

Fine Motor Fun

The beginnings..... Tips for building interest and skills for paper activities:

- Why build fine motor skills early? Because we use our hands for everything (e.g. eating, dressing, writing, texting, typing, open doors, etc...)
- Paper activities do not always involve using a pencil, crayon or marker
- Build strong fine motor skills before, or in addition, to working on pencil skills
- Make activities fun and meaningful: Sing songs, make noises, get messy
- Start short: Aim for your child to participate for 1-2 minutes at the beginning. End the activity when the child is happy.
- Introduce, Practice and Repeat: Your child will not get bored from using the same materials over-and-over again. For example, finger painting can be done on a variety of pre-cut designs to make seasonal crafts. Repetition builds skill, familiarity and confidence.
- It is about the process not the end result. Allow your child to do as much as possible without support. It is okay if it does not look like a craft at the end.

Build strong hands

A “bad” (inefficient) pencil grasp can be the result of a child starting to colour and draw before they are developmentally ready. The child will find a way to hold the pencil or crayon in a way that feels stable to them. Drawing and colouring requires a significant amount of fine motor strength and control. Don't let coloring and drawing be the child's only fine motor tasks – kids should be exposed to a range of activities that will strengthen little hands and improve the movement of your fingers:

- Play with playdough- roll snakes, pinch off small pieces, squish a ball into a pancake or roll small peas using only the fingers of one hand.
- Introduce scissors- Snip thin strips of construction paper or thin drinking straws
- Beading- large beads on pipe cleaners or small beads on strings
- PegBoards- play fun games such as Lite Brite™ or Pop-up Pirate™
- Sand play- Shoveling, scooping, pouring, building
- Put coins or bingo chips into a piggy bank (or container with slot cut in the lid)
- Open containers and jars- Have snacks in a container/jar and encourage child to open it (start with the lid loose until skill develops)

Build Interest

Build interest in paper activities by introducing fun and developmentally appropriate crafts. Some examples of paper crafts can include:

- Finger painting- can use paints, pudding, shaving cream
- Squeeze white glue and shake glitter
- Bingo dabbers
- Stamping or making hand prints
- Ripping paper into small pieces