



## What are Fine Motor Skills and How Can I Help My Child Develop Theirs?

Many of your child's daily activities—like getting dressed, eating, and writing—require control of small muscles in the hands. We call these skills fine motor skills. **Your child can do more things for themselves when they have opportunities to practice these skills.** There are many activities that can increase muscle strength and coordination, that prepare children for more advanced skills; from writing with a pencil, using a computer mouse, or playing a musical instrument. Help your child build fine motor skills at home. Here are some fun ideas.

### Play Together With...

Play-Doh--Smooch it, roll it, pat, pound, and use tools like popsicle sticks or stamps

Puzzles--This is a great activity to do together!

Board games--Also a great way to teach taking turns and lengthen their attention span

Blocks, Duplos, or Legos-- (if younger children are in the home, remember to play Legos at the table so little ones can't pick up the pieces, as they can be a choking hazard)

Puppets--Use them to tell stories or make up new ones.

Musical instruments--Play the piano or guitar or children's instruments like a drum or xylophone

### Create Together

Color and draw, using pencils, markers, and crayons.

Cut with child-safe scissors. Just start with simple straight lines, then move on to shapes

Paint with brushes or with fingerpaint

### Cook Meals and Eat Together

Let your child help with meals--stir, shake, chop, cut and mix

Have them open containers with lids

Help them learn how to hold knives, forks, and spoons to eat

Teach them how to pour, and have them pour their own juice or milk into a cup

Let them wipe the table after dinner with a sponge or cloth

### Help Them Build Independence

Practice writing their name

Getting dressed--teach them how to button, zip, snap, buckle, fasten and use Velcro tabs

Remember, every child develops at their own pace. Be patient and provide a supportive environment that allows them to explore and practice these skills naturally. Offer praise and positive reinforcement to boost their confidence as they develop their fine motor abilities.

Source NAEYC Help You Child Build Fine Motor Skills

Adapted from "Getting a Grip on Things: Building Fine Motor Skills," Message in a Backpack, 2010, Teaching Young Children 3 (5): 26-28

