

Resources for Parents

Supporting Your Child with Fine Motor Development

Fine motor development is a process for young children. Fine motor development includes coordination and strength of the small muscles in the hands and arms. Children must develop many of their gross motor skills before they can focus on the small muscles. Some gross motor skills like crawling, pushing, and climbing build the large muscles in their arms and shoulders. Through this development, the large muscles are then better able to support and steady the smaller muscles in the arms and hands.

In HIPPY, children will experience many motor (both fine and gross) activities. Children will begin to cut with scissors and use writing tools like crayons, markers, and pencils. It is easier for children to use tools that are wider in diameter like large crayons or sidewalk chalk. Children typically do not have the fine muscle strength to use a “three finger” (tripod) grasp of pencils and crayons until they have entered elementary school. They will often use their whole hand or several fingers to hold writing tools.

How to help your child develop fine motor skills:

- Let your child try out different activities that strengthen arms.
 - Examples: throwing balls, climbing on playground equipment, pushing things like strollers or small carts, wiping off tables.
- Let your child do activities that strengthen hands.
 - Examples: play with play dough and squeeze sponges, washcloths, and soft balls.
- Sing songs or say rhymes and use hand and finger motions to develop coordination.
- Have your child use writing tools to develop strength and control.
 - Examples: crayons, safety scissors, markers and paintbrushes.
- Allow your child to try tasks that use the thumb and pointer finger.
 - Examples: buttoning clothes, putting puzzles together, stringing beads or noodles, picking up small things.

