

ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP MOTOR SKILLS

There are plenty of fun, simple activities that you can find around the house to help your child explore and develop their motor skills. The aim is to make the activities fun and engaging so your child learns through play.

| AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT | ACTIVITIES TO TRY AT HOME |
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| <p>Postural Strength and Control</p> <p><i>Postural control requires muscle strength in the muscles around the neck, spine, abdomen and pelvis. Postural strength will support your child to sit for longer periods at tabletop activities, mat time and play times.</i></p> | <p><i>These activities will develop core muscle strength:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wheelbarrow walks (holding child by legs in a 'wheelbarrow' position whilst they 'walk' on hands) • Animal walks (bear and crab walks, bunny hops, frog jumps, kangaroo jumps) • Outside play (climbing, swinging, digging, throwing, catching, kicking, monkey bars) • Commando crawling around the house |
| <p>Shoulder, Arm and Wrist Strength</p> <p><i>Strength around the shoulders, arms and wrists provides a stable base so the smaller muscles of the hands and fingers can move freely. The wrist and forearm help to get the hand and fingers in place for manipulating small objects, drawing, cutting and writing.</i></p> | <p><i>These activities will develop arm and shoulder strength:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painting and drawing on a vertical surface (white board, black board, blu tac paper to the wall) • Painting an outside wall with water • Hitting a suspended ball with a bat • Tug of war • Swimming |
| <p>Hand Strength and Finger Dexterity</p> <p><i>Hand strength and finger dexterity allows your child to confidently grasp, control and manipulate small items in their hands. This is essential for pencil grasp development, open and close action of scissors, pushing and pulling small lego pieces, playing musical instruments, typing and mouse work, buttoning shirts and tying shoe laces.</i></p> | <p><i>These fun activities will develop the muscles of the hands and fingers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peeling off and sticking stickers • Use a spray bottle to water plants • Use a variety of tools to draw and colour in (crayons, chalk, thick markers and pencils) • Picking up sultanas with tweezers/tongs; • Squeeze juice from an orange or lemon with hands • Use pegs while putting the washing out; • Stamps and ink pads • Posting coins • Lego and other construction games that require pushing and pulling apart • Using eye droppers to pick up coloured water • Using tooth picks to make designs in playdough • Rolling small balls from tissue paper and gluing them to make designs |

ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP MOTOR SKILLS CONTINUED...

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| <p>Bilateral Integration Skills</p> <p><i>Bilateral Integration refers to the ability to use two sides of the body together in cooperation. For fine motor skills, one hand provides stability while the other hand is engaged in a task requiring manipulation and precision. It allows a child to use their hands together purposefully to successfully complete activities such as cutting and pasting, beading, lacing, eating with a knife and fork and also handwriting. This is essential for the development of hand dominance.</i></p> | <p><i>These activities will develop the coordination of two hands in one task:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing with Playdough (rolling pin, using cookie cutters, making sausage rolls) • Paper tearing and pasting activities • Beading games (pasta beading, beading with cut up straws) • Construction games (lego, screwing nuts and bolts) • Helping with cooking activities (holding a bowl with one hand and stirring with the other, wrapping sandwiches, peeling vegetables) • Cutting activities • Wind up toys |
| <p>Visual Motor Skills</p> <p><i>Visual motor skills can also be termed hand-eye coordination. Visual motor skills allow your child to visually track, copy, trace and weave a pencil to draw and create letters and shapes. Strong visual motor skills are essential in reading and writing.</i></p> | <p><i>These activities will help develop pre-writing shapes using a multisensory approach:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dot to dots, mazes and tracing activities • Colouring in and painting • Trace around stencils • Creating art projects • Copying and drawing geometric shapes (vertical and horizontal lines, circles squares, crosses, diagonal lines, X's, triangles) in different ways e.g. in shaving cream, chalk on the pavement, painting • Catching, rolling, hitting, kicking and throwing balls and bean bags at targets • Hit or bat a balloon • Catching bubbles • Tenpin bowling with old milk containers |
| <p>Sensory Awareness</p> <p><i>In order for your child to make sense of what they are feeling in their hands (in terms of the weight, shape, texture and size of an object) they need to have adequate sensory awareness. This will provide them with feedback to help plan and sequence the next step in their play.</i></p> | <p><i>These activities will develop awareness of the weight, shape and size of objects:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messy and wet play with shaving cream, finger painting or wet sand • Finding objects in tubs of sand, rice, pasta • Touch and feel bags (where the child closes their eyes, picks an object from the bag and then guessing what it is with only touch) |

** These are examples only and do not replace professional advice, if you have concerns about your child's motor skill development, it is important to consult an occupational therapist.