

Top tips to develop:

Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor skills are those that control the movement of the hands and fingers. Gross motor control needs to be developed before the fine control will be successful. Children need to develop strength in their fingers and to learn to manipulate objects that they hold, including tools such as scissors and pencils. Good fine motor control is vital if children are to develop handwriting skills.

Remember you need to help children to develop their skills over time. Observe them carefully and when they have mastered something, offer them opportunities to try a different resource/ challenge that will move their skills on. They may need your encouragement to try new things that are a little harder.

- Provide a selection of objects in treasure baskets that are safe for babies to pick up and bring to their mouths. Try to offer things that are different textures, sizes, weights and colours.
- Provide squeeze toys and books with 'feely' sections and flaps.
- Blocks and stacking toys.
- Ensure you provide some smaller/trickier construction resources as their skills develop, but match them to their skill level/strength so that children are able to use them successfully.
- Provide young children with 'edible' finger paints, such as food purees.
- Provide easy to hold mark making resources. Younger children could begin with sponges, finger paints, chunky chinks, big paint brushes or chunky crayons/markers. Older children who have more developed skills should be encouraged to try pens, pencils and finer paint brushes.
- Offer trays of gloop (cornflour and water), slime (soap flakes and water), or shaving foam.
- Hide objects in the wet/dry sand or in trays of lentils or rice. Get children to find them with their hands. As children become more skilled make the objects smaller. Challenge the children to pick them up with large tweezers/kitchen tongs.
- Put paint or oil and glitter into ziplock bags and seal with tape. Children can use their fingers to make patterns in the bags.
- Thread cereal hoops onto string to make an edible bracelet or bird feeder.
- Offer pegs and a washing line for clothes/number cards/pictures.
- Play table football – children have to flick a ball of paper/small ball between goalposts made from lego/blocks.
- Finger and hand puppets.
- Sorting small objects such as beads/craft pompoms/ buttons into small containers or chocolate box inserts.
- Baking (stirring and whisking) and decorating biscuits/cakes with small sprinkles.
- Playdough with small objects (such as beads or matchsticks) pushed in. Offer modelling tools. As children's finger strength develops offer clay or plasticine as these offer more resistance.
- Encourage children to do their own buttons, zips, press studs and other fastenings.
- Popping bubble wrap.
- ...and lots and lots of opportunities for mark-making in their play.