

Gross and Fine Motor Activities to Try at Home

Gross motor skills are the abilities usually acquired during childhood. These skills are built upon, improved and better controlled through early childhood. Gross motor movements come from large muscle groups and whole body movement. Fine motor skills are involved in smaller movements that occur in the wrists, hands, fingers, feet and toes. Below are some activities that you can do with your child at home to support the development of their gross and fine motor skills.

Gross Motor Activities

Attach paper to walls and tree trunks outside – children can make marks on them with different media (water/paint/chalk etc.) as they scoot/ride/walk by.

Playing turn taking games with different sized balls (e.g. rolling, kicking, throwing and catching)

Riding a bike, scooter, tricycle

Large water play activities – using buckets, any waterproof tubes, jugs for pouring, paint brushes, rollers etc. Children can clean bikes and scooters, or “paint” the house or fences with water

Set up a course that involves jumping, skipping, crawling (e.g. jump into three hoops, crawl under the table, hop on the spot, walk along the line)

Playground games that can include: Hopscotch, hula-hoops, skipping ropes

Popping bubbles

Developing Self-Care Skills

Spooning rice, pasta, cereal from one bowl to another

Pouring rice, pasta, cereal from one jug to another

Using old spray bottles filled with water – encourage your child to spray the water onto the wall outside or on large paper on the floor

Unscrewing little jars and containers to take out motivating objects from inside e.g. activity pieces – puzzles, beads to thread

Using plastic/child-safe scissors and child-safe knives, forks and utensils with the play dough and malleable play resources

Toileting time – grasping, releasing and maneuvering clothing when accessing the toilet or being changed. Activating the soap dispenser and rubbing the soap into their hands, washing it off again, twisting the taps and drying their hands.

Meal-times – dishing up food, cutting up food, using cutlery, pouring, scraping, washing up etc.

Cooking activities – spooning, stirring, mixing, kneading, stretching, scraping etc.

Finger Awareness and Finger Strength

Use finger puppets – taking them on and off of different fingers during singing and story times. Encourage movement of all and individual fingers. Coloured finger gloves also work well.

Feely bags or feely boxes – place different objects in a bag or box and fill with rice or pasta, children have to guess what objects are inside (exclude vision for this game)

Simon Says finger games

Playing with computer keyboards or calculators – ask your child to type in a list of numbers or letters. Alternatively just explore both technological objects

Hold soft ball or playdough, gradually extend one finger at a time, repeat with each finger and then change hands

Finger gym: clench and unclench hands, stretch fingers as wide as they will go, make waves with your fingers etc.

Sticky tape – wrap around finger and thumb (sticky side up) and practice pressing together and pulling apart

Finger Manipulation

Use an old baby wipe box and your child can post different objects into the hole (letters, pom-poms)

Stacking Cheerio's – stick a long bamboo stick or piece of spaghetti into a piece of dough and encourage your child to thread Cheerio's on to it (you could also thread pasta or beads as an alternative)

Cook some spaghetti and let it cool. Draw some shapes on a piece of paper and encourage your child to trace the shape with the spaghetti

Tearing up, squashing and rolling up pieces of tissue and paper – these can be thrown to hit a target/into a bucket, used as footballs to “flick” into a goal etc. Try scrunching up the paper using only one hand.

Using pegs e.g. to hang up pictures, to make a peg chain, put pegs around the outside of objects – paper plates, containers etc.

Playing with interlocking toys such as; Lego, Duplo, Mobilo, Magnetic Blocks (Magformers), Mega Bloks, Sticklebrick

