



FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Top tips for parents



Children learn through experience, they learn through being provided with opportunities to engage in new experiences and to develop skills associated with those activities. **Fine motor skill activities** refer to the co-ordination of the small muscles within the hands and fingers.

These skills are very important for lots of daily activities e.g. getting dressed, eating, using the toilet, washing our hands, mark making and eventually their writing ability later on in school.

Enclosed are some ideas and resources to help you support your child to develop hand/arm strength, support their posture and balance and further develop their fine motor skills.

You can help your child to develop their fine motor skills by encouraging them to:

Cut

Twist

Thread

Fasten

Sort

Squeeze

Pull

Pour

Weave

SELF-HELP SKILLS These are important skills to practice to increase your child's independence when completing daily activities.

Take your time—Practice at the weekend or at a more relaxed time of the day so it won't feel rushed

Encourage your child to cut up their own fruit, butter their toast, pour their milk etc. and give lots of praise and encouragement for their efforts

Small Steps—Break tasks down step by step, using photos can be helpful too

Routine—Use the same routine when practising putting on your coat, brushing your teeth etc so they become familiar with the task and can learn it faster



USING CUTLERY

Ensure that your child is **sitting at the table** to practice - it is important that their feet and back are supported.

Think about the utensils that you are using—are they the **correct size**? Knives and forks with shorter handles are easier to control.

Place a **non-slip mat** under the plate to stop it from sliding around when your child is learning to cut.

Start off cutting softer foods before moving on to firmer foods.

Take your time and be consistent - learning a new skill takes patience and lots and lots of practice!

EASELS

When your child is using an easel they will usually lead with their dominant hand and are developing their

- shoulder and wrist stability
- finger and hand strength
- focus and co-ordination
- visual perception skills (how our brain interprets what we see) and so much more!

At home you can...

Stick a large sheet of paper/bubble wrap/cardboard/tinfoil etc on a door or wall at eye level

Give your child some chalk/crayons/shaving foam/finger paint/paint sticks etc to make marks on the paper

Encourage your child to stand or tall kneel at the paper



POSITIONS

When you are playing together with your child think about the position of activities and to vary these. For example;

- Lie on your tummy on the floor to complete a jigsaw or draw
- Half kneel to play with toys on the floor
- Sit on a chair to share a book
- Stand at the table when completing art and craft

Varying the position for activities helps to develop postural strength and control.