



# Fine Motor Skills

## Fine Motor Skills

### **Ways to strengthen fine motor skills at home**

Fine motor development is very important for your child. Here at Pond Meadow we support our learners to be as independent as possible throughout the school day. We strive to give our learners valuable independence skills; skills that we hope will support them throughout their life.

Fine motor control is important for independence. Think about gripping a pencil, zipping a coat, buttoning a shirt, opening a door or holding a cup/bottle of water. These all require fine muscle control. Throughout the school day we complete activities that develop and strengthen fine motor skills. We have created a list of possible ways to strengthen fine motor skills at home:

*Some of the activities include the use of small items, please watch your child when completing the tasks to prevent items being put mouths. Some activities also include the use of scissors.*

## 1. Basters:

If you have any Basters at home, encourage your child to squeeze and release the Baster end. You could squeeze the end hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently.

Encourage your child to squeeze the Baster towards their other hand/ arm and feel the air pushing out of the Baster. Encourage your child to explore transferring water from one cup to another or from a jug to an ice tray.

You could add edible glitter/ food colouring/ flavouring to the water. You could complete a 'colour mixing' experiment by having different colours of water and encourage your child to see what happens when they mix colours together.

You could encourage your child to explore the baster during bath time.



## 2. Threading:

If you have any pipe cleaners and beads at home you could encourage your child to thread beads on to pipe cleaners. You could thread the beads on the pipe cleaner hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently. If you don't have any pipe cleaners, you could try using feathers or ribbon.



You could give your child different coloured beads and pipe cleaners and encourage them to thread the coloured beads on to the same coloured pipe cleaner. This activity would also develop your child's colour recognition and ability to match. You could even bend the pipe cleaners to look like Dragonfly's.

Another threading activity could be to thread pasta bits on to a straw. Stick straws into playdough on a table and use large pasta.

You could also create holes in cardboard shapes and encourage your child to thread string/ ribbon through the holes.



### 3. Tongs:

If you have any kitchen tongs at home, encourage your child to squeeze and release the tong arms. You could squeeze them hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently. You could encourage your child to pick up pompoms/ material with the tongs. If you don't have pompoms you could use coloured toys they may have at home.



If you have different coloured pompoms/ materials at home you could encourage your child to sort the colours by picking up each item with the tongs and placing them in the correct colour pile/ tub. You could lay out colour symbols and encourage your child to match the item to the correct colour symbol or you could label tubs (colour labels below).





Another way to use tongs is to encourage your child to move their small toys from one location to another. For example, you could encourage your child to pick up a car from the floor mat and put it in a box. You could use tongs to help you 'tidy away'.

If you do not have tongs at home you could use a clothes peg.

#### 4. Garlic Press:

If you have a garlic press at home, encourage your child to squeeze the Garlic press. You could squeeze the press hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently. Try squeezing playdough through the Garlic press, your child is developing their fine motor control and now has some playdough spaghetti to play with!

##### Playdough Recipe:

*(For one small ball of dough)*

8 tbsp Plain Flour

60ml Warm Water

You could add edible glitter/ food colouring/ flavouring to the dough.



## 5. Stickers:

If you have any stickers at home, you could encourage your child to put stickers over large letters of their name. You could hold and push the stickers down hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently. See image below for an example. If you do not have stickers you could use buttons instead.



## 6. Posting:

If you have any cardboard tubes and pompoms at home, you could encourage your child to drop (or post) pompoms through the cardboard tube. You could use masking tape to stick the tube to the wall. You could hold and drop/post the pompoms down hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently. If you do not have any pompoms you could use buttons, pasta bits or sticks from the garden instead.



Another posting activity could be pushing pipe cleaners through holes in a cardboard box/ colander.



If you have any play money at home, you could encourage your child to post the money into money box's.



## 7. Hole Punch:

You could encourage your child to practice hole punching paper. You could squeeze the hole punch hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently. In the upper school, we encourage pupils to hole punch their work to go in their work folders. Therefore, practicing to use a hole punch is an important skill that will give your child independence at school and in their future. Once you have finished hole punching you could explore the confetti you've made (excess paper circles in pole punch).

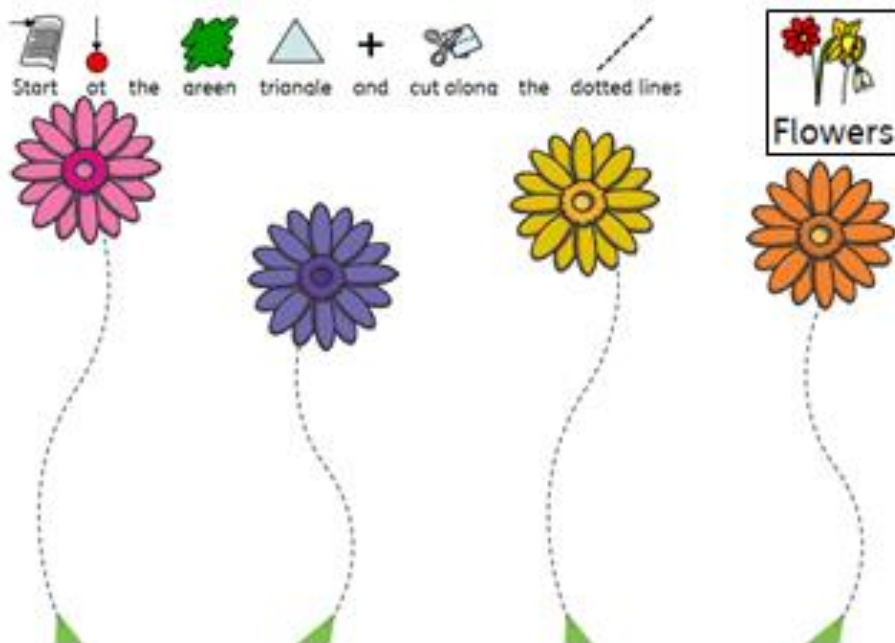


Another way to encourage your child to practice hole punching is to collect leaves/ petals from the garden and pole punch them. Once hole punched you could thread ribbon/ thread through the holes to create outdoor bunting. Hole punching leaves could also be used as a prop when telling 'The Hungry Caterpillar' story.

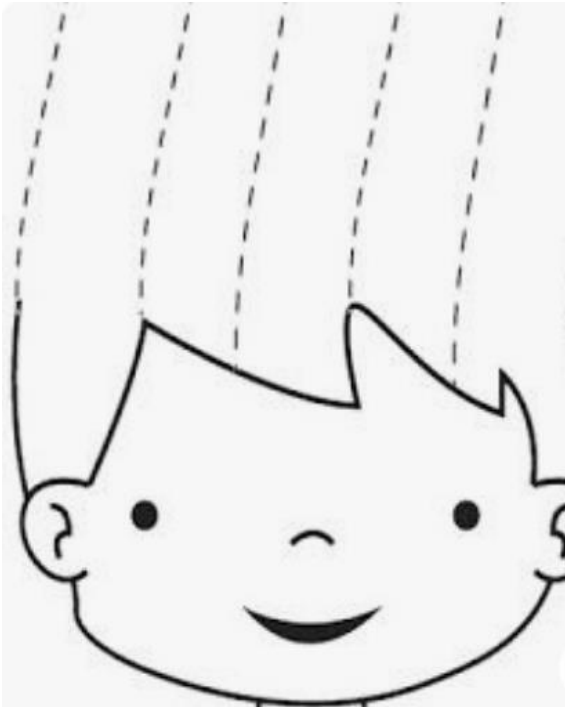


## 8. Cutting:

If you have child-safe scissors at home you could encourage your child to practice and develop their cutting skills. You could hold, squeeze and release the scissors hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently. You could complete a 'cutting' worksheet or just draw some lines/ shapes on paper and cut them out.



You could also encourage your child to draw a face on the bottom of some card, then draw them some dotted lines from their face to the top of the page, encourage your children to cut down the lines to create 'hair' for their drawn person. They could then give the hair a 'hair cut'.



### **9. Water Pistol:**

If you have a water pistol at home, you could encourage your child to use it to 'paint' outside. You could hold, squeeze and release the trigger hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently. You could encourage your child to water plants with it, 'paint' fences/ floors outside or draw patterns/ shapes with it.



### **10. Moving objects:**

If you have any small tubs/ old egg cartons, you could fill them up with pompoms and encourage your child to pick up each one and take it out of the tub/ egg carton until it is empty. You could pick up, hold, and release each pompom hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently. If you do not have any pompoms you could use buttons, pasta bits or sticks from the garden instead. You could paint inside the egg carton lids and encourage your child to sort the pompoms by colour. If you don't have any egg cartons you could use large Lego turned upside down.





### **11. Playdough People:**

You could encourage your child to push pipe cleaners/ beads/ pasta bits/ sticks/ buttons into playdough and make a 'playdough person'. You could encourage your child to make the face, encouraging them to think of what they have on their face (eyes, ears, nose, mouth, eye brows, ears). You could use a mirror to encourage your child to identify what they have on their face and make the same on their 'playdough person'. You could pick up, hold, and push each item into the playdough hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently.



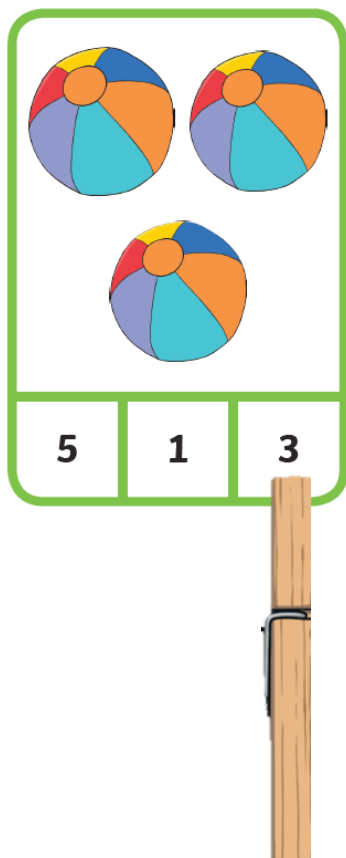
### **12. Peg Activities:**

You could encourage your child to peg clothes pegs on to card/ onto clothes. You could pick up, squeeze, and release each peg hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently.

You could also encourage your child to peg clothes pegs onto the side of a basket or help you peg clothes on a washing line.



You could also complete peg activity cards, each card has a large image on it. You could encourage your child to identify what is on the card and encourage them to point to the correct answer on the card and put a peg over the correct answer.



Twinkl Link to Peg Activities:

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/searchpegactivities>

### 13. Tape:

If you have any masking tape at home, you could stick down a few small toys to the table/ floor. You could encourage your child to take off the tape to release their toy. You could gently unpeel, hold and pull off the tape hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently.



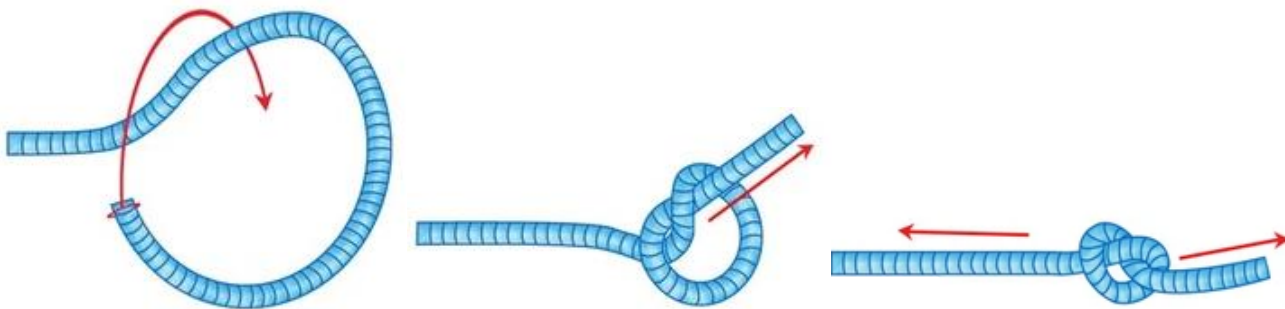
#### 14. Wrapping/ unwrapping:

If you have wrapping paper, tape and child-safe scissors at home, you could do some wrapping and unwrapping with your child. Wrapping toys/ tubs is a great activity that involves cutting skills, folding skills and placing/ pushing skills. Encourage your child to cut the wrapping paper to size, fold the paper to cover the toy/ tub and stick tape over the paper folds to keep it secure. You could hold, squeeze and release the scissors and hold/ push the paper/ tape hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently. After you have finished wrapping, you've got the fun of unwrapping!



#### 15. Tying:

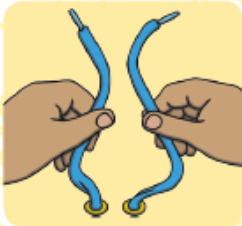
If you have any spare shoe laces, you could encourage your child to practice tying a knot. You could hold, push and pull the laces hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently.



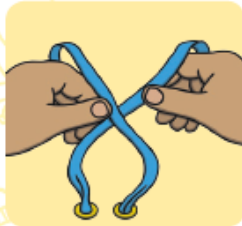
You could also practice tying shoe laces (bow).

If you do not have any shoe laces you could use ribbon/ string.

## How to Tie Your Shoelaces



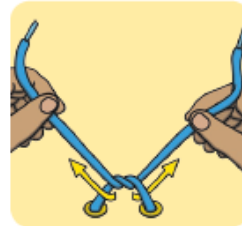
1. Take both laces in your finger tips and thumbs.



2. Fold the right lace over the left lace.



3. Fold the right lace over the top and push through the hole.



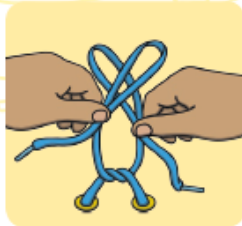
4. Pull both laces tight.



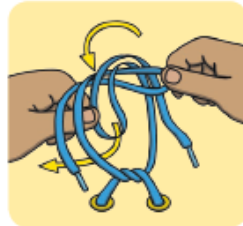
5. Take the end of one lace and fold it into a 'bunny ear'.



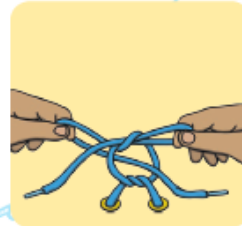
6. Do the same with the other lace and hold both 'ears' at the bottom.



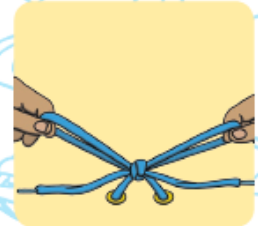
7. Make both bunny ears into an 'X' shape.



8. Fold one bunny ear over the top of the other and push through the gap.



9. Pull both bunny ears to the sides...

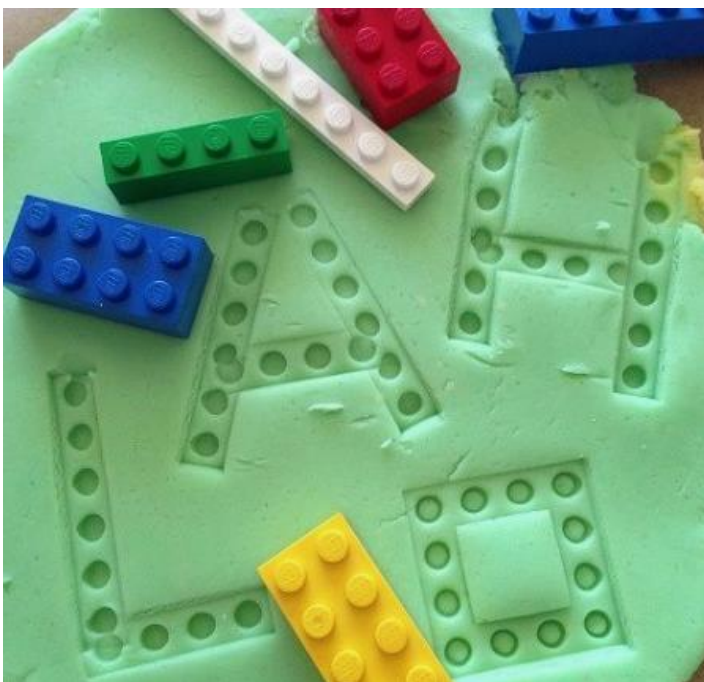


...and you've tied your laces!



### 16. Playdough Stamping:

You could encourage your child to push various items into Playdough and then take them back out to see the stamp it left. Lego has a great effect; you could try and create letter shapes in the Playdough using various objects. You could pick up, push and take out the object hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently.



### **17. Water Play:**

If you have plastic jugs at home, you could encourage your child to pour water from one jug to another. You could pick up, hold and tip the jug hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently. You could encourage your child to explore transferring water from a jug to an ice tray, in each of the cubes. You could add edible glitter/ food colouring/ flavouring to the water. You could encourage your child to explore pouring water from jug to jug during bath time.



### **18. Lego Construction:**

If you have any Lego at home, you could encourage your child to create a tower/ other construction. Encourage your child to push bricks together and pull them apart again. You could pick up, push and pull apart the bricks hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently. You could try and turn the bricks upside down and see if your child can build a tower like this, this is also developing their ability to problem solve.



### **19. Letter/ Number Matching:**

If you have magnetic/ foam letters/ numbers you could put them in a bowl of water and could encourage your child to use a spoon to collect each letter/ number. They can then take it off of the spoon and match it to a number/ letter sheet (see examples below). You could hold, scoop and pick up the spoon and number/ letter hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently.

a b c d e f g h i  
j k l m n o p q  
r s t u v w x y z

0 1 2 3 4 5  
6 7 8 9 10



## **20. Bottle Tops:**

If you have any twist top bottles at home, you could encourage your child to twist off and twist back on the tops of the bottles.

If you have any push top bottles at home, you could encourage your child to pull up the drinking nozzle and push down the bottle nozzle.

You could hold, twist off/pull up and twist on/ push down the bottle top hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently.

One way you could encourage your child to twist bottle tops at home is through making 'Sensory Bottles'. When making them encourage your child to twist off the lid and once the bottle is filled encourage them to twist on the top. Tape the lid shut to prevent pillages.

### Sensory Bottles:

After you have finished with a water bottle/ juice bottle, fill it with sensory items and encourage your child to explore and describe it using all of their senses. You could also use these as a prop to tell a story.

Possible items to fill bottles:

Water and baby oil with food colouring – Wave effect

Water and glitter – magical effect

Rice (maybe coloured/ left over rainbow rice) – Rainmaker effect

Pasta/ oats – heavy/light effect

Ribbons/ pompoms/ buttons – visually pleasing effect



### **21. Switches:**

You could encourage your child to help you turn off/ on switches at home (e.g. light switches). You could encourage your child to push the switch with one finger hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently.

### **22. Keys:**

You could encourage your child to help you open doors/ padlocks using keys at home. You could encourage your child to hold, twist and pull out the hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently.

### **23. Zips:**

You could encourage your child to practice zipping their coats at home. You could encourage your child to hold both sides of the zip, slot together, hold the zip and pull up the zip hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently.

### **24. Buttons:**

You could encourage your child to practice buttoning at home. You could encourage your child to hold, push through the button hole and pull it through hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently.

### **25. Cotton Wool Painting:**

If you have cotton wool and paint at home put some on two separate plates and collect some paper. Encourage your child to pick up the cotton wool and dip it in the paint, you can then encourage your child to paint with the paint dipped cotton wool. You could encourage your child to hold the tongs, hover over the cotton wool, squeeze the tongs to pick up the wool, continue squeezing to dip it in the paint and paint with it hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently.

You could also try this activity with a clothes peg.

### Paint Recipe:

¼ cup salt

½ cup flour

½ cup water

You could add edible glitter and food colouring/ flavouring.



### **26. Sensory Tracing:**

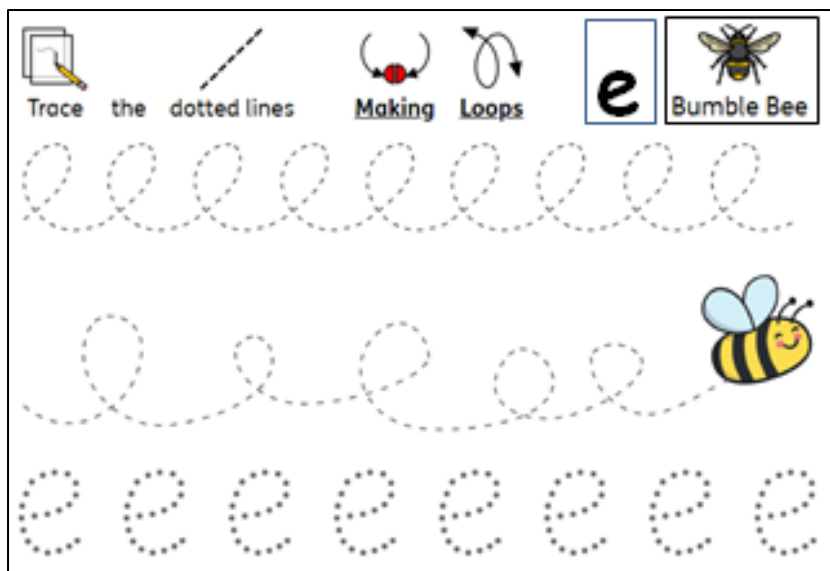
If you have any sand and a tray/ empty box's at home, you could put a layer of sand in the tray/ box and encourage your child to trace different patterns/ numbers/ letters/ shapes. You could encourage your child to use one finger to trace and mark make hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently. You could draw a letter/ pattern in the tray and encourage your child to do the same or you could hold up a letter/ number/ shape on a card and encourage them to do the same in their tray. Another way you could encourage your child to trace in a sensory tray is to draw a shape/ number/ letters of their name on card and put it in the bottom of the tray and encourage your child to trace over it.



### **27. Tracing – Pencil Control:**

You could write a letter/ number/ shape on paper and encourage your child to trace over it. You could encourage your child to use one finger to trace, mark make hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently. Then you could encourage them to trace with a pen/ pencil. You could also complete tracing pattern worksheets.





Twinkl Link to Pencil Control Activities:

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/search/pencilcontrol>

### **28. Tweezer Activities:**

If you have any large tweezers at home, you could encourage your child to practice picking up small items/ pompoms with the tweezers and moving them to a different location. Perhaps moving small items/ pompoms from one pot to another. You could encourage your child to hold, hover, squeeze and release the tweezers hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently. You could encourage your child to sort the pompom by colours.

If you do not have any large tweezers you could use a clothes peg instead.



### **29. Fishing:**

If you have a clean net at home, you could encourage your child to collect (or fish) for items in a bucket of water. You could encourage your child to hold the net, scoop it, pull it up and take the item out of the net hand over hand initially and build up to encouraging them to try independently. This is also a good way to introduce floating or sinking. You could put different items in a bucket and find out if they float or sink.

