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**Handwriting without Tears and Fine Motor Activities for Home**

*Young children ages 2 through Kindergarten benefit from experiences that support the development of fine motor skills in hands and fingers. The following activities help support young children’s fine motor development and can be done in a playful way at home.*

**Fine Motor Activities:**

* Mold and roll play dough into balls using the palms of the hands facing each other and then roll the dough out into snakes. Your child can form letters with the snakes.
* Roll play dough into tiny balls (peas) using only their fingertips.
* Use pegs or toothpicks, children can make designs and write in the play dough.
* Cut play dough with a plastic knife or with a pizza cutter.
* Tear newspaper into strips and then crumble them into balls.
* Scrunching up one big sheet of newspaper at a time is good muscle builder.
* Use a squirt bottle to water plants outside or around the house.
* Use large tweezers or tongs to pick up cheerios, small marshmallows, pennies, etc.
* Shake dice by cupping hands together
* Lace and sewing activities such as stringing beads, Cheerios, macaroni, etc.
* Use eye droppers to “pick up” colored water for color mixing or to make artistic designs on paper.
* Turn over cards, coins, checkers, or buttons.
* Use stickers or self-sticking paper reinforcement.

**Scissor Activities:**

*Using a “thumb up” scissor grasp:*

* Let children use child scissors to cut junk mail, particularly the kind of paper used in magazine subscription cards
* Make fringe on the edge of a piece of construction paper (snips)
* Cut play dough with scissors
* Cut straws or shredded paper

**Sensory Activities:**

*The following activities encourage children to strengthen awareness of his/her hands as well as increase motor strength:*

* Wheelbarrow walking, crab walking
* Clapping games (loud/quiet)
* Catch bubbles between hands
* Draw in a cookie sheet with wet sand, salt, rice or goop using cornstarch and water
* Pick out small objects like beads, coins, etc. from a tray of salt, sand, rice or putty. Try this activity with your eyes closed to help develop sensory awareness.

**Midline Crossing:**

*Establishing hand dominance can develop through age 5. The following activities will facilitate midline crossing:*

* Encourage reaching across the body for materials with each hand. It may be necessary to engage the other hand in an activity to prevent switching hands at midline.
* Refrain specifically from discouraging a child from using the left hand for any activity. Allow for the natural development of hand dominance by presenting activities at midline and allowing the child to choose freely.
* When painting at an easel, encourage the child to paint a continuous line across the entire paper. Encourage your child to start at the top and go to the bottom as well as start at the left and work to the right when making a cross. This teaches directionality for later writing and reading.

**Activities to Develop Handwriting Skills which we reinforce through Handwriting without Tears:**

* Attach a large piece of drawing paper to the wall. Have the child use markers, crayons, etc. to draw on the paper while talking about directionality of top/bottom and left/right.
* Play connect the dots
* Talk about how letters are made of big line, little line and big curve, little curve as a child is playing on a magna doodle or writing with chalk
* Break crayons in half encouraging them to develop a tripod grip
* Color, color, color. The best way to develop fine motor control as well as eye hand coordination is through coloring.
* Color with colored pencils to increase pressure that is needed to color on paper.
* As children are ready, encourage them to write their name the “Kindergarten Way” using upper and lower case letters.
* Let your child help write out a grocery list or a note to a relative.

**Fine Motor Activity Resources for Parents:**

* [**www.hwtears.com**](http://www.hwtears.com)
* [**www.education.com**](http://www.education.com)
* [**www.handsonaswegrow.com/2012/01/30-kids-activities-materials-for-promoting-fine-motor-skills.html**](http://www.handsonaswegrow.com/2012/01/30-kids-activities-materials-for-promoting-fine-motor-skills.html)

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