

Fine Motor Activities

Throughout the Reception year, the children take part in a range of activities designed to improve their fine motor skills and to develop their hand and finger muscles for writing. It is important that your child continues to develop their fine motor skills whilst learning from home. Children need to have developed the strength in their hands and fingers before they are able to write. Please see below for activity ideas, which will help build your child's hand, fingers and thumb muscles, and develop their dexterity and strength.

Threading pasta

Encourage your child to pick up the pasta between their thumb and index finger as they thread the pasta onto a piece of string.

Posting peas through a narrow neck bottle

Ask your child to hold an empty bottle firmly on a table with their non-writing hand. They can then pick up the peas one at a time and post them through the top of the bottle. Your child should pick up the peas between their thumb and index finger. Add extra challenge by asking them to use their thumb and middle finger only and then (and this is hard for adults too!) thumb and ring finger and then thumb and little finger (this is really hard for adults too!).

Squeezing sponges

Fill a small tub with water then ask your child to empty the tub with the sponge by soaking it and squeezing the sponge with either or both hands. You can add extra challenge by varying the volume of water in the tub and/or by setting this as a time challenge.



Making paper footballs for table football

Ask your child to place their 'writing' hand flat and stretched out on a piece of paper and the other hand behind their back. Challenge your child to scrunch the paper into a ball by turning it in their hand to make it round. Both hands can then be used to make a tight ball. The activity can be varied in difficulty by the thickness of the paper. Thin paper e.g. tissue paper will be easier and thicker paper will increase the difficulty.

Flicking the paper footballs

Your child lines up the balls of paper (made in the previous activity) on the table and flicks the balls with each finger in turn to shoot at a target (this can be an ice-cream tub, washing up bowl, target on the wall). Your child keeps their wrist flat on the table as they flick. Progression is alternating hands, then both hands at once and flicking with each finger in quick succession.

Clipping clothes pegs around a box

How many pegs can your child clip onto the edge of a box in one minute?



Picking up pebbles

Ask your child to pick up as many pebbles in one hand as they can and then try to let go of them, one at a time, dropping each one into a container.

Posting coins through a slot in a box lid or moneybox

Ask your child to post coins one at a time through a slot making sure they use their thumb and one finger.

Make roll and pinch pots

Make coil pots by rolling playdough or clay into strips. Make pinch pots by making a ball of dough, pushing the thumbs into the centre and pinching round in a circle to form a pot.

Dough Gym

Make the playdough recipe below or use playdough that you have at home already to take part in some dough gym recipes. If you type 'Dough Gym' or 'Dough Disco' into YouTube a variety of dough gym exercises will come up - Shonette's Dough Disco activities are our favourites:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3K-CQrjIOuY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ofMavss0dw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoWqUNUcAzo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ovgPLvue164>

Playdough Recipe:

You need:

- 2 cups plain flour
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup salt
- 2 tablespoons cream of tartar
- 1 to 1.5 cups boiling water (adding in increments until it feels just right)
- Few drops food colouring (optional)
- Few drops glycerine

Method:

- Mix the flour, salt, cream of tartar and oil in a large mixing bowl
- Add food colouring TO the boiling water then into the dry ingredients
- Stir continuously until it becomes a sticky, combined dough
- Add the glycerine (optional)
- Allow it to cool down then take it out of the bowl and knead it for a couple of minutes until all of the stickiness has gone.
- If it remains a little sticky then add a little more flour until just right.