



## Fine motor skills



Fine motor skills refer to the small muscle movements of the fingers and hands needed to grasp and manipulate objects. Hand strength refers to the strength of the muscles in the hand. Adequate fine motor skills and hand strength are very important to allow a child to carry out every day activities e.g. cutting with scissors, playing with Lego, holding a pencil and managing dressing tasks.

### **Hand Dominance**

Children develop hand dominance at around 3 – 5 years (but sometimes later). Having hand dominance allows one hand to become the **lead (doing)** hand and one to be **assisting (helping)** hand, which is required to complete many tasks e.g. handwriting or using scissors. If your child continues to swap hands you should observe which hand they use more frequently. For example if they use their right hand more often they should be encouraged to use their right hand consistently during activities. The **right** hand should be used to either hold the pencil or scissors and the left (helping) hand should stabilise or hold a page when writing or cutting.

### **Children who experience fine motor skill difficulty may:**

- frequently drop objects
- have difficulty with two handed activities
- demonstrate reduced stamina or motivation for fine motor activities.
- avoid fine motor activities

### **General tips and advice**

- Complete short bursts of fine motor activities practice on a daily basis.
- Ensure your child is in a supportive position before beginning e.g. sitting at a table with feet flat on the floor or lying on the floor on their tummy.
- Give lots of praise and encouragement for engaging with fine motor tasks.
- Keep it fun!

## Pincer grasp



*A pincer grasp is a refined grasp which involves using the pad of the thumb and index finger to pick up and manipulate small objects.*



Establishing a pincer grasp is very important in a child's development to enable them to manipulate objects during play, manage buttons and hold a pencil.

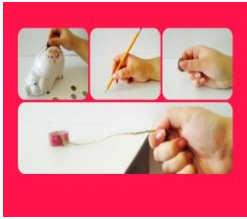
### Activities to develop pincer grasp:

- Play doh or theraputty activities- rolling, twisting and pinching using pincer grasp. Objects can be hidden in it for the child to find and extract using a pincer grasp.
- Clothes peg - opening pegs using a pincer grasp to place socks onto a line or place pegs around the edge of a lunch box.
- Sorting pompoms or cotton wool balls. Use a pincer grasp to pick up the object and place into an ice cube tray or egg box. Make it into a race.
- Tongs- using a pincer grasp squeeze the tongs together to pick up any small and light objects e.g. cotton wool balls/ craft pom poms. Transfer the object from one container into another container. Make it a race.
- Counting or sorting activities where children have to pick up counters using a pincer grasp.
- Picking up cheerio's using a pincer grasp and placing them on a straw.
- Threading activities- hold lace using a pincer grasp and feed lace through the bead or straw.
- Sticker books- peeling stickers off the book and using them to decorate a picture.
- Age appropriate board games that involves holding and manipulating small parts e.g. buckaroo, snakes and ladders, operation, and monopoly.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MD86MGSBd8w&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/funspot123/fine-motor-activities/pincer/>





## In Hand Manipulation

*This is the ability to move one or more objects around in your hand, without using the other hand to assist.*



In hand manipulation enables children to efficiently complete everyday tasks such as handwriting, cutting, using cutlery and managing fastenings.

Activities to develop in hand manipulation skills.

- Place 2 coins in palm of right hand and post them into a money box using right hand only- then practice with left hand only. This can be made more difficult by adding more coins.
- Lacing/threading activities- threading beads onto a piece of string. This can be made more difficult by using smaller beads.
- Pegboard activities- lift a peg in right hand and place it into the pegboard without using left hand to help. Swap hands and try with the left hand only. As skills improve pick up more pegs and hold them in the palm of the hand.
- Crumple up paper using only one hand.
- Pick up small objects from the table using one hand.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nr1ScLf6nT8>

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/funspot123/fine-motor-activities/in-hand-manipulation/>

