

# Helping your child develop their fine motor skills.



**Fine motor skills** are small muscle movements (with fingers) that are usually co-ordinated with the eyes. The development of fine motor skills is important because they are used for a number of important functions such as writing and learning to tie a shoe lace.

**By the time a child starts school many children will be able to:**

- Button and unbutton a cardigan or coat
- Hold a pencil correctly with a tripod grip
- Draw a square shape with an example to follow
- Cut out a circle and a square following the line drawn
- Touch each finger to thumb within 8 seconds
- Connect dots on paper eg complete a dot-do-dot picture
- Fold a sheet of paper in half, following a line
- Colour between parallel lines—colouring most of the space and only crossing lines a couple of times
- Use a knife and fork to eat a hot meal

**Activities you could try at home to help your child develop their fine motor skills include:**

- Threading beads or uncooked pasta tubes onto string or pipe cleaners
- Threading popcorn or cereals with a hole in them
- Tearing newspaper or wrapping paper, trying to make strips
- Using sellotape or masking tape to wrap a present
- Cutting with safety scissors eg fold paper in half, follow a line, cut out a shape
- Using chopsticks or tweezers to pick up pebbles, raisins, dried beans etc
- Painting with fingers, cotton buds, brushes.
- Pouring; spooning; filling; emptying containers with eg powder, sand, dried foods, water
- Twisting and turning caps, lids, bottles
- Punching holes with a hole punch
- Practising zips, buttons, laces on clothes, dolls etc.
- Building with small bricks, lego etc
- Junk modelling with recycling materials and glue and tape
- Making a paper chain decoration
- Rolling out pastry or dough with a rolling pin; using cutters
- Using stickers to make pictures
- Using a knife and fork to cut playdough

