

Home Learning Challenge-Physical Challenge!

Gross and Fine Motor development are key aspects of a child's overall physical development. Gross motor refers to larger physical movements that a child will make (for example from the hip or shoulder), while fine motor refers to the more controlled movements that a child will make, like pinching or twisting. Basic Gross motor movements typically develop at an earlier stage in a child's development than Fine Motor, which tend to develop once a child has gained confidence and mastery in their larger movements. We like to focus a lot on fine motor development with the children here, as when they come to us they tend to be at the stage where they are ready to take this all in. In this home learning challenge, we will look into a few ways that you can support children's fine motor development at home.

Bath Tub Learning

A great (and fun) way to develop a child's fine motor skills is to add basters to the bath tub. It is such a good way for children to practise their squeezing skills, and once they have got the hang of it, they will want to do it over and over and over again. Squeezing is a really good way to strengthen those little muscles in their hands that will eventually be used for writing and children will love the fun element of this activity. If you do not want to have a small flood after each bath time, children can also reap the benefits of this activity by transferring water from a bucket into a smaller vessel through a baster, as shown below. Maybe you could make it extra exciting by adding different food colouring and extending it to a colour mixing activity.



Dough Disco

Playdough has a huge impact on Fine Motor development for children of all ages as well as being a very calming resource to play with. It is also so easy to make with materials around your home-just flour, warm water, oil and food colouring or paint (and cream of tartar if you want to make it super stretchy!) Children can be encouraged to turn their playdough into balls, sausages, pancakes, or even snakes, and can take their fingers for a dance across a flattened playdough surface! There are videos available on YouTube which show a fantastic exercise called Dough Disco-we use it here with the children and they absolutely love it! Please see the link to a Dough Disco activity that all children will be able to access and join in with. Have fun with it and watch your child's fine motor development transform over time!



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrBsNhwzgc>

You could also think about extending this further by using different sensory materials, such as moon sand (sand and baby oil) or cloud dough (flour and baby oil), as children can mould with these and then crumble them up again. You could also have lots of fun with gloop (cornflour and water) which is fantastic because it has the properties of both a solid and a liquid; when you put pressure on it (for example rolling it into a ball) it will act as a solid but as soon as this pressure is released it melts into your hands.

Big Cook, Little Cook

Getting your little one into the kitchen is not only a great way to delegate small jobs, it is also a great way to help develop your child's fine motor skills. If you have fresh herbs, give your child a pair of scissors and encourage them to chop them up for you. It is such a lovely way for them to practise their scissor skills, as well as being a great sensory experience for them; they are sure to comment on the smell! Ripping up lettuce leaves is also a lovely way for them to strengthen the muscles in their fingers. If you have a garlic press, encouraging children to help squeeze the garlic through the holes is another fantastic way to help build strength in their hands and wrists and they will feel so proud knowing they have helped cook dinner. Our children here love using our small graters too so maybe (with a little supervision) you could encourage your child to grate some lemon zest while baking some cookies? Cookie dough has the same benefits of playdough, just with a yummy treat at the end!



Stay Active!

The NHS recommends that children of this age should have a minimum of 3 hours physical play, 1 hour of which should ideally be moderate to vigorous activity. We would like to challenge all of our children to try to get that 1 hour of moderate physical activity each day-maybe by going on a walk or a bike ride, playing in the park, or scooting somewhere. We would love to see how you all keep busy during the half-term!

