

Family Activities



School Readiness Skill: Uses pencils, crayons, scissors, and paints and does other activities that help develop small muscles

Fine motor skills involve the control of small muscles in the hands and fingers. Before children are introduced to the task of writing with pencils they should have many opportunities to work with small objects that can help strengthen the small muscles in their hands and fingers. The following are a list of suggested activities that are designed to help children develop these muscles.

Play Dough Fun

One of the best ways to strengthen the muscles in your child's hands and fingers is through the use of play-dough. Give your child a supply of play-dough (a recipe for homemade play-dough is included with this family print activity). Encourage him or her to use their hands and fingers to manipulate the dough into shapes or they can create their own structures. Provide him or her with a supply of plastic tools in which to mold and shape the dough including scissors or cookie cutters.



Beads, Beads, Beads



In addition to strengthening fine motor skills, beading is also great for hand-eye coordination. Yarn or string can be used to string such items as beads, cereal, macaroni, or other pasta.



Scissor Exercises

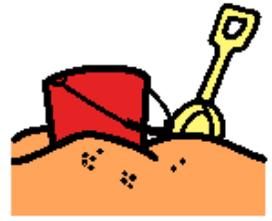


It is important to teach your child scissor skills and proper scissor safety. Talk with your child about the appropriate use of scissors and what is okay and not okay to use scissors on. Start off by providing him or her with a child sized pair of scissors and scraps of paper in which to cut as he or she sees fit. Once you notice him or her getting the hang of the scissors you will want to introduce paper with lines of various shapes and sizes for which to cut i.e. straight lines, curved lines, looping lines, zig-zag lines, etc. A scissor cutting practice sheet has been provided with this family print activity for your use.

Sift and Pour



Provide your child with an assortment of cups or containers of various sizes and sand or other like material such as rice, beans, soil, etc. He or she can practice pouring and sifting the materials using the containers. This is a good way to reinforce the hand/eye coordination needed for small muscle development.



Art Studio



Set up an area for your child to experiment with drawing and other art materials. Provide an assortment of paper, paints, brushes, markers, crayons, and chalk. Your child will enjoy creating their own works of art and displaying them for everyone to enjoy.

Books That Spark Creativity

For more ideas on expanding your child's creativity and use of small muscles, check out the list of books listed below. Many are available at your local library.



The Museum by Susan Verde

Arlo's ARTrageous Adventure by David LaRochelle

Fancy Nancy, Aspiring Artist by Jane O'Connor

Art With Anything: 52 Weeks of Fun Using Everyday Stuff by Mary Ann Kohl

13 Art Techniques Children Should Know by Angela Wenzel