

Fine Motor Skills

Children's Therapy Services



What are fine motor skills?

Fine motor skills follow on from the development of movement control at the trunk, followed by the shoulder, then the arm, wrist, hand and fingers.

Fine motor skills involve the small muscles of the body that enable such functions as writing, grasping small objects, and fastening clothing.

Fine motor skills involve strength, fine motor control, hand eye coordination, a good sense of touch and dexterity.

Why are good fine motor skills necessary?

Fine motor skills are important in most school activities as well as in life in general. Weaknesses in fine motor skills can affect a child's ability to eat, write legibly, use a computer, turn pages in a book and perform personal care tasks such as dressing and grooming.

Children need to have strength and dexterity in their hands and fingers before being required to hold a pencil correctly and begin writing activities. This can help avoid incorrect pencil grips.

General Guidelines

Weight-bearing activities can help to improve arm/hand function by stimulating the muscles around joints and increasing stability.

Focus on activities which require fine movements.

Try and prevent large movements physically or by verbal prompting.

Focus activities very specifically on the particular movements with which the child has difficulty.

Supervision and guidance are essential.

Activities for home and school

- Mould, roll or play with clay/play-doh/silly putty
- Play games with cards
- Work on stringing/lacing activities; lacing cards, lace projects or sewing
- Use tweezers. Good games include OPERATION, BED BUGS
- Practice dressing skills with buttons, zips and snaps. Play dress up or dress dolls
- Games such as Jacks, Pick up Sticks and marbles
- Dot to dot games, mazes and tracing
- Travel games – small pieces
- Domino rallies – setting up and knocking down
- Origami
- Cats cradle
- Dice games, Yahtzee
- Spray bottles, squirt games
- Chalkboard activities
- Finger painting, collage work
- Baking and cooking
- Duplo, Lego, Airfix modelling etc
- Manipulating play dough: rolling it into small balls, long rolls etc.
- Tearing paper into fine strips – use them for collage or crumple them into balls.
- Screwing up whole pieces of newspaper in one hand at a time to develop strength
- Cutting out with scissors, using the correct grip.
- Manipulating clothes pegs to pick up small objects.
- Performing finger plays.

For older children

- Modelling clay
- Macramé
- Mosaic work
- Gardening, planting seeds shrubs etc
- Baking and cooking
- Play the piano
- Learn to type

For further information about this service contact:

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