



Developing Fine Motor Skills in Foundation Stage

What are fine motor skills?

Fine motor skills involve the small muscles of the body. The coordination of these small muscles are required for small movements like cutting, writing, opening water bottles, tying shoes, etc. Young children benefit from daily practice to help develop fine motor skills in their hands and fingers. Strengthening these skills are important because they directly impact how well a child can write as well as increases their stamina for writing. Any practise that you can do at home will support your child's progress in this area. We recommend little and often – 5 minutes every day is plenty at this age!

Activities to Strengthen Fine Motor Skills

- Use a plant sprayer to spray water on plants or to spray water at a target that you have drawn together.
- Provide child safe tweezers or tongs and encourage children to pick up small marshmallows or pom-poms and place in empty ice cube trays or egg cartons for counting games.
- Provide Cheerios, Fruit Loops, or beads and encourage children to lace them on string or yarn.
- Posting chickpeas or similar into a bottle – focus on using fingers to move one at a time.
- Spread cards, coins, or buttons on the floor and encourage children to turn them over. Make it a game by racing a timer.
- Play with finger puppets.
- Sing chants and finger plays that encourage the use of the fingers such as 5 Little Pumpkins, 5 Green and Speckled Frogs etc.
- Spread sand or salt in a shallow pie pan and encourage children to use their fingers to draw in it. Use the letter formation sheet as a visual prompt if writing.
- Place coloured hair gel or poster paint in a sandwich bag. Force all the air out of the bag and seal tightly with packing tape or duct tape. Place the bag on a flat surface and encourage children to use their index fingers to write on the bag.
- Play with play dough. Use a rolling pin to roll play dough. Roll “snakes” with play dough using palms of hands. Roll play dough into tiny balls using only the finger tips.
- Tear paper and make a collage.
- Build a paperclip link necklace.
- Roll marbles at a target.
- ‘Paint’ on the wall with a roller or pasting brush.
- Use ribbons and scarves to make shapes in the air – encourage down/up, left to right, and anti-clockwise movements.
- Clipping pegs to a box – start with clipping them to something that is freestanding and progress to clipping onto card or similar held in the other hand.