

Fine Motor and Letter Practice for Home

Hand skills are crucial to successful handwriting. Small movements of the hand are referred to as fine motor skills. If you believe that your child needs extra activities to strengthen his/her hands or fine motor skills, here are a few suggestions:

- Do finger plays. You can find these in books at your library.
- Cut pictures from newspapers or magazines. You can take a large black marker and draw a line around the picture to give a guideline.
- Have your child put together small beads, Legos, Tinker Toys, Lincoln Logs, etc.
- Knead dough or clay and build an object.
- Hide small objects in the dough and have your child find them.
- Play pegboard games.
- Gather small objects from around the house (small buttons, beads, etc.) and place them in a container. Then have your child pick them up off the table with a pair of tweezers and place them back in the container.
- Play with any toys that require moving or placing little pieces.
- Let your child squirt a water bottle outdoors on the sidewalk.
- Squeeze a kitchen baster to move cotton balls with air. Have a race on the table.
- Finger paint with Jell-O or cocoa on a paper plate.
- Use small marshmallows and toothpicks to form letters.
- String popcorn, buttons, or beads to make necklaces.
- Let your child create a design on a piece of paper with a hole punch.
- Have your child clip clothespins to a container.
- Have your child lace cards.

You can do several fun activities at home to encourage letter practice. A few are listed below:

- While your child is in the bathtub, have him/her draw letters on the wall of the tub in shaving cream or soap paint.
- Trace a letter on your child's back and have him/her guess and write the letter on a piece of paper. Take turns tracing letters on each other's backs.
- Finger paint letters.
- Write letters on the sidewalk with chalk.
- Trace letters in the snow or in the sand.
- Form letters out of dough or clay.
- Make cookie letters. Having your child form the letters by rolling the dough and putting the pieces together.
- Form letters out of French fries.
- Make letters with pipe cleaners.
- Draw letters on the carpet with your fingers.
- Decorate a letter collage using glitter, puffy paint, and markers.
- Use different types of pencils for writing practice (gel pens, colored pencils, scented markers, crayons, etc.).
- Have your child write your shopping lists.
- Use a flashlight and make letters on the wall. You or your child has to guess the letter that was made. You can also cut out letter templates to place in front of the flashlight.
- Put letters on a die. Have your child roll the die and write a word that starts with the letter.
- Fish for words. Place cut-out fish in a shoebox. Write words or letters on the fish. Attach paper clips to the fish and adapt a small pole with a magnet. Ask your child to come up with a word or sentence using the letter or word on the fish that is caught.
- Have your child write with icing tubes.