

# Fine Motor Activities

- Have child pick up small objects with individual fingers and thumb (i.e.: pegs, beans, beads, coins) and place them in a container with a small opening. Have child do several with each finger
- Opening/placing clothespins
- Using finger paints with each finger being for a different color
- Snapping marbles at a target with individual fingers
- Placing rings (pop can tabs) on individual fingers
- Using toys/instruments/machines requiring individual finger control (i.e.: typewriter, piano, flute, horn calculator)
- Getting masking tape (that has been wrapped around hand and fingers) off using one or both hands
- Stretching a rubber band between a finger and thumb
- Nails and scrap lumber can be used for motor planning tasks which emphasize the use of a single hand for skill, and the other hand for helping and holding. Small hand tools. can be used for pounding, Sawing and screwing. Construction of specific, planned woodworking projects adds a dimension of form and space awareness.
- Painting variations useful in motor planning are:
  - a. finger painting
  - b. house painting strokes ("painting" with a large brush and a can of water on the sidewalk, patio, etc.)
  - c. easel painting
- Sort various small objects such as paper clips, rubber bands, etc., into small boxes
- Finger play songs that involve motor planning, but also conceptual sequencing. Children with the fingers role play gestures such as swimming, skating, playing hopscotch or sign language. The other children try to guess what the puppets are doing. Finger races are also fun.
- Stringing beads
- Making macaroni bracelets
- Snap together beads
- Sewing cards
- Practicing buttoning, zipping and lacing (oversized to normal sized items)

- Weaver looms
- Construction toys such as: Legos, Tinker Toys, and Lincoln Logs
- Flipping coins
- Shuffling cards
- Pop beads

## Activities with Fine Motor Manipulatives

Young children benefit from experiences that support the development of fine motor skills in the hands and fingers. Children should have strength and dexterity in their hands and fingers before being asked to manipulate a pencil on paper. Working on dexterity and strength first can eliminate the development of an inappropriate pencil grasp, which is becoming more commonplace as young children are engaged in writing experiences before their hands are ready. The following activities involve the use of manipulatives, which will support young children's fine motor development and will help to build the strength and dexterity necessary to hold a pencil appropriately.

### **Fine Motor Activities**

- Molding and rolling play dough into balls - using the palms of the hands facing each other and with fingers curled slightly towards the palm.
- Rolling play dough into tiny balls (peas) using only the finger tips.
- Using pegs or toothpicks to make designs in play dough.
- Cutting play dough with a plastic knife or with a pizza wheel by holding the implement in a diagonal volar grasp. (see attached diagram)
- Tearing newspaper into strips and then crumpling them into balls. Use to stuff scarecrow or other art creation.
- Scrunching up 1 sheet of newspaper in one hand. This is a super strength builder.
- Using a plant sprayer to spray plants, (indoors, outdoors) to spray snow (mix food coloring with water so that the snow can be painted), or melt "monsters". (Draw monster pictures with markers and the colors will run when sprayed.)
- Picking up objects using large tweezers such as those found in the "Bedbugs" game. This can be adapted by picking up Cheerios, small cubes, small marshmallows, pennies, etc., in counting games.
- Shaking dice by cupping the hands together, forming an empty air space between the palms.
- Using small-sized screwdrivers

- Lacing and sewing activities such as stringing beads, Cheerios, macaroni, etc.
- Using eye droppers to "pick up" colored water for color mixing or to make artistic designs on paper.
- Rolling small balls out of tissue paper, then gluing the balls onto construction paper to form pictures or designs.
- Turning over cards, coins, checkers, or buttons, without bringing them to the edge of the table.
- Making pictures using stickers or self-sticking paper reinforcements.
- Playing games with the "puppet fingers" -the thumb, index, and middle fingers. At circle time have each child's puppet fingers tell about what happened over the weekend, or use them in songs and finger plays.

### **Scissor Activities**

When scissors are held correctly, and when they fit a child's hand well, cutting activities will exercise the very same muscles that are needed to manipulate a pencil in a mature tripod grasp. The correct scissor position is with the thumb and middle finger in the handles of the scissors, the index finger on the outside of the handle to stabilize, with fingers four and five curled into the palm. **\*\*Note:** Fiskars brand scissors are made for right or left handed children while many other brands are only for right handed children. Fiskars is a great brand for younger children who have not identified a hand preference.

- Cutting junk mail, particularly the kind of paper used in magazine subscription cards.
- Making fringe on the edge of a piece of construction paper.
- Cutting play dough with scissors.
- Cutting straws or shredded paper.