

Dudley Children's Occupational Therapy Service
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Developing Fine Motor & Hand Skills – Pre-School

Children need to develop their fine motor skills to help them have the dexterity and strength to be able to draw, write, use scissors, fasten buttons, use cutlery and other activities. The following ideas are examples of games and activities to help:

- Tongs, tweezers, connected chop sticks, clothes pegs: Use these to pick up small objects for sorting, such as beads, marbles, beans, pompoms and cotton balls.
- Spray bottles: help water plants or spray the windows to clean, play with it in the bath, play outdoors in warm weather, add food colouring to make spray bottle pictures in the snow.
- Water guns and squirt toys: outdoor summer fun as well as for use in the bath.
- Sponges: squeezing to wring out the water is great for strengthening hands and forearms. Help wash the car, wash toys and dolls in the sink or bath, squeeze sponges on your friends during water play outdoors etc.
- Punch holes along strips of paper or along the edge of a paper plate using a hole punch.
- Clay, therapy putty, silly putty, play-doh, bread dough, modelling foam: these are all excellent materials for squeezing, squishing, pushing, pulling and moulding.
- Try hiding small objects (beads, pennies, beans) inside materials such as play-doh and then try pulling them out.
- Work on threading activities initially with a thick dowel and progress onto threading with a finer lace.
- Make a collage with small objects such as pasta, lentils, dried beans, tissue paper (rolled into small beads using pincer grip) etc.
- Plant seeds. Either the child picking up larger seeds individually for planting or sprinkling smaller seeds with index finger and thumb.
- Pop the bubbles on large or small bubble wrap by pinching with thumb and index finger or by pushing down on bubbles when sheet is placed on a hard surface.
- Interlocking construction toys: e.g. Mega Bloks, Duplo, stickle brick.
- Activities around the home – stirring cake mixture, rolling, kneading dough.
- Place pegs on the side of a box or cardboard face whilst holding the card in one hand. Use the pegs as hair.
- Finger puppets – Try making finger puppets to use in imaginary play.
- Using small beads, dried peas or chickpeas, time how quickly ten can be moved from a dish into a cup.

