



Fine Motor Skills

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What are fine motor skills and why are they important?

The term “**fine motor skills**” refers to purposeful, effective movements of the small muscles of the fingers and hands used for functions such as writing, grasping and fastening clothing. For many of us, these skills developed sequentially and with little perceived effort. It may be difficult to remember how we developed these skills and in what order they developed. In fact, we usually don’t think much about them until daily tasks become difficult for us as adults. Fine motor control requires awareness and planning to complete a task as well as muscle strength, coordination and normal sensation. Your child’s fine motor development is a very important part of their physical skill set that develops as the neurological system matures. Children will continue to develop and improve these skills as they grow older, but the groundwork needs to be developed and established within the first six years. This is why a child will need toys, games, and activities to practice and improve these skills during his early childhood. Fine motor skills are important in most school activities as well as in life in general. Weaknesses in fine motor skills can affect a child’s ability to use self-help skills, ability to eat, write legibly, use a computer, turn pages in a book, and perform personal care tasks such as dressing and grooming.

Inside this issue:

Definition of *fine motor skills* and why they are important for your child

Saint Patrick’s Day Fine motor activities

Fine Motor Milestones for your child’s age

Resources for kid-friendly activities to promote development of fine motor skills



Saint Patty’s Day Fine Motor Fun



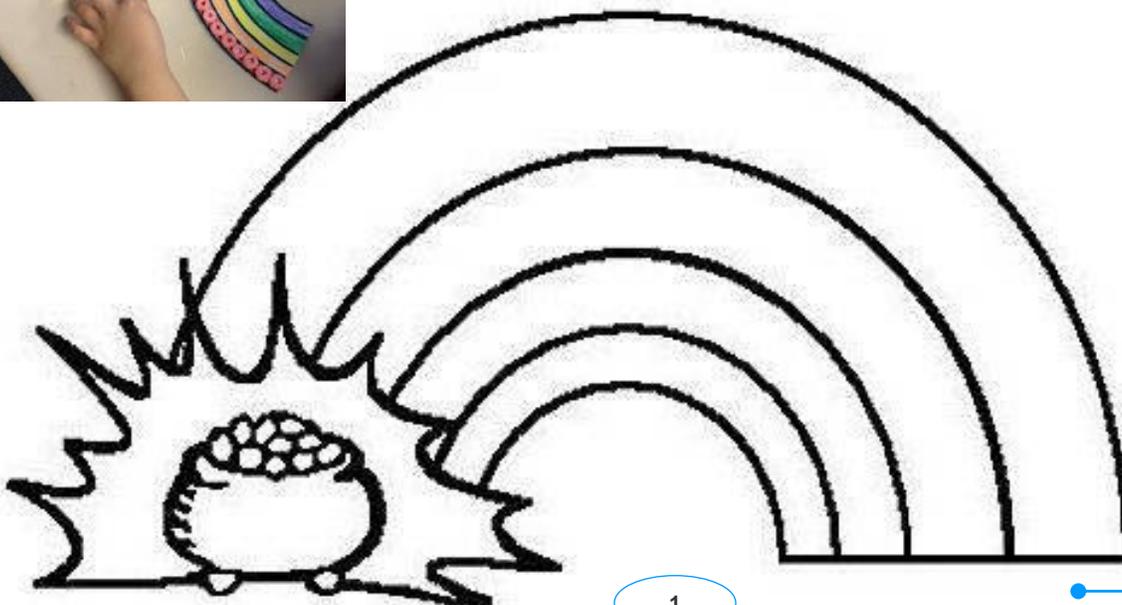
Have your child use tongs or “pinching fingers” to pick up colored foods like fruit loops, veggie pieces, skittles, or M&Ms to place in each row to “color –in” the rainbow. Then share the snack together:

Easy ways to work on fine motor skills

Roll out and cut shapes in Playdoh

Use staplers, hole punches, and squirt bottles

Hide and find small objects like beads in putty or dough



Fine Motor Skills Milestones



For children who have fine motor skill delays, trying to complete daily expectations (like getting dressed, writing their name, brushing teeth, etc.) can be very frustrating. Parents sometimes see their struggle but aren't sure if it is typical for the learning curve at that age, or if there is need for outside help to develop the motor skills for success.

The chart below offers ages where the skills are typically mastered. It is important to note that there is a range of development for children. Two typically developing children may develop skills several months apart without concern, and often girls display fine motor skill mastery slightly faster than boys. So, if your child varies slightly from these norms, there is likely little cause for concern. However, if your child's development is behind by multiple months or you have questions about their development please contact an OT.

Age	Fine Motor Milestones
0-3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arm movement is mostly random but begins to bring hands to mouth and to watch hand movement
3-6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Movements become more symmetrical, reaches for objects with both hands using palms and fingers (but not always thumbs) to grasp them Brings hands to the middle (midline) of the body
6-9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses fingers to rake small food items to pick them up Transfers objects between hands
9-12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isolates index fingers (points without other fingers) Uses thumb and index to pick up small food items (pincer grasp) Releases items intentionally into containers or hands
1 year -18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turns hard pages in a book (multiple at a time is ok) Holds crayons with a fist grasp to scribble Begins to stack blocks and place a few large pieces into a puzzle board
18 months – 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begins to hold a small cup in one hand Imitates vertical lines and begins to snip with safety scissors with some help
2-3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crosses the midline (middle of their body) with preferred hand Strings large beads and stacks 8-9 blocks Uses a fork and spoon to self-feed Dresses and undresses with assistance; Buttons and unbuttons large buttons
3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draws recognizable shapes using a 3-4 finger grasp and cuts simple lines and curves Washes and Dries their hands Grasps feeding utensils with thumb and index finger instead of whole fist.
4-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draws a person and recognizable shapes Cuts simple shapes Pours water without spilling and spreads with a safety knife Able to dress self and zips front zippers Applies toothpaste and brushes teeth
5-6 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main motions for writing or coloring come from fingers and wrist instead of shoulder, elbow, or forearm Writes first name Hand dominance should be established Non-dominant hand stabilizes efficiently for cutting, drawing, and daily living tasks

Compiled using information from the Peabody Developmental Motor Scales; Beery Test of Motor Integration; and Hawaii Early Learning Profile Checklist

For more in depth information about fine motor skills development go to:

www.superduperinc.com/handouts/pdf/145_Fine%20Motor%20Milestones.pdf

The following sites have some great kid-friendly activities for Fine Motor Development. They all have photos to help illustrate each activity so they are easy to recreate at home:

<http://handsonaswegrow.com/30-kids-activities-materials-for-promoting-fine-motor-skills/>

<http://www.prekinders.com/fine-motor-skills/>

<http://www.loveplayandlearn.com/2012/09/the-ultimate-list-of-fine-motor-skills-activities-for-children.html>



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Happy Saint Patrick's Day!

