visual information to manipulate small objects
- Difficulty with or avoidance of fine motor activities such as drawing, threading, snipping, games that require finger coordination and manipulation
- They may often seek adult support or rely on adults to complete their tasks

Encourage Participation in the Following Activities:

Isolating Finger Movements

- Finger painting
- Pinching /prodding play-doh
- Finger puppets
- Finger football

- Counting small objects on the table
- Tracing down a path with the index finger on the pavement, chalk board or paper
- Popping bubbles
- Pointing at pictures in a book or in the garden etc.,
- Finger action songs for example, Round and Round the Garden and Tommy Thumb

Encouraging the use of a Pincer Grasp

The pincer grasp is when small items are held between the tip of the thumb and the tip of the index finger.

- Pop bubble wrap paper
- Place small pegs into a pegboard (you may want to make this more fun and categorise colours etc.)
- Picking up raisins/chocolate buttons or cheerios out of a tray
- Posting pom poms or pennies into slot containers
- Small handled inset puzzles
- Opening and closing clothes pegs
- Use tongs/tweezers to pick up small objects and place them into a container
- Commercial games such as monkey tree, kerplunk, tiddlywinks etc.

Finger Dexterity

Involves being able to grasp objects in the hands and fingers for precision and accuracy. This is a skill children learn through play and it's through repetition and practice that their movements become more refined, more accurate, faster whilst maintaining accuracy.

- 5 Beads and lace; thread beads as quickly as possible (begin with larger beads and progress to smaller ones)
- 15 Lego pieces: fit them together as quickly as possible
- Ice-cream container and 10 clothes pegs: place pegs around the top of the box using finger and thumb to open and close them
- 5 Coins and 5 empty matchboxes: open each box and place one coin inside then close the box

Points to Remember

- Remember to prepare the child's sensory system prior to fine motor activities by providing deep pressure and touch input e.g. push hands together, wiggle fingers, play with dough or messy play activity.
- If the child struggles to isolate their index finger and thumb give the child a small object like a coin to hold in their palm with three fingers whilst completing the activities. This encourages isolated use of the index finger and the thumb.
- The child will need supervision during these activities so that you can encourage them to isolate their fingers instead of using the whole hand.

Please contact the Children's Occupational Therapy Department on (01481) 213623 should you have any queries.

