



Infant Toddler Fine Motor Activities

Tape Rescue (9 months - 3 years old)

Gather small animals or blocks and use masking or painter's tape to attach to a cookie sheet. Encourage toddler to find edge of tape to free the animal from the tape. Through this the child is learning problem solving strategies, hand eye coordination and fine motor skills.

Crayon Push (6 months - 3 years old)

Take an empty oats container (large cottage cheese or yogurt would work as well) and cut holes that are large enough to push a crayon through. After child pushes the crayons through encourage them to open the container to dump out the crayons and start again. This can also be done with straws; craft sticks or pipe cleaners. To encourage color recognition color around each hole and match colors.

Card Slot Drop (6 months - 3 years old)

Take an empty oats container (large cottage cheese or yogurt would work as well) and cut a slot wide enough for cards to be dropped through (can reinforce the area with masking or painter's tape). After child drops the cards through encourage them to open the container and dump out cards to start again.

Pom-Pom Grasp (9 months - 3 years old)

Take two ice cube trays, and place one pom-pom (or other small objects) in each space of the ice cube tray. Encourage child to transfer pom-poms to the other ice cube tray. For an older toddler use small tongs or tweezers to transfer to each ice cube tray. To encourage color recognition place small pieces of colored paper and have child match the pom-pom the color.

Pom-Pom Sort (2 - 3 years old)

Place pom-poms (or other small colored objects) in a large bowl or container. Place colored bowls or bowls with colored pieces of paper and transfer the pom-pom to the appropriate colored bowl. To further develop fine motor skills, use tweezers or tongs to transfer the pom-poms. To extend this activity you can count how many pom-poms you have of each color, sort pom-poms by size (big, medium, small)

Shaving Cream Blocks (2 - 3 years old)

Place small building blocks and small amount of shaving cream into a medium storage container. Encourage children to dip blocks into shaving cream as they build on top of other blocks; the shaving cream acts as mortar holding the blocks together. To extend this activity child can be given a small bowl of warm water and washcloth to clean the shaving cream off of the blocks.

Pom-Pom Drop (9 months - 3 years old)

Take a variety of empty paper towel rolls and tape to a large piece of cardboard using masking, painter's or electrical tape. Place Pom-Poms or Cotton Balls in a large bowl to put in the tubes. Place Tupperware containers at the bottom to catch the pom-poms. To further develop fine motor skills, use tongs or tweezers to transfer the pom-pom or cotton ball the tube. To extend this activity you can have child predict which container will have the most pom-pom or cotton balls, and count how many are in each container.

Simple Toy Push (9 months-2 years old)



Take an empty plastic wipe container and some small toys or pom-poms/cotton balls that will fit through the opening. Show your child how to push the toy through the opening and then open the container to get it out. In this activity your child is using their hand-eye coordination, as well as, fine motor skills. Your child is learning about cause and effect and spatial awareness. To extend this activity you can count with your child how many toys or pom-poms/cotton balls fit in the container.

Tugging Box (1 ½ - 3 years old)

To create a Tugging Box, you need an old box, pencil, and an assortment of material that can be threaded the holes (ribbon of various textures, pipe cleaners, shoe laces, yarn, etc. in various lengths) Take an old box, and flatten it. Next poke holes randomly on the box with a pencil. Using a pipe cleaner thread your material through two different holes, making sure to tie a knot on the outside of the box so it is not pulled all the way through. Once you are done stringing your materials tape the box shut and give to your toddler to explore.

Tugging Lid (4 months - 1 year old)

Same idea as the Tugging Box, but smaller and easier to hold for older infants. Take an old lid from a plastic container and ribbons of various textures and lengths. Poke holes in the lid with scissors (carefully trimming off any sharp pieces) and thread the ribbons through one or two holes, making sure to tie knots on the outside of the lid. For young infant's place in front of them during tummy time to give them something to reach for. Older infants can hold the lid and explore the ribbons.

Playdough (15 months - 3 years old)

Exploring playdough helps your child build the muscles in their hands and wrists. Squishing, rolling balls or snakes, twisting or pushing/pulling all build different muscles that are needed for control and dexterity of everyday items such as zippers, pens/pencils, and scissors. Using store bought or homemade playdough the play ideas for your child are endless. You can give cookie cutters, rolling pins, strainers, forks, animals, blocks, large Legos, art materials (such as buttons, pipe cleaners, straws, glitter, Q-tips), pinecones, flowers just to name a few. Allow your child to explore the playdough however they choose. For toddlers (24 months and up) using scissors to cut playdough is a great introduction to scissors and easily cutting something thicker than paper.

Flourless Playdough Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 c. Baking Soda
- 1/2 c. Cornstarch
- 3/4 c. Water
- Food Dye, optional

Directions:

1. Add dry ingredients, water, and food dye/essential oils to a microwave safe bowl.
2. Stir everything together until it is fully blended.
3. Pop your bowl into the microwave for 2 minutes.
4. Once it is done in the microwave pull it out immediately and stir very carefully. The playdough will look absolutely crazy at this stage. Let your children check it out – it will fascinate them!
5. Once all of the playdough is blended together let it sit aside for a minute or so and then give it another stir. If the playdough is still sticking to your spoon at this point pop it back into the microwave for 30 seconds.



6. After you have a playdough that doesn't stick to a spoon lightly cover your bowl and leave it out on your counter until it cools down. If you do not cover the playdough it will begin to dry out. If you seal the cover too tight it will create a soggy sticky playdough. Once cooled down play!

Quick Playdough Recipe Notes: This playdough will dry out quickly if it is not being played with. Make sure to keep it in a covered container when it is not

Playdough with Flour Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of flour
- 1/4 cup of salt
- 3/4 cup of water
- 3 tablespoons of lemon juice/Vinegar
- 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil
- Food coloring or Kool-Aid

Making the Play Dough:

1. Add the water, oil and lemon juice/vinegar to a medium non-stick pot and heat on medium heat on the stove (maybe even slightly lower heat depending on your stove).
2. Add food coloring, liquid scents or Kool-Aid to the water mixture.
3. In a mixing bowl, combine the flour, salt and any dry seasonings/spices you are using.
4. After the water is hot, but not boiling, slowly add the dry ingredients to the pot and while mixing to combine. I use a wooden or plastic cooking spoon.
5. Continuously stir until the ingredients combine, dry out and begin to form a ball. If there are parts that seem a bit sticky still, just flatten the dough out and put the sticky side down on the bottom of the pot very briefly. Flip back and forth frequently until it doesn't seem sticky anymore. However, don't cook it too long. It is better to be a bit undercooked as it will firm up as it cools down.
6. Place on a sheet of wax paper until it cools down a bit. Then knead the dough for a minute or two to bring it all together.