



Fun Fine Motor Activities

The following activities must be supervised carefully. The Ideas generally progress from easiest to more difficult. Have fun!

General Activities:

- spray bottles and squirt guns to develop strength
- tongs for pre-scissors skills
- squeeze toys for water and air play
- eye droppers
- spinning tops
- wind up toys
- two-handed building toys (Duplo, Lego, Tinker Toys, beads, sewing cards)
- baking, stirring, rolling, pounding and pouring
- peg boards
- hammer and nails
- bubble paper popping
- playing cards (dealing & counting)
- pennies in a piggy bank
- puzzles, blocks
- dress up dolls and action figures
- open and close containers for snack time
- bingo daubers, finger pain, paint with water, chalkboard
- computers
- clothes peg games
- elastic bands

Creative (visual-motor)

Powder Power: Lightly sprinkle flour, icing sugar, cocoa or jelly or Kool-Aid powder on a cookie sheet or counter top. Show the child how to draw "roads" or train tracks.

Pudding Painting: Have the child help you make an instant pudding mix or buy the pudding pre-made. Use paper plates to finger paint on, or if you use paper it takes a while to dry before you can display the picture. If you can stand it, have the child lick the fingers for a great oral-motor experience! (Strawberry Cow or Brown Cow syrup dries shiny)

Fruit Juice Painting Cubes: Freeze juice with strong colors (grape, orange, cranberry) into ice cubes. Take cubes out to draw with on white paper and pop the rest into cold drinks!

Magic Milk Paint: Open a can of sweetened condensed milk and place in muffin tins. Add a few drops of food color and paint with Q-tips. It dries very shiny.

Two Handed Tasks (bilateral coordination, finger dexterity)

Cereal Necklaces: Start threading with O shaped cereal onto a pipe cleaner. "Thread one, eat one" works a motivation! Progress to stringing on a licorice string, then to spaghetti string or gimp (craft stores).

Opening Skills: Collect small see through plastic jars and containers. Carry small cereal or raisin treats with you but always ask the child to OPEN the jar to get inside. Pop off lids are easiest, turning comes later and is usually done with the dominant hand; other hand is the "helper" or holding hand. Try hand-over-hand help if needed to start and gradually remove your help.

Learning to "Spread": Use plastic picnic cutlery, wooden tongue depressors or popsicle sticks as "knives". Short handled kid's knives are also good. Large rice crackers or flour tortillas do not break as easily as crackers or bread.

Marshmallow Madness: Gather toothpicks and different size marshmallows. Create prickly creatures by poking toothpicks into the marshmallows. You can make theme creatures, snowmen, or vehicles.

Edible Dough for Fine Motor Fun

Many children are still using their mouths as their "sensory doorway" when we want to begin play dough activities. These recipes offer alternatives that are edible! Provide clean hands and a few tools (theme units are easy to do with cookie cutters). Have fun and happy eating!

Mashed Potato Candy Dough

1 box powdered sugar 1 pkg. Coconut (optional)
2 T mashed potatoes Few drops of milk, cream or half and half
2 T melted margarine

Combine ingredients with hand; add more powdered sugar to desired consistency.

Peanut Butter Play Dough

1 C peanut butter 1 C corn syrup
3 T brown sugar 1 ½ C powdered sugar
1 T raw oatmeal 1 ½ C powdered milk

Mix with hands, adding more sugar or dry milk until you can knead it. Add oatmeal or Rice Krispies for texture. You can make this dough without the corn syrup; you just have to adjust the dry ingredients "by feel".

Frosting Dough

1 can bought frosting 1 ½ C powdered sugar
1 C peanut butter (optional)

Knead with hands. VERY STICKY!

Cinnamon Applesauce Dough

2 C cinnamon 1 C applesauce

Add enough flour to get desired consistency. Great for fall themes!

Homemade Silly Putty

Many children love to use silly putty or play dough when learning to pound, roll, squeeze or cut. Play dough may crumble and is often too "babyish" for older children. This putty can be made very stiff, which makes it ideal for holding in the other hand to cut. Although it may be harder to snip through the scissors, the "stiffness" provides increased tactile and proprioceptive feedback. This putty works great during imaginative play. It can be used to stick things together on a temporary basis. The resistance of the putty helps develop finger strength. This recipe is a low cost alternative to silly putty but not recommended for children who still put fingers or clay in their mouths! It is fun to make in a group but practice first to get the feel of it.

Homemade Silly Putty Recipe

Mix together ½ cup water, ½ cup white glue and food coloring (blue seems the least edible color, to visually discourage kids from putting it in their mouths). Mix another ½ cup water and 1 tsp. Borax in a measuring cup. Combine, knead until the glue forms a puttylike consistency, adding cornstarch gradually and keep kneading until it is a solid mass. Store in an airtight container.

A great thing about this homemade putty is that you can keep adding cornstarch to make it nice and firm with soft texture. You can easily squeeze it and it takes more effort to pull it and break it than most soft putties. Also, the more corn starch the less sticky. This recipe makes enough for 8-10 children to put in their "fidget" bag.

Silly Putty Activities

- Keep a large plastic tub of putty and dump it on the table with cookie cutters, scissors, rolling pins, etc. Theme based cookie cutters are easy to find.
- Hide small toys or coins in it for finger strength.
- For fingertip skills, use thumb and pincer fingers of ONE HAND ONLY to roll baby dinosaur eggs or alien eggs (whatever small round shape eggs fit the play themes). Puppets or clickers held by the other hand "eat" the eggs.
- Make "creatures" with toothpicks.

Reference: *Building Bridges through Sensory Integration*