

Fine Motor and Gross Motor Activities for Classroom and Home Use

Compiled by Moorhead, MN Public School Occupational Therapists and Physical Therapist: Jackie Dulka, MOTR/L, Nicole Groves, MA, OTR/L, Wendy Paulson, MS, OTR/L, and Kristin Peters, PT.

Fine Motor

- Fine motor skill (or dexterity) is the coordination of small muscles, in movements—usually involving the synchronization of hands and fingers—with the eyes. The complex levels of manual dexterity that humans exhibit can be attributed to and demonstrated in tasks controlled by the nervous system. Fine motor skills aid in the growth of intelligence and develop continuously throughout the stages of human development. (Wikipedia)

School-age

By the age of five, most children have clearly advanced beyond the fine motor skill development of the preschool age. They can draw recognizably human figures with facial features and legs connected to a distinct trunk. Besides drawing, five-year-olds can also cut, paste, and trace shapes. They can fasten visible buttons (as opposed to those at the back of clothing), and many can tie bows, including shoelace bows. Their right- or left-handedness is well established, and they use the preferred hand for writing and drawing.

School-age children six to 12 years old should have mastered hand and eye coordination. Early school-age children should be able to use eating utensils and other tools, be able to help with household chores, such as sweeping, mopping, and dusting; care for pets; draw, paint, and engage in making crafts; and begin developing writing skills. Children will continue to fine-tune their fine motor skills through adolescence with such activities as sports, crafts, hobbies, learning musical instruments, computer use, and even video games.

Helping a child succeed in fine motor tasks requires planning, time, and a variety of play materials. Fine motor development can be encouraged by activities that youngsters enjoy, including crafts, puzzles, and playing with building blocks. Helping parents with everyday domestic activities, such as baking, can be fun for the child in addition to helping the child develop fine motor skills. For example, stirring batter provides a good workout for the hand and arm muscles, and cutting and spooning out cookie dough requires hand-eye coordination. Even a

computer keyboard and mouse can provide practice in finger, hand, and hand-eye coordination. Because the development of fine motor skills plays a crucial role in school readiness and cognitive development, it is considered an important part of the preschool curriculum. (Encyclopedia of Children's Health)

Developmental Milestones 2 – 6 years					
Age (yr)	Gross Motor	Fine Motor Adaptive	Personal-Social	Language	Cognitive
2	Kicks a ball Walks up & down stairs	Stacks 6 blocks Copies to draw a line	Feeds doll Washes & dries hands Brushes teeth Puts on clothes	Puts 2 words together Points to pictures Knows body parts	Understands concept of today
3	Climbs steps with alternating feet Broad jump	Stacks 8 blocks Wiggles thumb Copies O	Uses spoon well- only little spilling Puts on T-shirt	Speech 75% understandable Says 3 words sentences	Understands concept of tomorrow & yesterday
4	Hops on one foot	Copies + Draws person with 3 parts	Brushes teeth & dresses without help	Names colors Understands adjectives	—
5	Skips Heel to toe walks	Copies □	—	Counts Understands opposites	—
6	Can balance on each foot for 6 seconds	Copies Δ Draws person with 6 parts	—	Define words	Understands right & left

Click on the links below for fine motor activities to help with the following skills:

[Fine Motor Strength](#) activities used to strengthen the small muscles of the hands involve materials and tools that provide resistance.

[Pincer Grasp](#) the coordination of the index finger and thumb to hold an item.

[In-Hand Manipulation](#) skills refer to the ability to move and position objects within one hand without the assistance of the other hand.

[Finger Isolation](#) Finger Isolation is the ability to move each finger one at a time. Infants move all fingers together in unison. As they develop, children learn to move the fingers individually.

[Bilateral Coordination](#) is the ability to use both sides of the body at the same time in a controlled and organized manner.

[Crossing Midline](#) refers to the ability to reach across the middle of the body with the arms and legs crossing over to the opposite side. Examples include being able to draw a

horizontal line across a page without having to switch hands in the middle or sitting cross-legged on the floor.

[Eye Hand Coordination](#) Also referred to as [Visual-Motor Integration](#), this is the ability to control hand movement guided by vision. A child who is challenged in this area has difficulty coordinating body movements in response to what he/she is seeing.

[Upper Body Strength and Stability](#) Postural control refers to the ability to maintain an upright trunk position. This is an important skill needed for developing fine motor skills.

[Pre-Writing Skills](#) Certain fundamental skills need to be developed before a child even picks up a pencil.

[Handwriting](#)

[Scissor Skills](#) The Importance of Scissor Skills. The opening and closing motion of cutting with scissors helps children develop the small muscles in their hands otherwise known as fine motor skills. These muscles are crucial for holding a pencil or crayons and gripping and manipulating objects.

[Self Help Skills](#) Self-help skills are a subset of a larger repertoire of daily living skills, sometimes called activities of daily living (ADLs). Self-help skills refer to the skills a child needs to look after themselves independently. This can include dressing, grooming, eating, toileting, and bathing.

[Gross Motor](#)

- Gross motor skills are the abilities required in order to control the large muscles of the body for walking, running, sitting, jumping, crawling, and other activities. In the schools, we have Physical Therapists and Adaptive Physical Education teachers that work with students and their gross motor skills if they are unable to access their school environment functionally and have an academic need. School-aged children between 5-7 years old should be able to balance on one foot for a few seconds, broad jump 10-24 inches, catch a large/small ball, can run, skip, jump, climb and perform hopscotch. Children can ride a tricycle, 2-wheeled bike and run up/down the stairs.

[Core Strengthening](#): Core stability refers to a person's ability to stabilize their core. Stability, in this context, should be considered as an ability to control the position and movement of the core. Thus, if a person has greater core stability, they have a greater level of control over the position and movement of this area of their body.

[Ergonomics for Students and Staff](#): Ergonomics is the science and practice of designing jobs, tools, equipment, and environments to match the capabilities and limitations of the human body

[Backpack Safety](#)-Discusses how much weight is a safe weight in a students backpack.

[Lifting Objects Safely](#)-Discusses how to lift objects properly.

Other Ways for Successful Participation at School

[Successful Participation at School: Strategies for all Students](#)

[Tips for Educators: Successful Participation at School: Strategies for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)

[After Recess Calming Routine](#)