

Fine Motor Skills

Ideas for learning how to use scissors

- Before holding scissors the child must be able to move their thumb, index and middle finger independently – bending and straightening
- Open and close tools e.g. tongs to pick up different objects
- Dress tongs with socks or material and a face to make it a crocodile or dinosaur etc.
- Squeeze turkey baster to make bubbles in a bowl or draw up water and squirt
- Use a sponge, a small pipette or eye dropper to pick up coloured water for mixing.
- Use squirt guns with trigger or washing up bottles and see how far you can squirt the water
- Move onto scissors – could try the Easy Grip, Self - Opening Scissors if needed:
 - Correct hold gives control – thumb on top and scissors pointing away from you
 - Open and close without attempting to cut
 - Stick a set of paper teeth on 'jaws' for fun
 - Start by cutting across 1cm strips of thin card, progressing to 3cm then 10 cm
 - Snip fringes in newspaper, then once able to cut across paper move on to length
 - Cut within 4cm line then gradually reduce to cut a straight line on thick marker pen line
 - Introduce a bend one way into the 4 cm and reduce width, repeat the other way
 - Try simple straight lined shapes and progress to curved lines, e.g. semicircle, circle
 - Gradually develop skill by cutting out more complex shapes

Activities to improve finger mobility and help develop dynamic pencil grasp

Isolated Finger Opposition

- Use thumb and each finger in turn to pick up dried beans, peas, etc and put in cups
- Use tweezers to pick up paper clips, buttons, rice, sequins, dried peas etc.
- Take off and replace top of pens
- Flick ping-pong ball or screwed up paper at a target
- Open and close clothes pegs with thumb and forefinger of writing hand
- Place pegs into peg board, marbles onto the marble run etc.
- Turn over buttons and coins without moving them to the edge of the table.

Finger Mobility

- Caterpillar fingers across the table, progressing on to scrunching up a crepe bandage with each hand in turn – could be competitive and timed
- Play musical instruments e.g. keyboard, recorder
- Screw paper into a ball with one hand and aim at target or bin
- Screw and unscrew nuts and bolts
- Wind yoyos, wool into balls or onto a large cotton reel
- Make pom poms from circles of card and wool
- Spin hoops and different sized balls

Dynamic Pencil Grip

- Encourage pencil to be held in tripod grasp, "pinch it" or with "froggy legs"
- Put strong elastic band around the fingers and thumb of the writing hand, open and close.
- Correctly position child with forearm resting on table
- Holding pen in tripod grasp draw imaginary circles, horizontal lines and figures of 8 in the air.
- Practise scribble patterns on paper or whiteboard. Discourage heavy handedness and tense grasp.