

Developing
Fine Motor Skills
In Preschoolers

Why Is it Important to Develop Fine Motor Skills?

Fine motor skills involve the small muscles of the body. These small muscles need to be developed because they are required for more advanced tasks such as writing, grasping small objects, and fastening clothing. When we refer to fine motor skills in the context of handwriting, we are typically referring to the small muscles in the hands and fingers used for writing. Young children benefit from daily practice to help develop fine motor skills in their fingers and hands. Before they can be expected to hold a pencil, or even master writing letters, children should develop the strength and dexterity in the hands and fingers to successfully accomplish these tasks without frustration or anxiety.

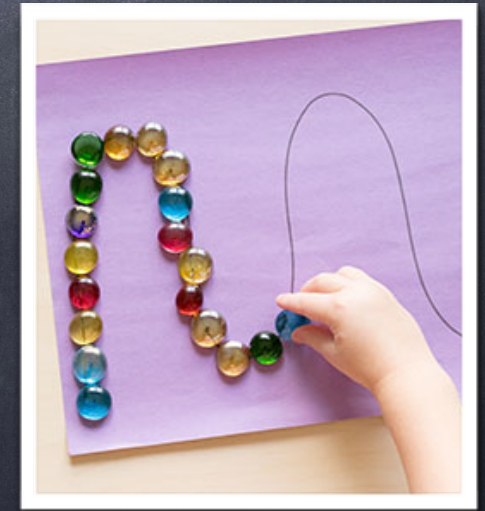
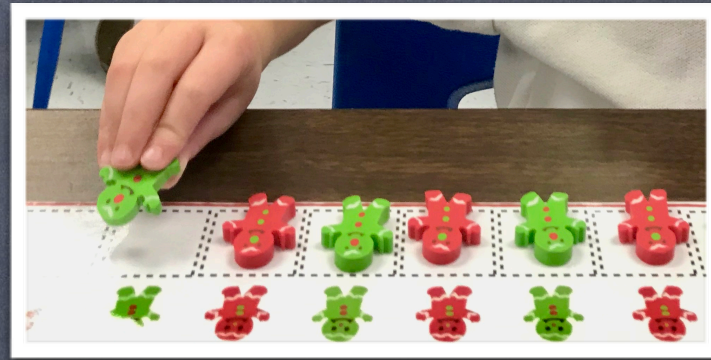
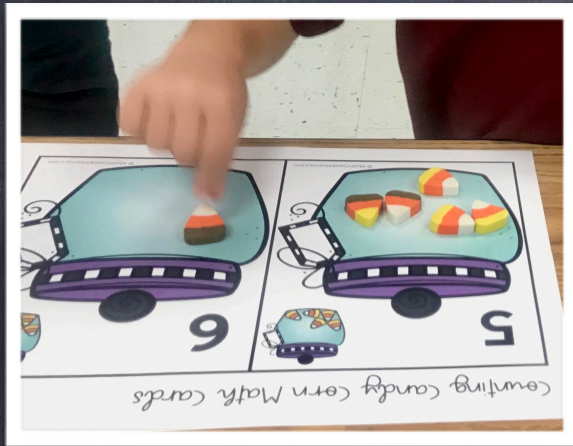
During the early years, it can be tempting to teach young toddlers and preschoolers to form letters and write as early as possible, but their muscles are not yet developed enough for the type of pencil control needed.



The early years are the time for developing pre-writing skills, mostly by doing activities that develop hand and finger muscles.

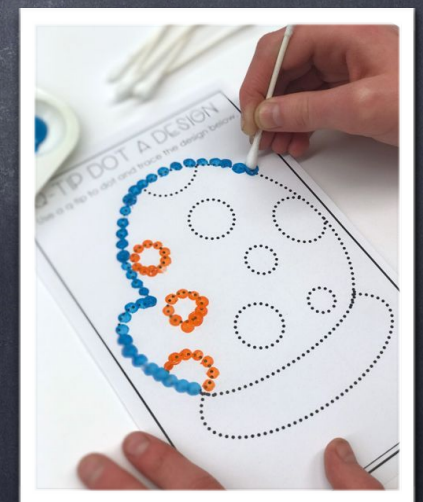
Manipulative Activities

When your child plays with small manipulatives, they are strengthening fine motor skills by reaching and grasping as well as hand-eye coordination.



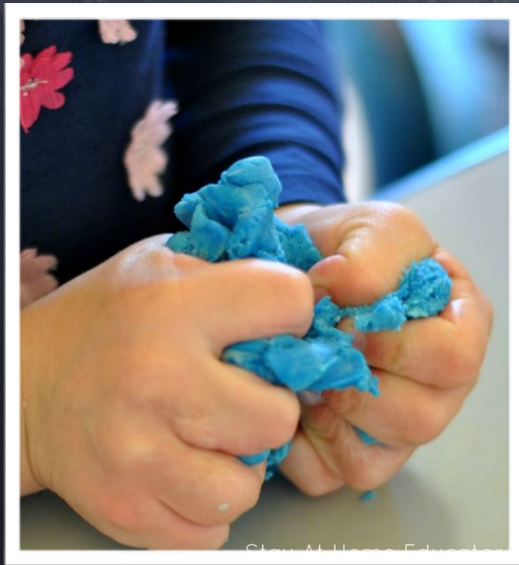
Painting Activities

Let your child experiment using different types of tools to paint with. By gripping them in their hands, children are building pincer grip muscles which will help develop fine motor skills for handwriting.



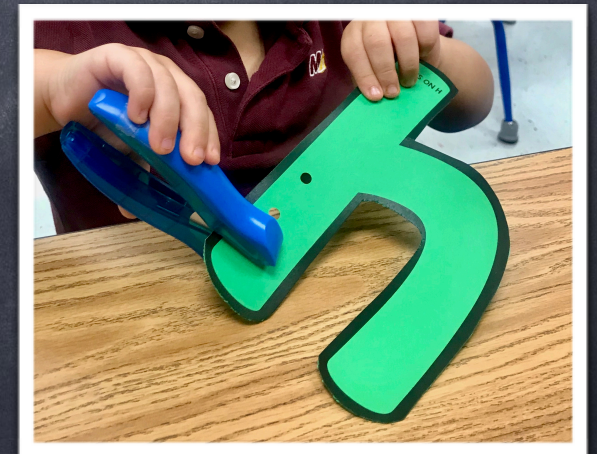
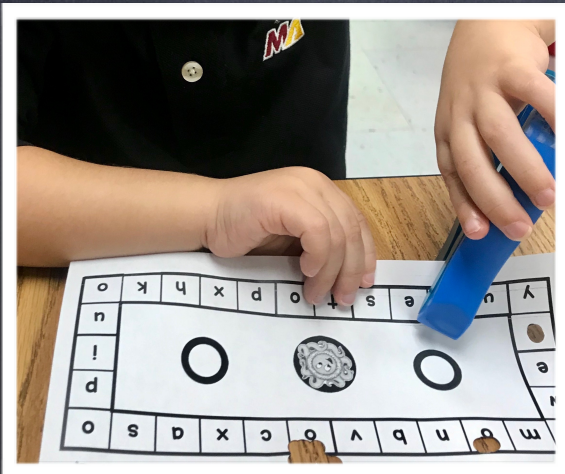
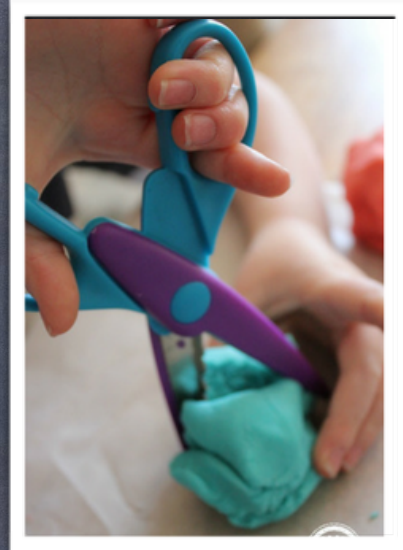
Squeezing Activities

One type of activity used to strengthen the small muscles of hands involve materials and tools that provide resistance. Squeezing strengthens hand and fingers and prepares children for important skills like cutting and writing.



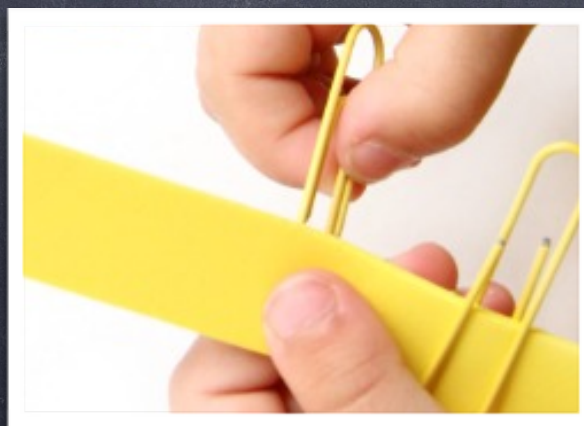
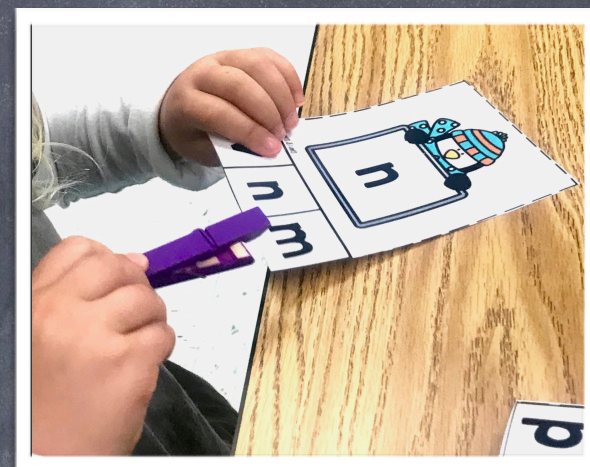
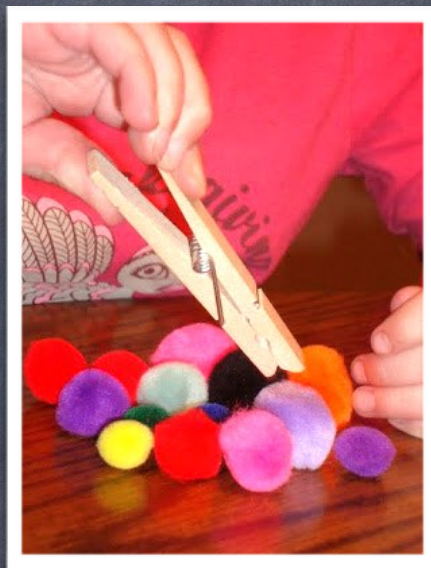
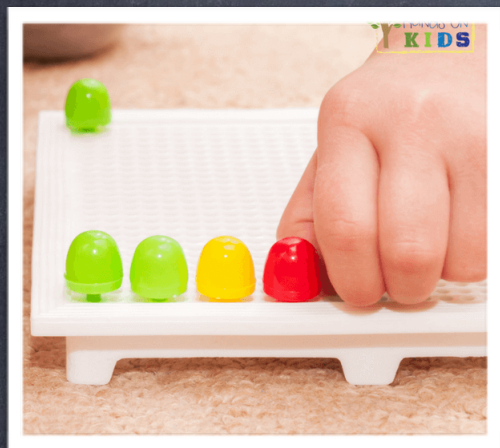
Bilateral Coordination Activities

The opening and closing motion of cutting with scissors helps children develop the small muscles in their hands. These muscles are crucial for holding a pencil or crayons and gripping and manipulating objects. Another important skill that is developed through cutting is bilateral coordination. Bilateral coordination involves using both sides of the body at the same time while each hand is performing different tasks. Tearing paper and punching holes are other activities that help strengthen bilateral coordination.



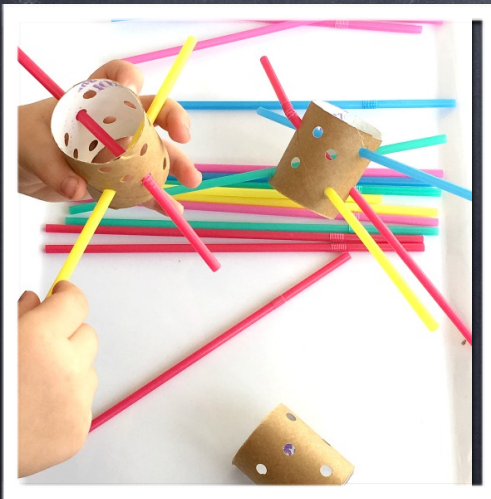
Pincer Grasp Activities

Mastering the pincer grasp (grasping an object with the thumb and pointer finger) is a precursor to handwriting. Practicing picking up, manipulating, and exercising the small muscles in the palm of the hand enables children to gain control and strength while coloring, drawing, cutting and forming letters when age appropriate.



Threading And Lacing Activities

Lacing and threading are classic fine motor activities for preschoolers. Manipulating the string in and out of the holes takes a lot of effort for little fingers. It strengthens dexterity, hand-eye coordination, and the pincer grasp.



Building Fine Motor Skills Every Day Through Play

The importance of developing the small muscles should not be overlooked and your children should have many opportunities to practice these skills on a daily basis, especially during the preschool years. We help students strengthen those muscles in the classroom by providing fun, hands-on and developmentally appropriate activities on a daily basis. Those activities will help children develop an appropriate pencil grasp when they are ready.

