

## Fine motor skills for younger children



*Fine motor skills are the movement and use of the small muscles of the hand. Having good finger, wrist and hand strength, coordination and skill helps with many tasks like eating, dressing and writing. If a child has poor fine motor skills, it can take them a long time to complete these tasks, or they might need extra help from others.*

You can help improve or develop your child's fine motor skills through a range of activities, in lots of different positions. This can also develop other areas, like their gross motor skills. For example, when children complete activities when lying on their tummy, they can strengthen their arms and tummy muscles. Also, when children complete activities on a vertical surface (like a chalk or whiteboard) they can build their wrist strength and develop a controlled finger movement.

There are heaps of activities you can try with your children. Remember to have FUN while doing them, as children learn best when they PLAY.

### Activities you can try at home:

Play with playdough in creative ways:

- Poke, pinch, roll or squeeze playdough
- Hide small plastic toys in playdough for your child to find
- Use toy scissors, plastic knives or cutters
- Make small and large balls of playdough

**Squeeze bottles:** Using empty sauce or shampoo bottles (any plastic, squeezable container will do), fill it with water and use one or two hands to squeeze the water out.

**Spray guns:** Use empty pump sprays, water pistols or trigger action sprayers. Fill these with water, and use just one hand to squirt. Ask your child to water plants or make artwork by filling the sprayer with water-soluble paint.

**Collages:** Rip up pieces of paper, magazines or thin card, and stick them onto a large sheet of paper to make a picture or collage.

**Stickers:** Peel stickers off the backing paper and make pictures with them.

**Single-hole punch:** Make designs on paper or thin card by punching out holes. You can extend this activity by threading string through the holes.

**Drawing and copying:** Practise drawing and copying shapes, either with pencils at a table or with shaving cream on the shower screen, using the 'pointer finger' (index finger) only.

**Wrist strengthening:** Try activities such as crawling, hand stands, pushing or climbing on playground equipment to increase the strength in arms and wrists.