

Fun Activities

Children learn best through play 😊



Your children will be building their skills and learning all while having fun!



Let's build those Fine Motor skills

Get those fingers and hands working 😊

One of the most important ways we can help our children learn while playing with them at home setting is through setting up simple activities that help to develop fine motor skills. Young children need to be able to hold and use scissors and pencils appropriately before using them in a classroom. We cannot expect them to be able to write if they haven't yet developed the strength needed in their hands and fingers.

There are plenty of easy ways to strengthen these muscles and strengthen hand:eye coordination using simple, everyday materials and a bit of creative fun!

What can you do to help your child build his/her skills? We have listed some fun and easy activities to do at home 😊

Remember.....Make it fun!

Play dough: It can be used in SO many ways by adding other combinations of materials to it, and automatically strengthens little hands as they roll, squeeze, twist and build with it.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup salt
- 2 cups flour
- 1.5 cups boiling water
- 2 tbsp oil
- a few drops of fresh lemon juice (this works in the same way as cream of tartar)

- Fresh Herbs can be added Mix all of the ingredients together in a bowl with a metal spoon. As soon as it is cool enough to touch, start kneading until it becomes soft, stretchy and pliable. Mix in the herbs. Store in airtight container.

Use items from Mother Nature so children can poke, stick, and create!

Threading with beads: is a fantastic activity for promoting fine motor development in young children. It requires concentration, thinking skills, encourages the use of the pincer grasp between the thumb and forefinger and naturally strengthens the small hand muscles that are vital for holding a pencil to write with, later on. Use different color beads for color recognition and/or matching.

Straw Fun: Colored straws, a cheese grater, plastic bowl with holes in the bottom, netting fruit bag and a plastic pot into which to cut a few holes in the lid. The kids will have fun, trying to poke the straws into the little holes!



Pasta Necklaces – You can use round cereals for this as well! This is a fun and easy activity that practices some great fine motor skills as well as promoting creativity with a little math tossed in along the way! You can have the children match colors, make a pattern, name colors – all kinds of activities can be built into this one fun activity! For this you need to dye some large pasta shapes. Rigatoni is easy to dye and string. Separate the pasta into 4 zip-loc bags and add some liquid food coloring to each. Shake them up and let them to dry for a day, tip them onto paper towel and let them finish air drying

Finger-paint

- * 2 cups of corn starch
- * 1 cup of cold water
- * 4.5 cups of boiling water
- * Liquid food coloring

Directions:

Mix the corn starch with the cold water and stir together. Pour in the boiling water and stir between each cup. It goes really strange (you are basically mixing a hot oobleck goop) but keep stirring and it literally seems to "melt" into a wonderful, custard-like consistency.

Some people have found that the paint remains liquid and doesn't thicken up as it should. Here are two possible solutions, based on the fabulous commenters below!

1. Try simply adding up to 1 more cup of corn starch and see if that helps to thicken it.
2. Try mixing the paint in a pan on a medium heat instead of just in a bowl, as that will help to bring it together.

More Ideas:

Spreadable Snacks: give the kids a spreadable item for lunch or snack at least once per week. For example, I might give them peanut butter, cheese spread and crackers, or almond butter and a fruit spread with toast.

Tearing, ripping, or cut paper

Coloring

Use scissors - allow children to use scissors to snip, fringe and cut lines

Allow children to use pencils

Let the kiddos help make breakfast, lunch or dinner - letting them help cut foods, open packages, stir etc, helps build many skills like math skills, following directions, science, cooperation, self-esteem....the list goes on and on..

Gross Motor Skills

Let's Get Moving!

Gross motor skills involve the large muscles of the body that enable such functions as walking, kicking, sitting upright, lifting, and throwing a ball.

Let the kids have fun with ball throwing, running, riding bikes, jumping, dancing and walking on balance beams!

Dancing, either freestyle or through songs with movements, such as "I'm a Little Teapot," "The Wheels on the Bus," or "Popcorn": "I'm a piece of popcorn, put me in a pan/Shake me, shake me, as fast as you can (child shimmies, shakes, and jumps)/And I ... will ... (child crouches down low) ... POP!" (child jumps as high as he can). (Dance and movement classes, like pre-ballet, can be fun but aren't necessary for motor-skills development.)

- walking, around the house, neighborhood, or park. For variety, add in marching, jogging, skipping, hopping, or even musical instruments to form a parade. As you walk, tell stories, count, or play games.

- Swimming and other water play.

- Balancing: Have your child walk on a piece of string or tape, a low beam or plank at the playground, or a homemade balance beam

Playing pretend: Kids boost motor skills when they use their bodies to become waddling ducks, stiff-legged robots, galloping horses, soaring planes—whatever their imagination comes up with!

- Riding tricycles, scooters, and other ride-on toys; pulling or pushing wagons, large trucks, doll strollers, or shopping carts.

- Building and navigating obstacle courses—indoors with furniture, pillows, boxes, blankets; outdoors with rocks, logs, or playground equipment.

- Throwing, catching, and rolling large, lightweight, soft balls.

- Playing backyard games tag or other classic games, such as Follow the Leader, Red Light/Green Light, Tails, or Simon Says (avoid or modify games that force kids to sit still or to be eliminated from play, such as Duck Duck Goose or musical chairs).

- Swinging, sliding, and climbing at a playground or indoor play space.

- Large-scale arts and crafts activities.

Blow Bubbles

Cognitive Skills

What are you thinking?

Cognitive skill development in children involves the progressive building of learning skills, such as attending, memory and thinking. These crucial skills enable children to process the sensory information they experience and eventually learn to evaluate, analyze, remember, make comparisons and understand cause and effect.

One way for teachers to engage preschoolers' thinking skills is through reading quality children's books

Ask questions when reading books: what is this.....see the tiger....

What do you think he is doing?.....

A useful technique for facilitating memory in children, especially when there is a lot of information, is teaching content with rhymes, catchy sayings or putting the content to music

Provide children with building materials to allow opportunity for thought, problem solving, cause and effect

Sorting objects - let the kids help sort laundry, sort foods, etc.

Counting - encourage the kids to count crackers, fruit pieces, toys etc.

Sing-a-longs - Sing songs with your child and encourage him to sing along with you. Play his favorite songs and music in the house and car regularly and he may eventually start singing along by himself. This activity helps promote memory and word identification.

Identify Noises - Have your child identify noises that he hears throughout the day (i.e. a bird singing, a car horn, running water or the dishwasher). He will begin to understand how sounds relate to objects in his everyday environment.

Practice the Alphabet

Help your child identify letters by singing along to the "Alphabet Song," reading books about the alphabet and playing with alphabet puzzles.

Here is an example of an easy game to help your child learn his letters:

Cut out individual squares that feature each letter of the alphabet written in bright colors.

Mix them up and tape them on various surfaces in the house.

Go through the alphabet with your child and encourage him to search around the house to find the next letter and tape it to the wall in order.

When finished, leave the alphabet letters in order up on the wall until you're ready to play the game again.

Practice Counting - Identify opportunities throughout the day to practice counting. Count the number of shoes in your child's closet when he gets dressed or the number of slides on the playground when you go to the park. You may soon find that you're counting everything!

Practice Shapes and Colors - Identify shapes and colors when interacting with your child. You can say, "That is a round, blue

ball," when playing in the yard or "That sign is a red octagon" when pulling up to a stop sign.

Offer Choices -When you can, offer your child choices: "Would you like to wear the brown shorts or the blue shorts?" or "Would you like string cheese or yogurt with your lunch?" This will help him to feel more independent and learn to make confident decisions that affect his day.

Ask Questions - Another way to help your child learn to think for himself is to ask him questions: "Which toy should we pick up first when we clean up the living room? Or "Why is it important to walk down the stairs slowly?" Asking him questions helps him learn how to problem solve and better understand how his environment works.

Visit Interesting Places -Take trips to your local children's museum, library or farmer's market to stimulate his curiosity and provide him with "hand on" experiences. Ask him questions while you explore

Play with Everyday Items -Playing with everyday household items is educational, fun and cost effective. Encourage your child to match various-sized lids to their accompanying pots or have him look in a mirror and point to his nose, mouth, eyes, etc.

Offer a variety of Games -Play a variety of games with your child to encourage problem solving and creativity. If your child is younger, the two of you can build with blocks and play "Peek-a-Boo." As he gets older, you can engage him in board games, puzzles and play "Hide and Seek

Social/Emotional Skills

Let's get together 😊

Making friends. Showing anger in a healthy way. Figuring out conflicts peacefully. Taking care of someone who has been hurt. Waiting patiently. Following rules. Enjoying the company of others. All of these qualities, and more, describe the arc of healthy social-emotional development. Like any skill, young children develop these abilities in small steps over time

Be a good example – model good social behaviors

Name the emotions you are feeling - I am happy, this makes me sad, I see you are angry.....

Play games together

Use puppets to act out situations and solve problems in a healthy way

Do a job together

Attend playgroups or other opportunities for children to play with others

Read stories – ask your child – what do you think he/she should do? Why do you think he did that?

Make a friend Book – take pictures of your child's friends or allow your child to draw the pictures – talk about why they are friends, what they like about that friend.....

Help your child learn to resolve conflict in healthy, appropriate ways.

Use language to describe feelings and experiences.

Books to use to help build social and emotional skills

Happy Monster, Sad Monster By Ed Emberly

My Many Colored Days By Dr Seuss

Today I feel Silly and other Moods that make my Day By Jamie Lee Curtis

When Sophie gets Angry, Really Really Angry By Molly Bang

The Way I Feel By Janan Cain

Sometimes I feel like a Storm Cloud By Lezli Evans

Feelings By Alike

Helpful Websites

These websites will give you information on the foundation of required skills and fun ideas on how you can best help your child build these skills!

Fine Motor Skills

www.theimaginationtree.com

www.inlieuofpreschool.com

www.prekinders.com

Gross Motor Skills (Physical Skills)

<http://preschoolers.about.com/od/activitiesfun/tp/summerskills.htm>

<http://study.com/academy/lesson/what-are-gross-motor-skills-in-children-development-definition-examples.html>

Cognitive/Thinking Skills

www.ehow.com

www.earlychildhoodteacher.org

www.scholastic.com

www.education.com

Social Skills

www.zerotothree.com

www.naeyc.com

www.buildingblocks.com