

## Activities that develop fine and gross motor skills

By Devon Gere, OTR/L, Occupational Therapist and Ben Cox Physical Therapist

### Fine Motor:

Fine motor refers to hands and finger(tips) and the activities today focus on increasing hand strength to help your child do activities for longer and precision to help with skills needed for handwriting, clothing fasteners, feeding themselves with utensils, etc. You'll find two different supervised fine motor activities per age-group. If you have questions about what to do if some activities are too hard or too easy, talk with your therapist for suggestions!

### Infant/Toddler

- Encourage your infant to push cotton balls, pom poms, etc. through the lid of a water bottle Encourage your toddler to push spaghetti noodles or pipe cleaners through the holes of an upside down colander
- DIY paintbrushes: Use cotton balls or pom poms for infants and q-tips for toddlers and encourage painting with yogurt or pudding on high chair trays, water on the sidewalk, etc.



### Pre-school

- Scissor Sun – take a paper plate or piece of yellow construction paper cut into a circle, draw lines or model how to make little snips with scissors (it might help to draw a smaller circle on the paper/plate as an end-point of where to cut to)

- Cereal necklace – string circular cereal (fruit loops, cheerios, etc.) on a string or yarn for an on-the-go snack and great hand-eye coordination activity (it can be helpful to tape the end of the yarn to provide a bit more structure to the tip)

### School-age

- Make your own or print off developmentally appropriate mazes for your children – mazes provide an opportunity for precision handwriting, problem solving, and visual-perceptual skill growth as well! Here are a couple sites with free printable mazes:

- <https://activities.raisingourkids.com/printable-mazes/>

- <https://www.allkidsnetwork.com/mazes/>

- Basic origami – take a square piece of paper (instructions to create square paper: <https://www.origami-resource-center.com/cut-a-square.html>) and try out some of these great, basic origami designs. This activity promotes sequencing and following multi-step directions, precision of making folds, and some frustration tolerance)

- <https://www.origamiway.com/very-simple-origami-for-kids.shtml>

- <https://www.origami-fun.com/origami-for-kids.html>

## Activities that develop motor- skills (continued)

### Gross Motor:

What better way to get moving and bring some joy than to dance!?! Seriously, plan a dance party and don't let anyone, including the too-cool-teenager or boring-old-dad, get out of it. The whole family will likely be home so include everyone in the action. The babies will love to move to the beat in their own booty-shaking way, the toddlers will love to imitate the movements of the older ones, and everyone will love to watch mom or dad awkwardly attempt the Floss or Shoot. (If you don't know what I am talking about, look them up and try them out for your own motor learning experience!) There are also plenty of dance videos on the internet so search some out and everyone dance along.

To mix it up: Have a freeze dance where someone is in charge of pausing the music. When the music stops, everyone stop in the pose they are in. This will challenge balance in different positions and make each person hold one position without falling for as long as the music is paused. Let everyone get a chance to control the music so everyone has a chance to be involved. Watch how everyone rises to the challenge. If certain family members can't hold a position very long or get too tired after only one song, make dance parties a regular thing to help build up endurance and to improve balance. Everyone can participate at their own level and still have fun. Happy Dancing!

### Finding the Positive:

Share what everyone is grateful for tonight. Bonus points for older kids to share something they're grateful for about themselves or their bodies as well!



\*\*All children activities should occur under parental supervision.