

FINE MOTOR SKILLS INFORMATION.

- IN THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS, WE LOOK AT WHAT EXACTLY FINE MOTOR SKILLS ARE AND WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT.
- WE ALSO LOOK AT THE DIFFERENT DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES FOR CHILDREN IN THIS AREA AND SOME OF THE CHALLENGES OF ACQUIRING AND MASTERING THESE FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS.
- FINALLY, WE LOOK AT PRACTICAL WAYS OF CONSOLIDATING AND PROGRESSING FINE MOTOR SKILLS THROUGH SPECIFIC EXERCISES, CHILD FRIENDLY GAMES AND EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES.



Fine Motor Skills

- Definition:
 - The skills and abilities required in order to control the small muscles of the body.
 - Namely the wrist, hands, fingers and thumb.
 - Fine motor skills are vital for the quality and speed of completing tasks and for independence.

Examples of Fine Motor Skill Milestones in Children.

- Reaching
- Grasping
(by the hand, by the fingers, pincer grip)
- Holding, transferring, placing and picking up objects
- Feeding and eating
- Establishing a dominant hand
- Holding objects for writing, colouring, painting and cutting
- Hand and eye co-ordination





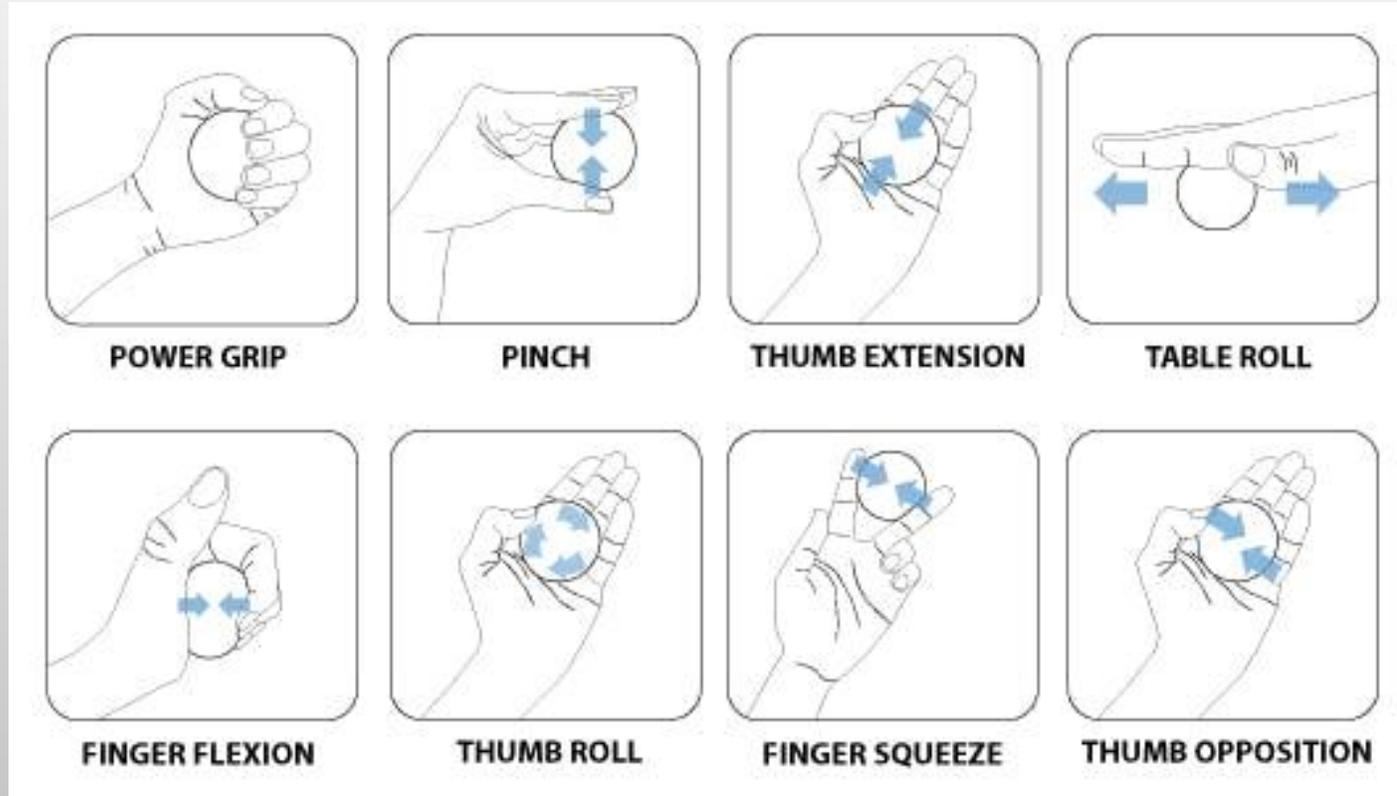
Challenges for Fine Motor Skills.

- Medical problems.
- Lack of experience or practice.
- Developmental delay.
- Difficulty using both hands.
(bi-lateral integration and co-ordination)
- Unknown hand dominance.
- Inability to move the fingers one at a time (finger isolation)
- Lack of wrist or hand strength.



Specific Exercises

Playdough or therapy putty are widely used to help strengthen hands and fingers and improve dexterity. Below are a few of the main movements with further links to a range of activities.



<https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/media/249897/theraputty-activities.pdf> A comprehensive guide to putty exercises, including hand warm ups.

<https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/healthcare-professionals/paediatric-occupational-therapy/theraputty-hand-strength-exercises/> Videos of the exercises and a recipe for playdough!

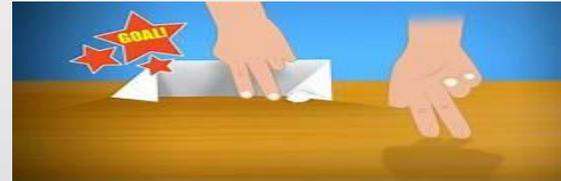
Games

- Lots of traditional games (think those with counters or dice) will utilise hand skills. Connect four, tiddlywinks, dominoes, snakes and ladders or jigsaw puzzles.

What's your favourite?

Paper football: Take a piece of paper and tear off strips (start with larger, go smaller to

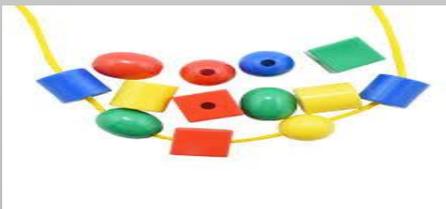
increase the difficulty). Scrunch into ball shapes, then use on a table or floor to flick across into a goal.



Posting games: Placing objects into jars. (Balls, coins, marbles, peas!!)



Threading or lacing: Beads, buttons, pasta.



Everyday Activities

- Here's a great opportunity and excuse to get the children busy and useful!!
- Lots of everyday tasks and chores involve having to manipulate small parts and objects.
- They are also great for strengthening the wrist and hand and practise lots of different grips.

Cooking - opening boxes or jars, stirring or using cutters.



Dining - picnic food or using cutlery.



Dressing - buttons, zips or tying shoe laces.



Using laundry pegs or tweezers.



Arts and Crafts

Any art or craft activity is going to be a great experience for those fine motor skills.



- It enables the child to practise and explore using their hands and how to manipulate equipment.
- Drawing, colouring or painting may be less intimidating for a child than writing but will utilise the same skills.
- Look out for adapted or larger styled equipment to assist.

