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Activities That Encourage Fine Motor Development

By Nicole Munoz

Fine motor skills involve the movement and dexterity of hands and fingers. These skills are the ones that allow your infant to grasp her toys and are used by your toddler when he manipulates and turns his toys between his hands. The primary use of fine motor skills in everyday life is for writing. Children must have already developed some strength in their fingers to properly hold a pencil and learn to write so it is important to offer a variety of activities that promote fine motor development.

The best fine motor activities are those that encourage your child to manipulate a toy with his hands and fingers and, like with all educational activities, should be something your child finds enjoyable. Modeling clay and play dough promote creativity and offer all kinds of opportunities to develop fine motor skills. Encourage your child to roll various sized balls out of the clay and let him use toothpicks or short, blunt dowels to etch designs and details into his play dough creations.

Building with blocks, like a 100 piece wooden block set, encourages young children to build their fine motor skills as well. Activities like puzzles, lacing cards, or bead stringing also allow children to use their small muscles to manipulate an object.

Art activities are great ways to develop fine motor skills. Have your child tear small pieces of tissue paper, then crumple the paper into a small ball and glue it onto a picture. Paper-mache art builds fine motor skills too. Allow your child to tear newspaper into small strips, then dip into a flour based glue solution and smooth onto a balloon. Medicine dropper paintings are another terrific art activity to enhance small muscle development.

Play board games with your child that include dice and encourage her to roll the dice to strengthen her hand dexterity. Games that involve turning over cards, like Memory, or games with small pieces to move, like Checkers, are other fun ways to enhance fine motor development. You should also provide your child with finger puppets and help her to use them during your song time or story time.

Cutting with scissors is one of the best activities for a child to prepare her finger muscles for writing. Supply your child with a sturdy pair of safety scissors and give her a variety of different materials to cut. Plastic straws or cardstock are great for building strength, while already shredded paper scraps can build dexterity as well as hand and eye coordination. Have your child cut in a number of different ways, including short, quick cuts to create a fringed line on construction paper and steady, long cuts to

follow along a drawn line.

After some fine motor skills have been mastered, usually around preschool age, you should provide your child with a number of prewriting activities. Drawing with chalk and painting are excellent fine motor development activities. Draw large letters on a piece of paper and let your child trace the lines with a marker. Dot to Dot games are also great for developing finger dexterity and hand and eye coordination.

For more tips and information about Activities That Encourage Fine Motor Development, check out <http://www.thekidstoystore.com>.

Preschool Activities

By Leilani Mairet

Preschool activities are for children between the ages of two and five years of age, pre-kindergarten. Preschoolers should have a variety of different activities to encourage proper mental and physical development. Emphasis needs to be placed in the focus areas of both fine and gross motor development, dramatic play, pre-reading skills, pre-writing skills, critical thinking skills, and social skills, as well as others.

Fine motor skills should be incorporated into preschool activities. Fine motor skills are working with the small muscle groups and are the most forgotten. This will help define your child's writing skills, cutting skills, etc. in the future. Fine motor skills activities can include, sand and water play, cutting activities, placing objects into small containers and areas, hand puppet plays with songs and many others.

Gross motor skills should be incorporated into preschool activities. Gross motor skills are working with the large motor areas and are most often worked on. These activities can be achieved by playing on the playground, throwing and kicking a ball, jumping, skipping, hopping, and any activity that requires the use of your large muscle groups.

Dramatic play incorporated into your child's preschool activities will help nurture your child's development. Dramatic play encourages your child to be creative, think, and reenact situations and scenarios on their own intelligence level. Children should be given props and toys to help them reenact different events for their learning skills.

Pre-reading and pre-writing skills should be incorporated into your child's preschool activities. Some examples of these skills include reading to your child, reciting the ABC's, cutting with scissors, tracing lines with a pencil or crayon, and drawing and creating projects without lines. These pre-reading, pre-writing skills will help your preschooler develop the proper background for future life school skills.

Critical thinking skills should be incorporated into your child's curriculum. Critical thinking skills will help your child become a problem solver in the future. This will help in the areas of both math and science as well as other areas. Let your preschooler figure out different options and strategies to get to the same result. Let them think about the consequences and actions of their decisions.

Social skills are one of the most overlooked strategies in the areas of preschool activities. Social skills include playing with other children, however, the proper way to interact with children and other people should actually be taught. Appropriate behaviors need to be modeled and taught, how to share, how to take turns, how to say please and thank you, how to interact in a group, how to wait for their turn, how to be a gracious loser and a good winner, as well as many others.

In summation, preschool activities are a very important part of your child's growth and educational process. Proper planning and instruction as well as modeling will prepare your child for their educational accomplishments to come. Please choose preschool activities appropriately.

For more information about preschool activities please visit <http://preschool-activities.blogspot.com>

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