



Fine Motor Development

Each child develops skills at his or her own rate. If you have questions regarding your child's development, please seek additional professional advice from your child's pediatrician.

WHAT ARE FINE MOTOR SKILLS?

Fine motor skills generally involve control of the small muscles of the hands and fingers. Such skills are important for appropriate participation in self-care activities, effective exploration in early learning, and school tasks, such as handwriting.

UNDERLYING SKILLS

Fine motor skills do not develop in isolation. Children must first demonstrate good core strength and endurance. They should also be able to accurately perceive touch information. Bilateral coordination, or the ability to use both hands together, must also be developing.

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| 1 month | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stares and gazes• Brings hands to midline while laying on back |
| 2 months | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grasps toy actively• Looks from one object to another• Hands most often remain closed• Has grasp reflex (grasps objects involuntarily if placed in palm) |
| 3 months | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reaches towards and touches toy |
| 4 months | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clasps hands together• Reaches for a toy when held in a sitting position |
| 5 months | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bangs objects on table |
| 6 months | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grabs own foot while lying on back |
| 7 months | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeds self finger foods• Can transfer objects from one hand to the other• Can pick up cube/medium sized object easily |
| 8 months | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rakes tiny objects• Picks up small objects with a 'pincer' grasp |



- 9-12 months
 - Bangs two cubes held in hands
 - Takes objects out of a container
 - Releases object voluntarily
 - Pokes with index finger
 - Uses both hands freely
 - Puts objects in a container
 - Throws things just to see what happens

- 12-18 months
 - Marks paper with crayon, rather than banging it
 - Holds crayon with whole hand, thumb up
 - Builds tower using two cubes
 - Points with index finger
 - Uses both hands at midline-one hold, other manipulates
 - Turns thick (cardboard) book page

- 18-24 months
 - Imitates vertical stroke
 - Imitates circular scribble
 - Strings one one-inch bead
 - Holds a crayon with thumb and fingers

- 24-36 months
 - Snips with scissors
 - Copies a circle
 - Builds a tower using eight cubes
 - Unbuttons large, easy buttons
 - Puts on shoes, socks, and shorts; takes off shoes and socks
 - Can use a spoon by himself, keeping it upright
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- 3 to 4 years old
 - Holds pencil with thumb and fingers using an adult-like grasp
 - Puts together simple puzzles
 - Cuts across paper following a curved line or circle
 - Strings small beads based on a simple shape pattern
 - Makes a fist and wiggles thumb

- 4 to 5 years old
 - Draws a square
 - Matches 6 or more colors
 - Spreads glue on one side of the paper and turns over stick it to another
 - Traces around own hand
 - Touches tip of thumb to each finger
 - Places key in and opens lock

- 5 to 6 years old
 - Draws a picture with at least three objects
 - Traces letters
 - Colors within lines
 - Copies first name

- Brigance, Albert H., Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Early Development.
- Parks, Stephanie, Inside HELP: Administration and Reference Manual, 1997 Revision.
- Psychological Assessment Resources Inc. Beery-Buktenica Development Test of Visual-Motor Integration.



Activities to Promote Fine Motor Development

Wrist strength

- drawing/coloring/writing on a vertical surface, such as an easel
- use a rolling pin or dowel to roll play dough or cookie dough, make sure hands are open

Finger muscle strength

- stringing beads
- insert pegs into a pegboard
- play with clay, play dough, or Patty
- play games or toys that involve grasping or squeezing
- play tug-of-war with small objects such as elastic bands, coffee stirrers, or shoelaces

General hand development

- roll objects such as silly putty in the palms
- roll a pair of dice within cupped hands
- activities that require weight-bearing through open hands, such as wheelbarrow walking and animal walks crawling on all fours
- line up pennies and turned them over quickly using your fingers
- open and close Ziploc® bags using your fingertips
- have the child cup their hands with their palms up, and gradually add grains of rice (or sand, water, etc.) to the maximum amount they can hold

Separation of the side of the hands

- activities that require one side of the hand for stability and the other side for movement
- squeeze the trigger on a spray bottle with the pointer and index finger, while the thumb and the other fingers hold the bottle
- roll small balls of play dough between the thumb and index finger
- give the child a number of small items such as coins, beads, or bingo chips to hold in one hand then ask them to sort and place the items into a container one at a time using only their thumb and index finger

Precision rotation

- activities that require rotating objects in one's fingertips
- spinning tops and playing jacks
- hold a flat object, such as a book or plate, on extended fingers and ask child to rotate the object under fingertips
- threading nuts on/off of bolts

Delicate touch

- paint with an eye dropper
- pick up fragile objects (cereal, marshmallows, pom-poms) with tweezers, tongs or with fingers without breaking or denting them
- drawing on tracing or tissue paper
- lining up dominoes
- release and count drops of water from an eyedropper one at a time

-Adapted from www.skillbuilderonline.com-

