

## FINE MOTOR and HAND STRENGTHENING ACTIVITIES

### Play dough/Clay/Putty/Modeling foam/Bread dough:

- Roll, Pinch, Pull and cut with scissors
- use each finger to pinch (thumb & index, thumb & middle, etc.)
- hide small objects (beads, coins, beans) inside and try pulling them out
- use small tools: rolling pin and cookie cutters

String small objects (beads of wood, plastic or foam, cut straws into ½-1" size) use various size strings to increase the level of difficulty (shoe lace, plastic lace, thread, etc.) or pipe cleaner

### Building Blocks/Interlocking Construction Toys:

- Stack blocks
- Small push blocks (Lego's), Mega Blocks are large size blocks and best for preschool age children
- Pop Beads: Large size for preschool, small (play jewelry type) for older children

Clothes pins of various sizes (tiny, small and large) place them on various size strings/rope/container rims to increase the level of difficulty USE THE PADS OF THE THUMB AND INDEX FINGER TO OPEN THE CLOTHESPIN

- Utility clips place on rope or small dowel stick
- Nuts and Bolts, PVC pipe connectors (twist on/off)
- Magnets of various sizes or extended pole magnet: Push/pull and pick up objects with them

(above items can be purchase at Hardware Store/Home Depot/Lowe's)

### Water Activities:

- Spray bottles-help water plants, spray windows, spray objects to knock them off sink counter or outside table, spray in the tub
- Sponges/Pool Toys
- Squeezing to wring out the water is great for strengthening hands and forearms. Help wash the car, or bike
- squeeze the water out of the sponge to fill a container (race)
- Cut sponge into small 1" size pieces and squeeze with thumb and index fingers

### Hole Punchers:

- Punch holes along a strip of paper or along the edge of a sheet of paper or paper plate (the thicker the paper the more difficult it will be to punch holes)
- Use hole clippings to make confetti or to create a picture
- you can find various hole puncher shapes at the craft store

### Bubble Wrap

- Pop the bubbles (large or small size) by pinching with thumb and index finger

### Squeeze toys and materials:

- Foam ball –squeeze the ball 10 times each hand
- Make a small slit in a container with lid (butter or yogurt container's) push coins or bingo chips into slit using the thumb and index fingers
- Craft activities that require using bottles to squeeze: glue, glitter glue, fabric paint, etc.

### **Pinch Strengthening:**

Kitchen tongs, tweezers' or kids chop sticks, strawberry hullers—use these tools to pick up small objects such as erasers, blocks, beans etc. and place into container

- sorting colored pompoms
- beans, erasers, small blocks or beads, etc.
- sort by colors/shapes/size
- Sticker Book--peel off stickers and place into a book or chart
- Velcro Strips—pull apart, stick on blocks and card board to pull off, etc.

### **Scissor Skills:**

(Use a thumb up position when cutting and manipulating paper. Snip paper, file folders, play dough

- Practice cutting out small shapes/pictures
- (If right hand, cut to the right side and if left handed, cut to the left side)

### **Pencil/Crayon Skills**

- Use small pencils, small crayon pieces using thumb, index, middle fingers
- Practice forming vertical, horizontal, circular lines
- Practice coloring skills using small pictures or shapes
- Practice tracing name, letters and shapes (younger children)
- Practice letter formation of upper and lower case letters
- Practice identifying colors, letters, numbers, shapes

### **Activities of Daily Living Skills:**

Encourage your child to dress self

- Practice zippers, buttons, snaps, fastens of various sizes starting with large to small
- Practice shoe tying (YouTube has several videos—find the best technique for your child)
- Practice using utensils (fork, spoon etc.)
- Practice washing/drying face and hands/using a napkin
- Practice opening/closing containers (twist tops/pull-push tops, milk containers)
- Practice using a tape dispenser, stapler, and paper clips

**FOR SAFETY-----**

**ALWAYS SUPERVISE (SMALL) CHILDREN WHILE USING SMALL OBJECTS AND DURING ACTIVITIES**

## **SENSORY ACTIVITIES**

**\*\*Sensory Bins are a great way to calm a child and to increase tolerance to various textures**

Use a shoe box size container's with lid. Create bins with different textures such as rice, beans, sand and water. Add small objects "treasures", small toys that are hidden. Have child find the hidden treasures, and then hide them for the next time. Add objects/small containers for scooping and pouring. Fine motor bin of small toys/objects/activities

Add dish soap to the water bin and have your child blow bubbles with a straw/with a straw blow a pom-pom or cotton ball across the table (race). Blowing is great for oral motor strengthening.

**\*\*Wash hands after use of sand bin so not to get sand in the eyes\*\***

Shave cream on the table, a cookie sheet or tray is a great way to practice letter formation/add sand for texture

Crafts—use fingers when gluing/pasting/finger painting

Heavy Work for Calming:

- Shovel a pile of dirt from one location to the other
- Transport dirt in an age appropriate wheel barrow
- Push/Pull Heavy objects such as a large cushion
- Exercise: Swimming, camp activities, ride a bike, jump rope--ENCOURAGE outside play

**\*Use your imagination and be creative**

**\*You can find objects in your kitchen, dollar store, home improvement stores, Wal-Mart, Office supply stores, etc...**

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