

Activities to strengthen the small muscles of the hand and fingers

1. Using thumb and finger in a pincer grasp to put pennies in a bank.
2. Use a pincer grasp to put men's shirt size buttons in a bottle with a $\frac{3}{4}$ " opening.
3. Screw a jar lid on and off.
4. Wring out the washcloth during and after use.
5. Squeeze a sponge.
6. Wind a clock (not a watch).
7. String Cheerios.
8. String beads on a shoelace.
9. Purchase sewing cards and have your child complete them.
10. Lace shoes.
11. Tie knots in pieces of string or broken shoelaces; try undoing the knots.
12. Put nuts and bolts together and then take them apart.
13. Teach your child to buckle and unbuckle his seat belt.
14. Practice fastening and unfastening buttons, zippers and snaps.
15. Teach your child how to use scissors with the thumb in the small, top hole. Make sure the scissors cut easily.
16. Roll clay into rope and cut the clay ropes with scissors.
17. Use scissors to fringe edges of paper.
18. Use scissors to cut corners off paper.
19. Use scissors to cut straight lines.
20. Use scissors to cut curved lines.
21. Use scissors to cut pictures out of magazines, catalogs, Christmas cards and paste them on bags.
22. Teach your child to snap their fingers.
23. Use tweezers to pick up popcorn kernels or grains of rice and drop into containers.
24. Play with clay; squeeze, roll, press and make simple shapes consisting of two or more parts.
25. Play with Tinkertoys, Lego or other building sets. Begin with larger size if it is available.
26. Use a short pencil. Wrap a rubber band around the pencil about one inch from the point for finger placement.
27. Begin with large geometric stencils. Have your child trace around them.
28. Pretend the pencil is a motorcycle that leaves "tire tracks." Have your child go around the racetrack ten times.
29. Draw simple geometric shapes, such as a circle or square, and ask your child to trace over them. Progress to letters and numbers.
30. When your child is able to trace, encourage him to copy the simple shapes you draw.
31. Practice holding a spoon correctly while eating. The spoon should rest on the first knuckle of the middle finger and be pinched by the thumb and pointer. The pointer finger should be slightly bent.

Remember to make the activities fun. Work often, but for short periods of time. Praise the work effort, not the product. "I like the way you are working hard on that." "I like the way you try to do that well." Quit before you or your child gets frustrated or angry.

