



## Fine Motor Play Ideas

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**Note:** Some of these ideas involve the use of small items and are only to be used with children who no longer use mouth objects. Activities should only be undertaken with the direct supervision of an adult.

- Place Cheerios®, raisins, or other small edible objects into tiny stacking cups. Encourage your child to use index finger and thumb to take treats out of the cups.
- Puzzles can come with a large variety of knob shapes. Start with large knobs that our child finds easy to grasp. Gradually try out different sizes, getting smaller as skill develops.
- Peg and pegboard sets also come in a wide variety of sizes so your child can play with the size that works best.
- When blowing bubbles, make a game out of popping the bubbles using the pointer finger. This encourages the use of a single finger by itself. To make long-lasting bubbles, combine 2 cups of Joy Liquid®, 6 cups of water and 3/4 cup of Karo Syrup®, shake well and refrigerate for four hours before use.
- Give your child a variety of stringing activities. Use beads, macaroni, popcorn, buttons, marshmallows, etc., or beads with large holes. String them on thick, fish tubing and straws as well as actual string. Make edible necklaces by stringing Cheerios® onto lengths of thin licorice. Wrap masking tape tightly around the end of the string to make it easier to slide on the beads.
  - Practicing buttoning, zipping, and snapping activities are more fun when using Dressy Bessy-type dolls or create your own using old shirts, jeans, shoes, etc.
  - To work on hand and finger strength, have your child play with a turkey baster or eye dropper in tub of water to draw water in and squeeze out. A ketchup squeeze bottle can also be used. Fill with water for a light squeeze or a thick medium such as a flour and water mixture to encourage your child to use a stronger grasp.
- The addition of Velcro®, Dual Lock® or Lok-lift® rug gripper to wooden blocks will add a little resistance to putting together and pulling apart and can help promote success in stacking and building.
- Place small, hard objects such as beans or marbles in Silly Putty® or Play-Doh® and have your child pick them out. You and your child can play “search for the hidden treasure.”
- Large tubs or pans of materials that are interesting to touch can provide hours of fun while encouraging finger movement and strength. Try Play-Doh®, Gak®, clay, Silly Putty®, rice and beans, or shaving cream. Include objects such as rollers, spoons, cups for your child to use to draw, roll, cut, etc. Make a game of drawing shapes or pictures and writing letters or names with a stick or a finger. Include plastic animals, cars and other toys to encourage imaginative play.

Homemade or store-bought sets such as doll houses, garages, or play stores will encourage your child to pick up and move around the little people. You can glue the furniture down to make it easier for your child to put the people in.