

# Activities for Fine Motor and Scissor Skills

## Posture and Position

**Before completing the following 'scissor skills' activities, please ensure the following:**



- A. the feet should have a stable base of support by touching flat on the floor. If child's feet do not touch the floor, consider using a smaller chair or putting something stable under their feet.
  - B. hips, knees and ankles should be bent at 90 degrees. Child should sit with their hips facing square to the table. If child cannot sustain this posture because he seeks movement, try using their wobble cushion.
  - C. table should be 1-2" higher than bent elbows. The table height should be approximately half-way between child's chest and belly button.
- Left hand scissors must be used if the child is left-handed (*this is important to observe because child have not yet established hand-dominance*).
  - When learning, it is essential that the child is:
    - Looking at the paper and scissors.
    - Holding the paper and scissors, even if this is hand over hand, make sure you are also supporting him to hold the paper as well.
  - The thumbs of both the scissor and paper hands must be facing the ceiling, rather than being turned to face the floor. This provides 135 degrees movement at the wrist, which helps with moving the paper and scissors.
  - Verbal prompts of "cut", "move", "cut" can help.

## Snipping Playdough Snake.

### Materials:

- Scissors.
- Playdough.



# Activities for Fine Motor and Scissor Skills

## How To:

- Demonstrate and ask child to roll the playdough into a long cylinder using both of his hands together.
- Demonstrate and ask child to hold the scissors in one hand – with his thumb facing the ceiling.
- Demonstrate and ask child to hold the playdough in the other hand – again with his thumb facing the ceiling.
- Encourage child to snip the playdough into 5 pieces.

## Tips:

- Discourage child to have his thumbs facing the floor.
- Discourage child to rest his hands on the table – support his hands to hold the playdough and scissors up.
- Encourage child to look at the scissors and the playdough, especially when providing hand-over-hand by saying “Zac looking” and gesturing your hands towards the scissors and playdough.

## Make it Easier:

- Use self-opening scissors (e.g., loop scissors provided by OT).
- Provide hand-over-hand support.
- Use ‘Backwards Chaining’ so that the adult begins the task, then child complete the final step(s). Gradually add each preceding step for child to complete, until he can finish the task independently (e.g., the adult makes four snips in the playdough while child observe, then he completes the final snip. Gradually, child will take on more of the snipping, until he can complete the entire task independently.

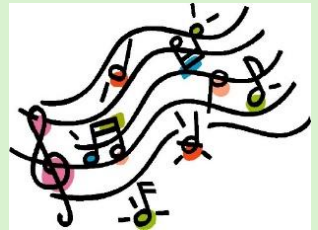
## Make it Harder:

- If child can complete the activity with self-opening scissors switch them to a set of regular scissors.
- Progress to completing snips to make smaller pieces of playdough.

# Activities for Fine Motor and Scissor Skills

## Action Songs

**Materials:** Action songs and rhymes that include identifying body parts, and movements using both sides of the body together (also, known as bilateral integration). Please use the links below to find recommended action songs and rhythms (if you are logged into YouTube, you can save the videos to your favourites for ease of access):



- [Where is Thumbkin?](#)
- [Twinkle Little Star.](#)
- [How Many Fingers On One Hand?](#)
- [Wind the Bobbin Up?](#)
- [Clap Your Hands.](#)
- [If You're Happy and You Know It.](#)
- [Row Your Boat.](#)
- [Open Shut Them.](#)
- [Crocodile Snap](#)

**Outcome:** *Example* child can copy the actions of a song with the use of visual demonstration, and verbal prompts.

### Tips:

- Position yourself within child's eye gaze and use slow and clear visual demonstration of the actions for child to observe. Then, help child to imitate the action using simple verbal descriptions (such as, "hand open, hand close") and physical support (hand-over-hand, as required). This will help child to form a 'motor engram' to learn and independently repeat the action.
- Pause singing or the video to encourage child to imitate the action. This will provide additional time to accommodate for his processing speed and will reduce the demand of multi-sensory processing to facilitate his success.
- Provide an enriched sensory experience to advance child's adaptive sensory integration and processing, by using colourful and textured materials (such as, ribbons, pom-poms, tinsel) to dance with.

# Activities for Fine Motor and Scissor Skills

## Hand Massage

### Materials:

- Hand Lotion (optional).
- Massager Tool (optional).



**Outcome:** *Example* child show awareness of his hands and fingers position.

### How To:

Demonstrate and ask child to rub his hands together with the lotion.

1. Rub the palms together.
2. Rub the backs of the hands.
3. Rub the thumb and the index finger.
4. Rub and name each finger.

This activity can be used alongside the actions songs such as, “how many finger on one hand?” and “where is thumbkin?”).

### Tips:

- It is recommended to use various textured materials and scents, as tolerated (e.g., scented lotion, textured or vibrating massager). Always start by applying deep pressure touch by squeezing up and down the length of the arms and hands. The pressure should be firm, but comfortable (it should not mark the skin; press approx. ¼ inch). This will promote a calm state of arousal, that allows you to work towards using lighter touch and textured materials.
- A trusted member of staff can provide the massage. It is recommended to use physical support (hand-over-hand) to help child gain additional proprioceptive and touch input to develop his body awareness.

**Disclaimer:** Always gain informed consent to complete massage. Frequently, monitor child’s non-verbal expression and pause every 30 seconds to check if he wants “more” using verbal communication and the Makaton sign for ‘more’. Cease the activity immediately if child show discomfort. Ensure that child do not have any allergies to the materials.

# Activities for Fine Motor and Scissor Skills

## Playdough Warm-ups.

### Materials:

- Playdough.
- Media Player.
- Small Toys.



### 1. Animal Hunt:

**Outcome:** *Example* child can find a small item hidden in the playdough using his dominant hand.

### How To:

- Bury item(s) in the playdough.
- Encourage child to search for the items with his dominant hand, while stabilising the container with his other hand. Then, swap hands.

### Make it Easier:

- Ask child to use two hands to search for the items.
- Use larger and colourful items that are easier to find, then progress to smaller items.
- Half cover the items so that child can see them, then fully conceal the items.
- Have child help to cover up the item so that he knows where the items are located.

### Make it Harder:

- Use smaller and less colourful items that are more difficult to find.

**Disclaimer:** Ensure that child is always supervised when completing the activity. If there is a risk that he will mouth the items, only use items safe for consumption.

### 2. Dough Disco:

**Outcome:** child can copy the video with the use of visual demonstration, and verbal prompts.

The following videos are recommended:

[Dough Dance Fine Motor Playdough Fun Write Rules GriffinOT \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

[Dough Dance Playdough Fun for Early Years and Schools Write Rules GriffinOT \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

# Activities for Fine Motor and Scissor Skills

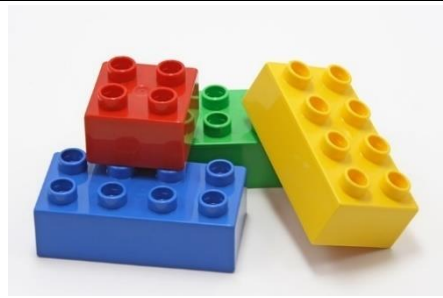
## Duplo

### Materials:

- Duplo (2x2 and 4X4 blocks).

### Outcome:

- Child can pull apart a tower of eight 2X2 Duplo Bricks.
- Child can easily put together a tower of ten 2X2 Duplo Bricks.



### How To:

- Playfully create constructions with Duplo blocks. This can be included in a highly motivating activity like a sensory tray to increase child's motivation.
- When completing the activity, encourage child to use their non-dominant hand to stabilise the tower, and his dominant hand to push or pull the other block. Provide hand-over-hand support if required.

### Make it Easier:

- Position yourself within child's eye gaze and use slow and clear visual demonstration of the actions for child to observe. Then, help child to imitate the action using simple verbal descriptions (such as, "breaking" and "pushing") and physical support (hand-over-hand, as required). This will help child to form a 'motor engram' to learn and independently repeat the action.

### Make it Harder:

- If child can complete the activity target, try using the larger 4X4 blocks.

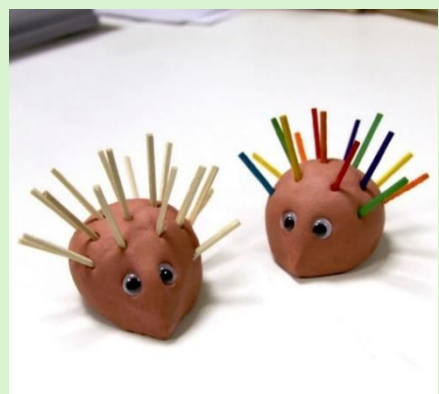
## Snipping Straws to Make a Hedgehog.

### Materials:

- Scissors.
- Straws.
- Playdough.

### How To:

- Demonstrate and ask child to roll the playdough into a ball using both of his hands together.
- Demonstrate and ask child to hold the scissors in one hand – with his thumb facing the ceiling.



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- Demonstrate and ask child to hold the straw in the other hand – again with his thumb facing the ceiling.
- Demonstrate and encourage child to snip the straw into 5 pieces.
- Demonstrate and ask child to pick up the small pieces of straw and push them into the playdough.

### Tips:

- Discourage child to have his thumbs facing the floor.
- Discourage child to rest his hands on the table – support his hands to hold the straw and scissors up.
- Encourage child to look at the scissors and the straw, especially when providing hand-over-hand by saying “Zac looking” and gesturing your hands towards the scissors, straw or playdough.

### Make it Easier:

- Use self-opening scissors (e.g., loop scissors provided by OT).
- Provide hand-over-hand support.
- Start by snipping large width and length straws. Use a large ball of Playdough.
- Use ‘Backwards Chaining’ so that the adult begins the task, then child complete the final step(s). Gradually add each preceding step for child to complete, until he can finish the task independently (e.g., the adult makes four snips in the straw while child observe, then he completes the final snip. Gradually, child will take on more of the snipping, until he can complete the entire task independently).

### Make it Harder:

- If child can complete the activity with self-opening scissors switch them to a set of regular scissors.
- Progress to snipping smaller width and length straws. Use a smaller ball of playdough.
- Draw lines on the straw for child to cut along.

# Activities for Fine Motor and Scissor Skills

## Feed the Monster

### Materials:

- Scissors.
- Playdough.
- Container.

### How To:

- Demonstrate and ask child to roll the playdough into a log cylinder using both of his hands together.
- Demonstrate and ask child to hold the scissors in one hand – with his thumb facing the ceiling.
- Demonstrate and ask child to hold the playdough in the other hand – again with his thumb facing the ceiling.
- Demonstrate and encourage child to snip the playdough into 5 pieces.
- Demonstrate and encourage child to use the fingertips of his thumb, index and middle fingers to roll the playdough into small balls.
- Place a container in front of child and encourage him to hold it with his non-dominant hand (likely, the hand that he did not use to roll the playdough).
- Demonstrate and encourage child to pinch the small balls, showing a ‘C’ hand shape, and place them into the container.



### Tips:

- Discourage child to have his thumbs facing the floor.
- Discourage child to rest his hands on the table – support his hands to hold the playdough and scissors up.
- Encourage child to look at the scissors and the playdough, especially when providing hand-over-hand by saying “Zac looking” and gesturing your hands towards the scissors and playdough.

### Make it Easier:

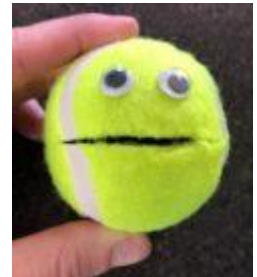
- Use self-opening scissors (e.g., loop scissors provided by OT).
- Provide hand-over-hand support.
- Use verbs like, “squeeze”, “lift”, “open”.

## Activities for Fine Motor and Scissor Skills

- Use 'Backwards Chaining' so that the adult begins the task, then child complete the final step(s). Gradually add each preceding step for child to complete, until he can finish the task independently.
- Use a container with a larger opening.

### Make it Harder:

- If child can complete the activity with self-opening scissors switch them to a set of regular scissors.
- Use a container with a smaller opening. Or cut a slice into a tennis ball, so when child squeeze the ball, it's 'mouth' opens, and he can 'feed' it.
- Put the container on the opposite side of child's body to the hand he is using (so he must cross the body's midline to reach the container).
- Once child can pinch and post the playdough using his fingers, encourage him to use tongs – he must have his thumb facing the ceiling when snapping the playdough (this position can change when he puts the playdough in the container). At first use larger kitchen tongs with less resistance. At first, if child find it difficult to use one hand on the tongs, allow him to use both hands. Once, child can use the larger tongs with one hand, progress to using clothes pegs or plastic tweezers (again, using the 'C' hand shape grasp).



### Clothes Pegs

#### Materials:

- Clothes Pegs.
- Container with Raised Edges.

**Outcome:** child can peg ten clothes pegs around a container using their thumb, middles and index finger.

#### How to:

- Demonstrate and ask child to squeeze the peg with their thumb, middle and index fingers to put it on the side of a container.
- Ask child to put the pegs on all sides on the container.
- Ensure that child hold the container with their non-dominant hand.
- Demonstrate and ask child to take the pegs off – ensure that child squeeze the peg open to take it off, rather than just pull the peg off.



# Activities for Fine Motor and Scissor Skills

## Make it Harder:

- Use pegs with more tension.
- Use smaller sized pegs.
- Peg onto a string, rather than a container.
- Put the container on the opposite side of child's body to the hand he is using (so he must cross the body's midline to reach the container).

## Make It Easier:

- Use pegs with less tension.
- Start with the pegs on the container and take them off to help build 'muscle memory' of squeezing.

## Threading

### Materials:

- Small beads.
- String.



**Outcome:** child can thread ten 1cm wide beads onto a piece of string consistently using their dominant hand.

### How to:

- The dominant hand is the hand that child should hold the string with, and the non-dominant hand should hold the bead.
- Demonstrate and ask child the string to thread the beads onto the string.
- Encourage child to use a pincer grasp to hold both the string and the bead.
- Demonstrate and ask child to push the string in, find it on the other side and then pull it out.
- Make sure that child swaps hands on the string once it come through the other side and continue to pull the bead down the string with their dominant hand.

### Tips:

- Discourage child to hold the beads and string with the palms of their hand – ensure that child use their thumb and index finger.
- Encourage child to lift the bead off the table and hold it in their fingers, rather than rest it on the table.
- Encourage child to pull the bead down the string rather than leave it at the top.
- You could include communication skills by asking child to request for a bead colour or shape.

# Activities for Fine Motor and Scissor Skills

## Make it Harder:

- Encourage child to copy a pattern of coloured/shaped beads or create a threading number sequence.
- Use smaller beads.



## Make It Easier:

- Use larger beads.
- Use a pipe cleaner or wooden rod instead of string.
- Use 'Backwards Chaining' so that the adult begins the task, then child complete the final step(s). Gradually add each preceding step for child to complete, until he can finish the task independently (e.g., the adult aligns the beads, while child observe and use hand-over-hand, then they pull the bead down the string. Gradually, child will take on more of the threading, until they can complete the entire task independently.

## Pre-writing Dots Picture

### Materials:

- Worksheet.
- Paint, stickers or markers.

**Outcome:** child can complete 10 accurate dots into circles with a marker pen.

### How to:

- Encourage child to hold the paper with their non-dominant hand.
- Place one dot or sticker into each circle.

### Tips:

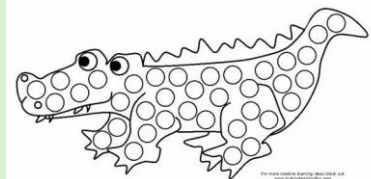
- If child is holding the marker with their hold hand, rather than their fingertips, try using a small object (no longer than 5cm; whereby it can be held with their little and ring fingers).
- Encourage the student to keep the sticker sheet raised in the air, rather than resting their hands on the table.

### Make it Harder:

- Use a thin marker or Q-Tip.
- Use smaller stickers.
- Use a worksheet with smaller dots.

### Make It Easier:

Crocodile, crocodile, big and green,  
those sharp teeth make you look mean.



## Activities for Fine Motor and Scissor Skills

- Use a worksheet with larger dots.
- Provide hand-over-hand support.
- Use bingo stampers, or paint and fingertips rather than markers.
- Use large stickers without boarder paper.
- Place the worksheet on a vertical surface (e.g., the wall) – this will also encourage shoulder girdle strengthening.

### Water Play

#### Materials:

- Containers.
- Water.
- Food Colouring (Optional).
- Spoon or pipet.

#### Outcome:

- Child can accurately transfer five scoops of toys into the container using their dominant hand, while supporting the container with their non-dominant hand.
- Child can fill the pipet and move water across ten times with their dominant hand and three times with their non-dominant hand.

#### How to:

- Place a container of water, and a container of toys covered in paint in front of child

#### Either:

- Encourage child to hold the dropper with their thumb, index and middle finger.
- Ask child to dip the pipet 'in' the water, 'squeeze' and 'open'. Then, 'lift', 'point' and 'squeeze' into the other container to clean the toys.
- Repeat with their non-dominant hand.

#### Or

- Demonstrate and ask child to hold the spoon in their dominant hand with their thumb facing upwards and fingers curled around.
- Encourage child to hold the container with their non-dominant hand.
- Demonstrate and ask child to scoop the toys from the water filled container with the spoon and transfer them to the other container.



# Activities for Fine Motor and Scissor Skills

## Tips:

- Encourage child to hold the container with their non-dominant hand.

## Make it Harder:

- Use a smaller pipet or spoon.
- Put the container on the opposite side of child's body to the hand they are using (so they must cross the body's midline to reach the container).

## Make It Easier:

- Use a sponge, instead of a pipet.

## Tressure Tie

### Materials:

- Small Toys.
- Blanket.

### Outcome:

- Child can remove ten pegs from the blanket.

**Time:** 5 minutes, depending on child's engagement.

### How to:

- Place a blanket outstretched on the floor. Place several small toys in various positions on the blanket. Wrap the blanket around each individual toy and use a peg to secure it.
- Encourage child squeeze the pegs using their thumb, index and middle finger to find the toys concealed inside.

### Make it Harder:

- Use rubber bands instead of pegs.
- Put a container on the opposite side of child's body to the hand they are using (so they must cross the body's midline to reach the container and place the peg/rubber band inside).

### Make It Easier:

- Use larger pegs, or use making tape to stick the toys on.

