

Dear Families,



Fine motor skills are the small, controlled movements children make with their hands and fingers. Children use these skills throughout the school day for writing, cutting, coloring, building, opening containers, turning pages, fastening clothing, and manipulating classroom materials.

Fine motor development happens gradually. Before children can efficiently control a pencil or scissors, they need opportunities to build strength, coordination, and control throughout the hand. Children gradually become better at using the two sides of the hand together, coordinating what their eyes see with what their hands do, and making increasingly precise movements with their fingers.

This is why some of the best fine motor practice does not look like handwriting practice at all! Activities that involve squeezing, pinching, pulling, twisting, picking up, and manipulating objects help prepare children's hands for more precise tasks. You can build fine motor skills at home through simple play and everyday activities:

- **Squeeze:** Play dough, sponges, spray bottles, squirt toys, or stress balls
- **Pinch:** Clothespins, chip clips, stickers, or small pieces of play dough
- **Pick up:** Use tongs or tweezers to move pom-poms, cereal, or cotton balls
- **Twist:** Open and close containers, turn knobs, or twist lids
- **Thread:** String beads, lace cards, or slide cereal onto a piece of string
- **Cut:** Snip paper, play dough, straws, or strips of paper with scissors
- **Build:** Use small blocks, puzzles, interlocking toys, or other manipulatives
- **Help:** Button clothing, zip jackets, peel fruit, stir ingredients, open packages, or help with simple food preparation

Drawing, coloring, painting, and writing are valuable too, but children do not need long pencil-and-paper sessions to strengthen their hands. A few minutes spent building, squeezing, pinching, cutting, and creating throughout the day can provide meaningful practice. Fine motor development looks different from child to child. As strength and coordination grow, movements generally become more controlled and efficient. Rather than focusing on perfection, give your child plenty of opportunities to use their hands, try challenging tasks, and become increasingly independent.

Thank you for helping your child build the strong, coordinated hands they use for learning, creating, writing, and everyday life!



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