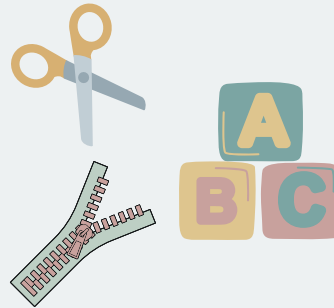


# Fine Motor Development

## What are fine motor skills?

- The physical skills that include the **small muscles** in our hands and fingers that help children perform the more **precise movements** related to **play, self care,** and **academic activities**.
- Examples of fine motor skills:
  - Reaching and grasping
  - Fine motor control
  - Object manipulation
  - Bilateral coordination
  - Utensil use
- Fine motor skills help children:
  - Self-feed and progress towards utensil use
  - Manipulate buttons on clothes
  - Grasp a toothbrush and control that movement
  - Complete academic tasks (coloring, scissor use, handwriting)



## Why are fine motor skills important?

- Difficulty or delays in fine motor skills can inhibit the ability to participate in all the activities that give meaning.
- Without fine motor skills, children are at risk for low self esteem and decreased independence in self-care and academic tasks.
- Decreased fine motor skills limit play and development opportunities.
- Fine motor skills equip children with the precision, coordination, control, strength, and confidence to tackle daily demands.



# Fine Motor Developmental Milestones

It is so important to note that every child and their development is **unique!** It is unlikely that your child will reach these milestones at the exact time as another child. Milestones should be used as a *guide* and not a *strict timeline*.

Below is a list of fine motor developmental milestones:

1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Imitate a scribble</li><li>• Uses thumb and pointer finger to pick up objects</li><li>• Bangs two objects together</li><li>• Puts objects into container and takes them out</li><li>• Opens a cardboard book and will begin to turn pages</li><li>• Stacks 2-3 blocks</li><li>• Able to draw a vertical line</li><li>• Scribbles spontaneously</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Turns over container to pour out contents</li><li>• Builds tower of at least 4 blocks</li><li>• Might use one hand more than the other</li><li>• Begins to snip with scissors</li><li>• Points to specific objects in books when asked</li><li>• As they approach 3 years, can imitate vertical, horizontal, and circular marks</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cut straight lines</li><li>• Stack 6 or more blocks</li><li>• Copies vertical, horizontal, and circular movements</li><li>• Begins to display functional grasp</li><li>• Cuts paper into 2 pieces</li><li>• Draw a cross</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Copies square shapes</li><li>• Draws a person with 2-4 body parts</li><li>• Draw circles</li><li>• Begins to copy capital letters</li><li>• Cuts a circle and a square</li><li>• Copies intersecting lines and diagonal lines</li><li>• Color within the lines</li><li>• print name</li><li>• Cut out a square</li><li>• Copy a triangle,</li></ul>

## How can we help improve these skills?

According to research, there is strong evidence that play and occupation-based intervention that takes place within a child's home and school environment supports development. Below are a few ideas of how to facilitate the improvement of these skills at home:

- Play doh or theraputty for hand-strengthening
- Putting balls in a bin and taking them out
- Practice picking up small objects like cheerios
- Play with building blocks or legos
- Practice lacing or stringing beads
- Board games like *Hi Ho CheeryO* or *Lets Go Fishing*
- Crafts that involve coloring, cutting, tearing, gluing, etc.
- Play dolls to practice dressing and utensil use
- Facilitate dressing and hygiene activities (buttons, toothbrush, zippers, feeding)

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