


Help Your Child Build Fine Motor Skills

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Many of your child's daily activities—like getting dressed, eating, and writing—require control of small muscles in the hands. We call these skills fine motor skills. Your child can do more things for himself when he has opportunities to practice these skills. There are lots of activities that can increase muscle strength and coordination, preparing children for more advanced skills, from writing with a pencil, using a computer mouse, or playing a musical instrument. Help your child build fine motor skills at home by providing opportunities to...

- Set the table
- Hold knives, forks, and spoons to eat
- Pour juice into a cup
- Wipe the table with a sponge
- Help with meals—stir, shake, chop, cut, and mix
- Get dressed—button, zip, snap, buckle, and fasten
- Use Velcro tabs
- Open and close containers with lids
- Cut with child-safe scissors
- Finger paint
- Use a paintbrush
- Play with playdough and clay—roll, smoosh, pat, pound, and use tools like popsicle sticks or stamps
- Draw, scribble, or write with crayons, pencils, and markers
- Put together puzzles
- Place pegs in a board

- Build with small blocks
- Play board games
- Play with puppets

Source: Adapted from "Getting a Grip on Things: Building Fine Motor Skills," Message in a Backpack, 2010, *Teaching Young Children* 3 (5): 26–28.

Audience: *Family*

Age: *Infant/Toddler, Kindergarten*

Topics: *Child Development, Physical, Fine Motor, Gross Motor*

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