

Fine Motor Skills



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Towards independence series - 2

(Funded by UNICEF)

National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped

(Ministry of Welfare, Govt. of India)

Manovikas Nagar, Secunderabad 500 009. A.P. India

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1990

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Reprint 1996

Reprint 2001

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Printed at : Sree Ramana Process, Secunderabad. Hello : 7811750

What do you mean by fine motor skills ?

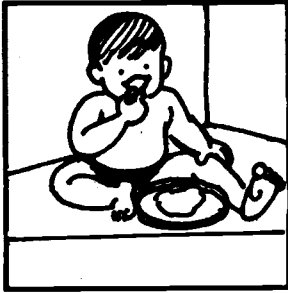
Activities that involve accurate and efficient use of, mostly the hands and fingers, are called fine motor skills.

Why are they important ?

Every activity of daily life involves the fine motor component. Hence, fine motor development is vital for independent living.

Examples given in the following pages clarify the above concept.....

Some of the activities that involve the use of fine motor skills are....



Eating...



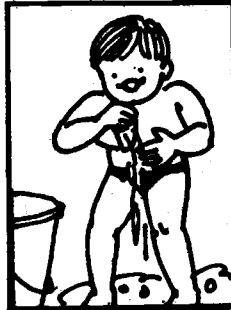
Dressing...



Washing....



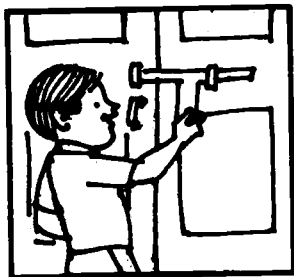
Brushing Teeth...



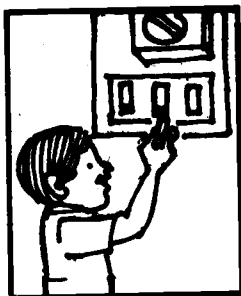
Bathing...



Grooming....



Opening doors...



Turning on/off lights...



Folding clothes...



Opening packets...



Playing with toys...



Art & craft activities...

and so on

Normal children develop fine motor skills during the natural course of development.

Delayed motor development is frequently found in children with mental retardation. Hence, the need for special, conscious, and systematic efforts to enhance fine motor development in such children.

IMPORTANT :

Development proceeds sequentially.

An example of fine motor developmental sequence....

.... reaches for objects, holds objects, picks up objects, releases them, uses both hands simultaneously, and so on...

Ascertain what the child can currently do, and gradually proceed further in a step-by-step manner.

REACHING FOR OBJECTS

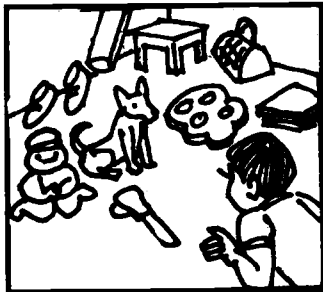


Place a toy of his interest in front of the child. Hold his hand and bring towards the toy.

Next, leave his hand and allow him to reach for the toy, by himself.

Keep the toy a little away from the child and let him reach for it.

Make sure the toy is never far out of his reach.



For small babies lying on the stomach provides more opportunity to explore the environment than lying on the back. Give him more chances to roll over and lie on the stomach.

This will also provide him opportunity to reach for different objects.

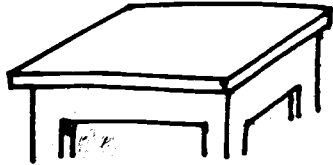


Encourage the child to touch, feel and handle as many different shapes, surfaces, and substances, as possible. The idea is to "tempt" him to explore for himself with his hands.

Expose him to things that are....



...smooth



...big ...small



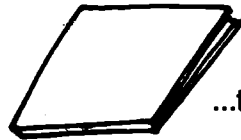
..hard



...prickly



..soft



...thin



..hot

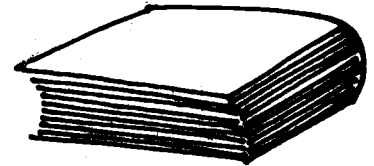


...cold



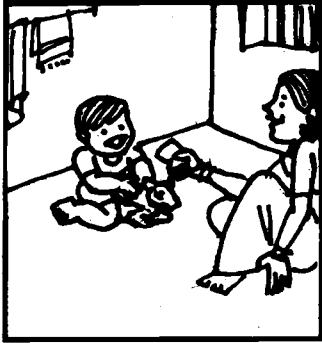
...sticky

...thick



and so on.....

GRASPING OBJECTS



Initially, keep an object in the child's hand or hold it very near to him, so that he feels, grasps and explores it.

Hold a biscuit/fruit in front of the child. Encourage him to take it.

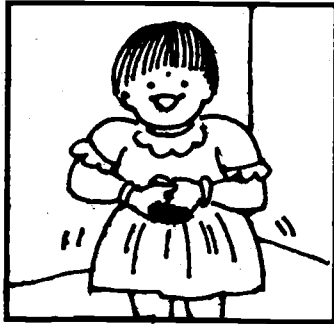
Play with the child when he is playing with his toys. Show him his favourite toy and ask him to hold it.

PRAISE HIM FOR HIS EFFORTS



Next, try to get him to hold two objects, one in each hand.

Play games and sing rhymes with him that involve folding fingers such as....



"This little piggy went to market....."

"Five little clowns standing in a row...."

"Eensie Weensie spider...."

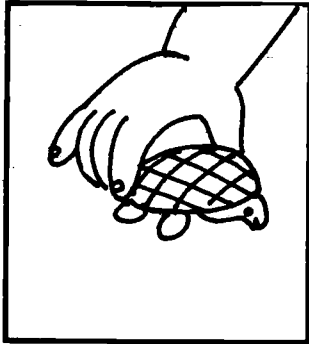
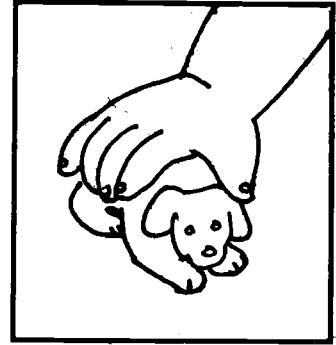
"Where is thumbkin....."



... and similar ones in other languages.

PICKING UP OBJECTS

At first, the child can only pick up large objects with his **whole hand**.



As he develops, he will be able to pick up and hold smaller things with **thumb and fingers**.

To encourage this progress in the type of grasp, use longer and thinner objects, which will necessitate the use of thumb and fingers.

Activities involving hand movements can be done better in some positions than in others. Find out which position suits your child best.

Teaching thumb and finger grasp.....

Imagine a situation in which you want to teach the child to pick up a single marble, from a bowl full of marbles....



In the initial stages, assist the child physically in opening his fingers,



closing his fingers round the marble,

and



raising his hand

Take the child to a field where there are flowers that may be picked.

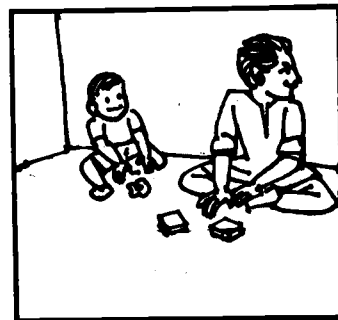


**Try to make up little games to encourage the child to pick up objects.
You will need to use a lot of imagination, but it will be worth it !**



Play a 'matching game' in which you place a set of objects in front of you and a duplicate set in front of the child. You pick up and hold an object, and the child must pick her duplicate object and hold it up.

Play 'hiding the object'. Place several objects in front of the child. Tell him that he has to pick one up and hide it in his hand, while you look away. Then you guess what he has in his hand.



The next step will be to teach him to pick up objects with the *thumb and Index finger* only.

Collect seeds, marbles, beads into a bowl. Ask the child to pick the objects one by one and transfer them into another bowl.

Demonstrate putting thumb and index finger together to hold an object.

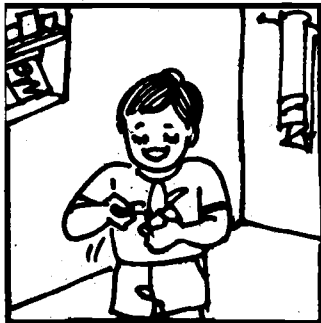


This exercise will also help him in learning to release objects.

Have the child perform the activity repeatedly, rather than performing an activity one time and quickly moving on to the other. At the same time, give importance to the interest of the child.

USING BOTH HANDS SIMULTANEOUSLY

Let the child practice...



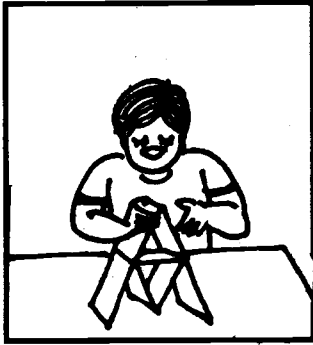
- i) holding an object with one hand, while manipulating part of it with the other hand.

Eg. Peeling a fruit.

- ii) holding an object with one hand, while manipulating another object with the other hand.

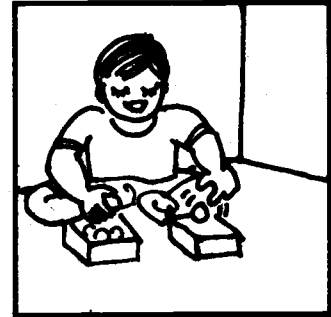
Eg. Cutting pictures from a magazine, using scissors, *in the case of an older child.*





- iii) using both hands simultaneously to manipulate a single object.
Eg. Building towers using books, .
boxes, cards.

- iv) using both hands simultaneously to manipulate two separate objects.
Eg. Picking up and dropping items into cardboard boxes.



Give the child a variety of opportunities to handle the things around him . Involve him/her as much as possible in activities of daily life.

Activities that are worth their contribution.....

Activities of daily life -



Dough making



Sorting vegetables



Cutting vegetables



Sieving flour



Washing clothes



Washing utensils



Dusting



Sweeping



Mopping



Fixing cloth pegs



Watering plants



Sewing

Other activities -



Painting



Drawing



Pasting



Folding paper



Stringing beads



Clay modelling



Building sand castles

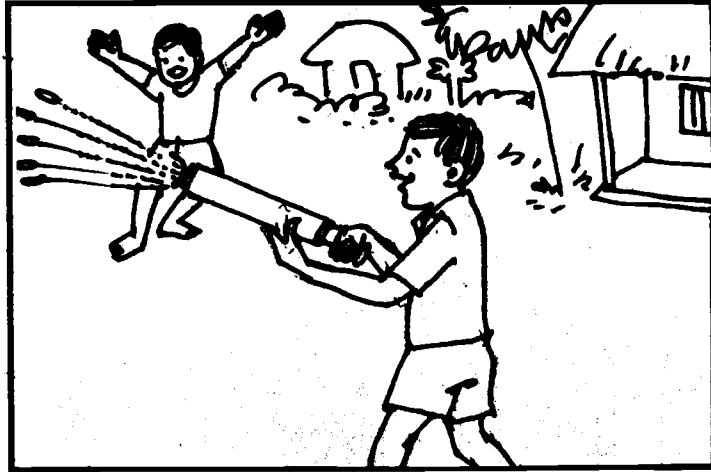


Flying kites

Involve the child in certain customs performed during festivals, that facilitate fine motor development as well as provide enjoyment to the child



... making rangoli.....



....playing holi using pichkaris (squeeze bottles).....



....decorating Christmas Tree....

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