



How can I help my child learn to write? Strengthen their hands!

**66 Fine Motor Skill Activities
That Will Help Strengthen Your Child's Hands**

- Play with spinning tops. Have a contest to see whose top will spin the longest.
- Pull apart yarn.
- Hold a bowl and stir the contents when you make something like cookie dough.
- Make a batch of Play-dough and create creatures or have them roll it and make letters and numbers.
- Bounce and catch a small rubber ball.
- Make some taffy and pull it.
- Squish a soft ball.
- Play with Jacks.
- Let them be your own personal shredder and have them rip and tear paper.
- Let them clip coupons.
- Have them snip a pile of tiny scraps of paper with a safety scissors.
- Move magnets on the fridge
- Pinch a clothespin 10 times.
- Play Connect-Four and other games that they need to use their “pincher” fingers for.
- Play with Pick Up Sticks
- Eat with chop sticks

- Squeeze water out of an eyedropper drop-by-drop.
- Pick up things with a tweezers and put them in a container. When they've tired doing it on their own, switch the objects and make it a race between the two of you. Children love the quality time and competition. You can also have them play against a timer too.
- Buy 2 extra long screws and 2 bolts. Have a race with your child of who can put the bolt on the screw and then spin it down to the end and then back off the screw.
- Have them mist your plants with a spray bottle.
- Let them spray and dust the furniture.
- Have them write letters on the pavement with a squirt gun.
- Draw pictures with sidewalk chalk.
- Snap together and pull apart Pop Beads! See how long they can make a "snake" or how big they can make a necklace.
- Make an ABAB or ABC paper chain.
- Do a craft together and make a Perler bead sun-catcher ornament.
- Cut up straws and have your child string them to make a very long snake or a brightly colored necklace to wear.
- Let them make holes with a hole punch, then glue the paper dots in a line, or make their initial with them.
- Have them build something with Uni-fix cubes, Duplo's or Lego's.
- Pinch a wand and blow bubbles.
- Peel and stick stickers in straight lines.
- Pinch a "clacker" (Little metal or plastic noise maker. They used to call them "crickets" when I was little.)
- Screw and unscrew caps and jar lids.
- Hold beads and string them.
- Lace cards. If you don't have a set of lacing cards, make some by punching holes with a hole punch around a variety of colored plates. Give your child an extra long neon-colored shoestring to "whip stich" around the edge.
- Give them a ball or skein of yarn and have them wrap it around an empty toilet paper roll or empty paper towel roll. Make it a game and you do it too, seeing who can do it the fastest.
- Put dried peas or beans in a cup and have them spoon them into another cup without spilling any.
- Give them measuring spoons and have them transfer a cup of colored water into a bowl, trying not to spill.

- Have them pour something from a small pitcher into a cup.
- Let them help you water plants with a watering can that has a spout.
- Write numbers, letters, and draw shapes around a paper plate. Give your child a clothespin and have them play “I Spy a ____.” With you. When they spy the “thing” you call out, they clip the clothespin to their answer. Continue ‘til they have identified all of the numbers, letters and shapes. Make a different plate for each thing.
- Have them build towers out of Popsicle sticks, coins, blocks, milk caps, or other “stuff” you have around the house.
- Put puzzles together.
- Hold a funnel and spoon sand into it.
- Help fold the laundry.
- Help roll socks.
- Pick petals from a flower...and make a wish.
- Pick up marbles, buttons or anything small with your “pincher” fingers and put them in a cup.
- Stack pennies in a tower of ten.
- Sing “finger-play” songs and wiggle those fingers! i.e, ***Eensy Weensy Spider***
- Pretend to be monkeys and scratch all over, wiggling those fingers and sounding like a monkey.
- Help them squeeze white glue onto a piece of cardstock to make a shape, their initial or write their entire name and then using their pinchers, pick up glitter or colored sand and sprinkle on the glue.
- Have them draw secret pictures on your back and have you guess what they drew.
- You or your child draws a simple shape or letter on a piece of typing paper, and then, using a golf tee or toothpick, pokes holes in it. I call these “Pinch and Pokes” and offer a large themed-selection of them on the web site. They are pre- “dotted”.
- Have your child put rubber bands, scrunchies or hair bands around an empty paper towel roll and then move them up and off with their fingers.
- Look for geo-board and peg board games at garage sales. Children enjoy these fine motor games. Hungry Hippos and Hungry Frogs

are noisy, but great fun as well! Checkers and games that move tokens, playing pieces and marbles also help.

- Children also enjoy card games too. Even learning how to hold and flip cards and shuffling are great fine motor activities.
- Allow your child to help you baste things with a turkey baster when you're cooking. Give them extra practice "squeezing" water from one bowl into another.
- Let them sand something with sandpaper.
- Purchase a flute horn at The Dollar store, and get some finger exercise in playing notes.
- Save newspapers and junk mail. Have them crumple it up into balls and practice shooting paper "snowballs" into a bucket or wastebasket.
- Stirring cookie dough and then frosting and decorating cookies is also fun and helps strengthen hands.
- Teach them how to draw a heart and a star and they will have a blast making those symbols!
- Chose them how to wrap coins in coin wrappers and then give them a collection of pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters to sort and wrap.
- Have them use their fingers to "crawl" up your back, their body, or the wall.
- Purchase some "fun" writing utensils like gel pens, watercolor markers and simply let them trace, color and "practice" holding a writing utensil and having fun with it. Simply writing secret "I ♥ U" messages on "cool" stationery and leaving their note in a goofy place is fun for them.

Remember to encourage and praise their efforts and hang up their masterpieces!

