

Activities to work on improving Fine Motor Skills:

- Threading small beads/ pasta tubes onto a string or cereal hoops onto a spaghetti
- Pegs: Make an animal face on a paper plate and put pegs around the edges to make fur as a fun way of building finger strength
- Arts and crafts: sticking and gluing activities - create something using your recycling



- Playing with Lego/ Duplo (be creative: build a house, a garage for the cars,...)
- Playdoh activities: see recipe at the end

Make a sausage, tear/cut off small pieces and make small balls (count how many small balls you can make); and use a knife and fork to practise cutting.

Hide small objects such as buttons or beads/ pasta shapes in the playdoh and remove them again.

Make a large playdoh ball, stick dry spaghetti into the ball and thread small beads/ pasta tubes/ buttons/ cereal hoops onto it (see image below).



- Painting – especially finger paints and with brushes
- Colouring in activities with crayons broken into small pieces (encourages your child to hold the crayon with the tips of the three fingers, thumb, index and middle finger → practise the tripod pencil grip).
- Have 2 or 3 small bowls and small washing up sponges: Get your child to soak up water from one bowl and squeeze the sponge out into another bowl.
- Tweezers: use tweezers to transfer small shapes, i.e cereal hoops, small pompoms from one bowl into another.

Also, practise practical skills such as:

- Getting dressed and undressed: as a parent you will find that your child finds it much easier to get undressed than dressed. If your child struggles with certain items of clothing, such as trousers, sit your child on a chair or the floor, then help your child put both feet into the trousers, but encourage your child to pull them up. Once the child has mastered this, help you child with one trouser leg and encourage your child to take over after that. The next step could be that you pass your child the trousers the

right way round and encourage it to do it independently.

This technique is called 'backward chaining' – breaking down a task and teaching the task starting with the last step and working your way backwards to the first task.

If your child still needs a lot of help with most items of clothing, start with practising one or two at the same time first, praise and encourage your child lots and do it daily so that your child gets regular practice.

- In addition to that practise doing up buttons, zips, Velcro on shoes and shoelaces (usually around age 8).
- Using knife and fork:

Make playdoh sausages and cut them into small pieces.

Parents can encourage their children to use knife and fork especially when offering the children food they can easily cut themselves, such as fish fingers, as well as practise loading up the fork with the knife (mashed potatoes, baked beans, ..).

The children can also help prepare their fruit and vegetable snacks, cutting up bananas, strawberries, apples and pears (once quartered by an adult), cucumber, tomatoes,

A fruit salad tastes so much better if prepared by the children themselves!

Recipe for homemade playdoh:

(Half the amount of ingredients may be enough)

You need:

- 2 cups plain flour (all purpose)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil (baby oil and coconut oil work too)
- 1/2 cup salt
- 2 tablespoons cream of tartar
- 1 to 1.5 cups boiling water (adding in increments until it feels just right)
- gel food colouring (optional)
- few drops glycerine (for stretch and shine)



Method:

- Mix the flour, salt, cream of tartar and oil in a large mixing bowl
- Add food colouring to the boiling water then into the dry ingredients
- Stir continuously until it becomes a sticky, combined dough
- Add the glycerine (optional)
- Allow it to cool down then take it out of the bowl and knead it vigorously for a couple of minutes until all of the stickiness has gone.

* This is the most important part of the process, so keep at it until it's the perfect consistency!*

- If it remains a little sticky then add a touch more flour until just right

Store the playdoh in an airtight container or zip-up food bag, this way it will last for months.