

Fine motor skills and  
pencil control

# Gross motor skills

- Gross motor skills are skills that involve the entire body, in particular the large muscles of the body.

Examples of gross motor skill movements would include standing, walking, crawling, rolling, as well as any controlling movements of the legs and arms.

Without these skills, we couldn't even sit up straight!

These skills then help us to be able to make smaller movements which we call our fine motor skills.



# Fine motor skills

- Fine motor skills can be defined as skills that involve the hand and fingers working together to perform tasks.

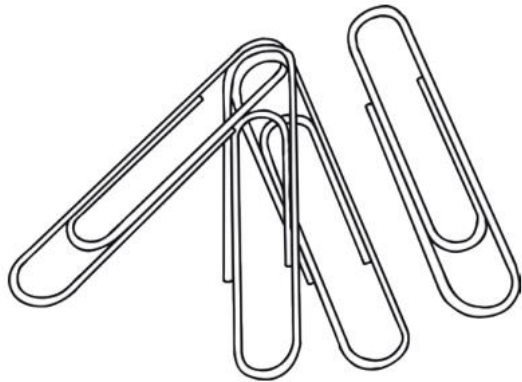
Examples of fine motor skills would include cutting, threading, eating using utensils, fastening buttons, tracing, pinching and tearing.

- It is so important to have control of our bodies when doing small movements, like when we use our hands to pick something up.
- **These important skills really help us to be able to do other things, like writing!**

# Here are some ideas to help develop your child's fine motor skills:

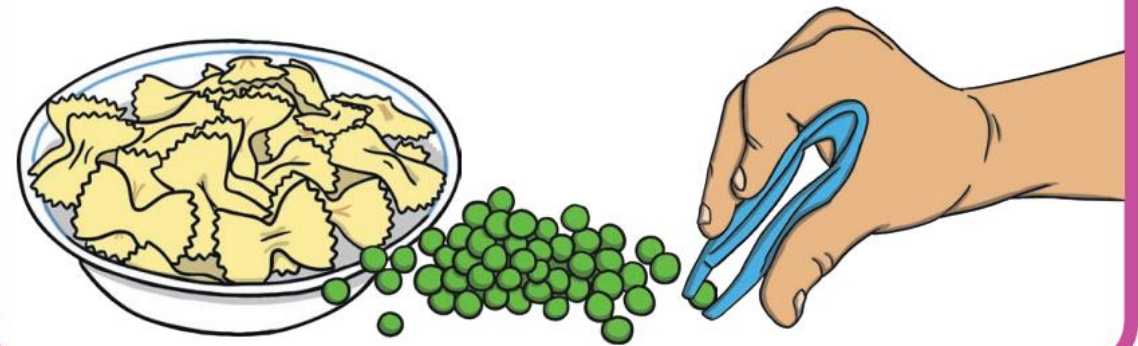
Indoor Fine Motor Skills Challenge Cards

**How many paper clips can you join together?**



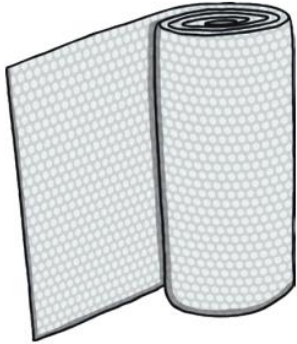
Indoor Fine Motor Skills Challenge Cards

**Can you collect 10 pieces of pasta and 5 peas from a tray using tweezers?**



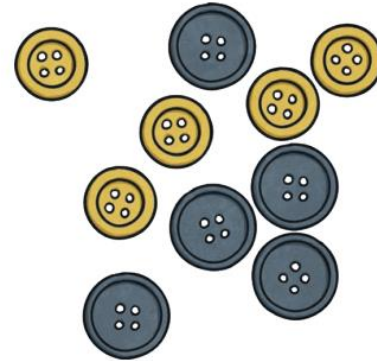


**How many bubbles can you pop with your fingers?**



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**How many buttons can you fasten?**



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**Can you fill the paper with your fingerprints?**



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Use a mini hole punch – how many holes can you make in a piece of paper, card, tissue paper even leaves?



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Fine Motor Skills

Use a colander and pipe cleaners.

Can you thread the pipe cleaners through the holes?

How many can you thread in a minute?

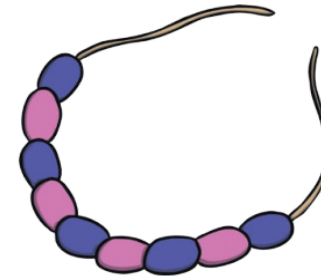


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Fine Motor Skills

How many beads or buttons can you thread on a lace or string?

Can you make a pattern using different colours?



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Fine Motor Skills

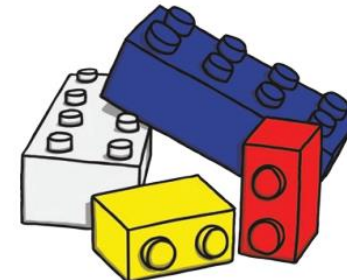
Use your thumb and finger to practise winding up toys. Watch them go, can you have a wind-up race?



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Fine Motor Skills

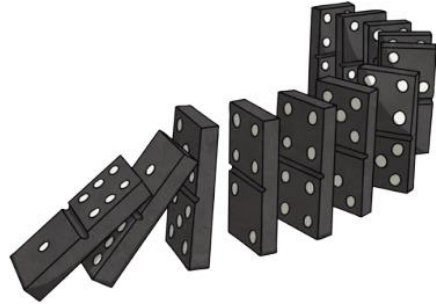
Use small building bricks to make a construction. Can you push the bricks together and then pull them apart?



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Fine Motor Skills

Pick up dominoes and make a long line next to each other, then knock them down!

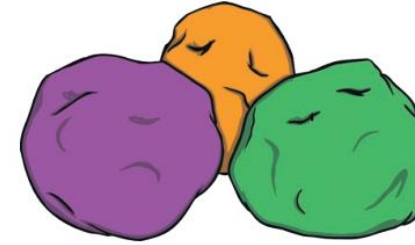


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Fine Motor Skills

Use your thumbs and fingers to make a playdough meal!

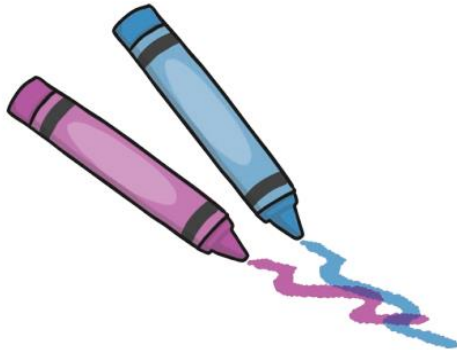
What other foods could you make?



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Fine Motor Skills

Trace around stencils with a pencil, felt tip, chalk or crayons.



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Fine Motor Skills

Roll a ball of playdough. Push in golf tees. See how many marbles you can balance. Can you make a spiky hedgehog?



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#### Fine Motor Skills

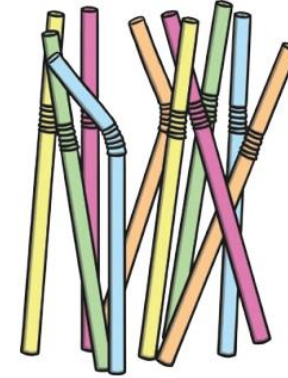
Use a sand tray and your finger, a feather, pipe cleaner, paint brush or spoon to make patterns, letters, numbers and shapes!



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#### Fine Motor Skills

Chop up straws into small parts. Thread onto string or ribbon to make a necklace or bracelet.



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#### Fine Motor Skills

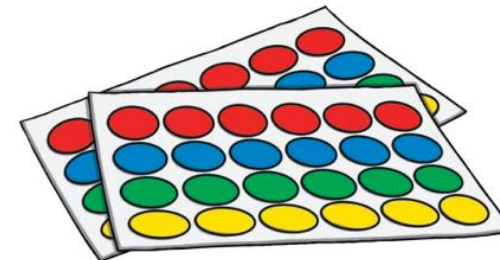
Use pegs to hang out washing on a washing line.  
How many pieces can you hang out using two pegs?



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#### Fine Motor Skills

Use colourful sticky dots, to peel and stick to create a dotty picture!



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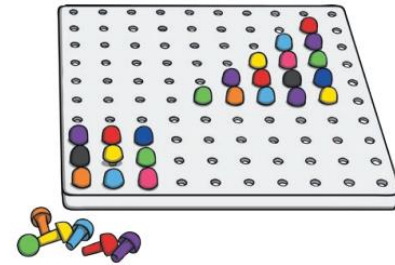
Fine Motor Skills

Sort coins into different colour groups. Then use money to post coins into a money box.



Fine Motor Skills

Use pegs and a peg board to make different pattern and pictures. Can you stretch elastic bands across the pegs to make shapes?



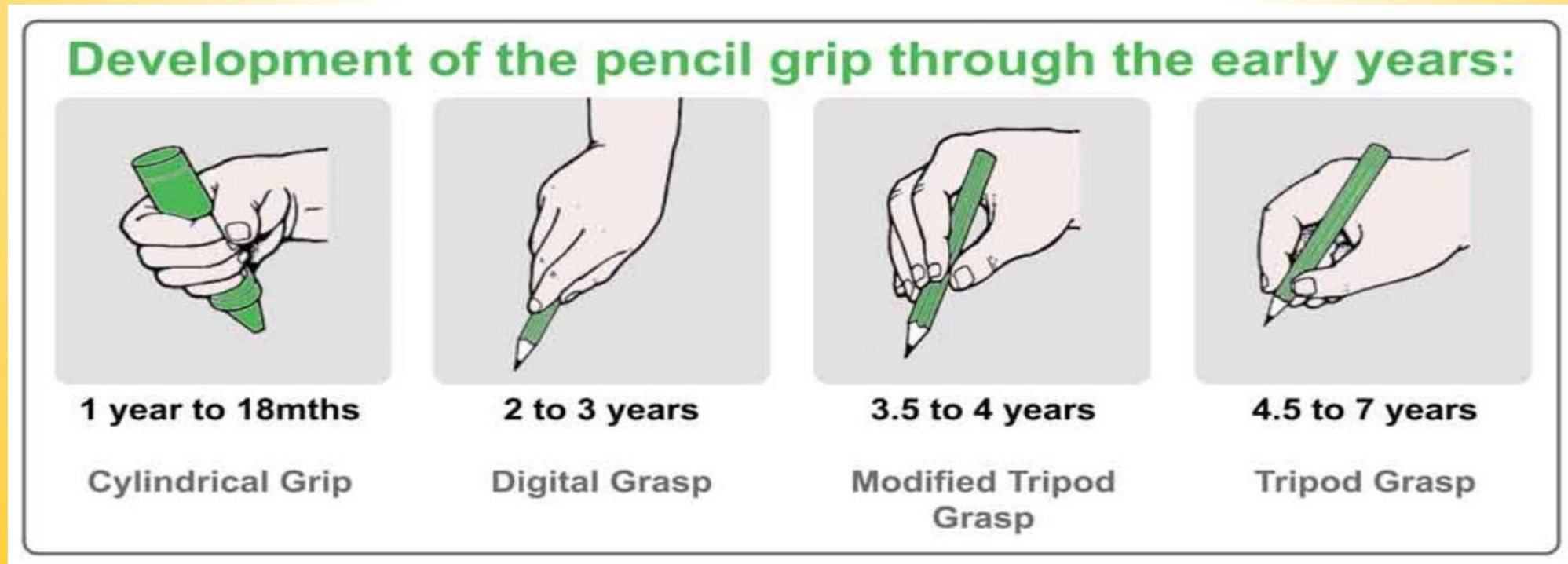
These are all fun activities that the whole family can enjoy doing together!

Whilst your child develops and strengthens their fine motor skills, it enables them to have better control of their pencil skills for writing!

The development of a correct pencil grip, as well as control and strength, is crucial in the early stages of development.

A child's pencil grip should naturally develop and progress as their muscles and posture strengthen and develop.

Below shows a guide of the ages and stages that children go through whilst learning and developing their pencil grip...



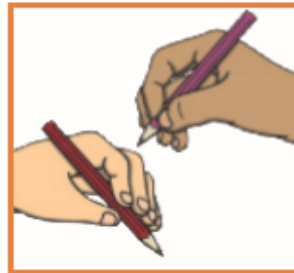
# Here is a description of each stage:



The elbow, wrist and fingers stay in a fixed position. Movement comes from the shoulder.



The elbow and the wrist stay in a fixed position. Movement comes from the shoulder.



Movement comes from the wrist. Fingertips, elbow and shoulder remain in a fixed position.



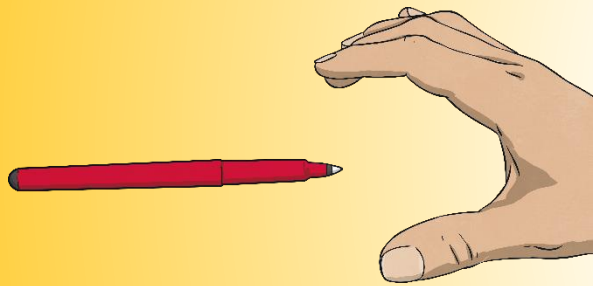
The hand rests on the table. Movement comes from the fingertips. The wrist, elbow and shoulder remain in a fixed position.



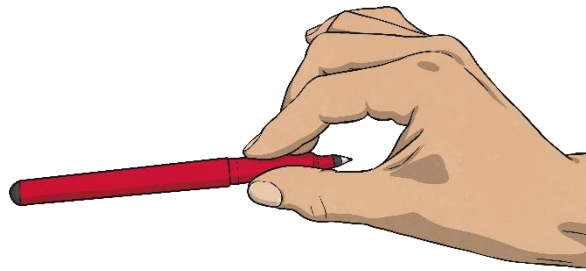
# So how can you encourage your child to use the correct pencil grip?

You might find this tip helpful:

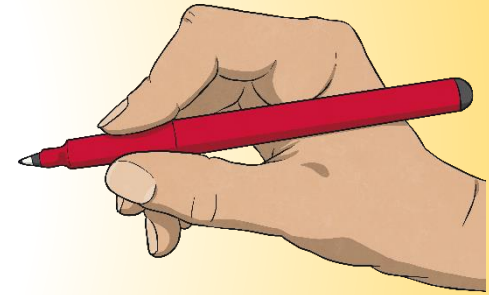
## Nip, Flip, Grip!



Nip the pencil between your first finger and thumb



Flip the pencil back so that it is resting on your hand

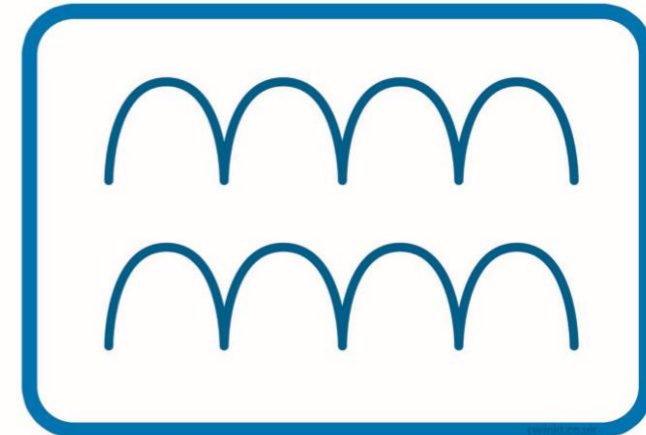
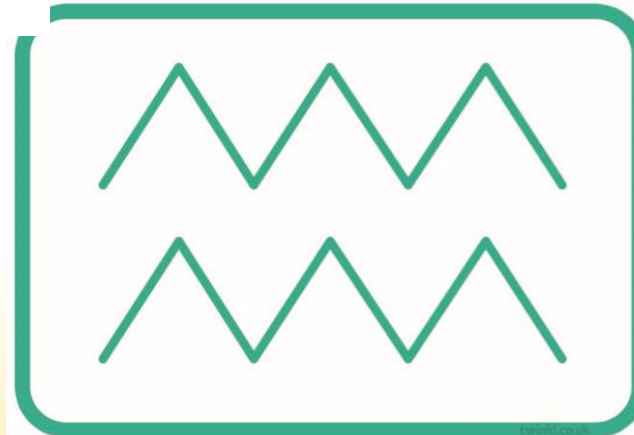
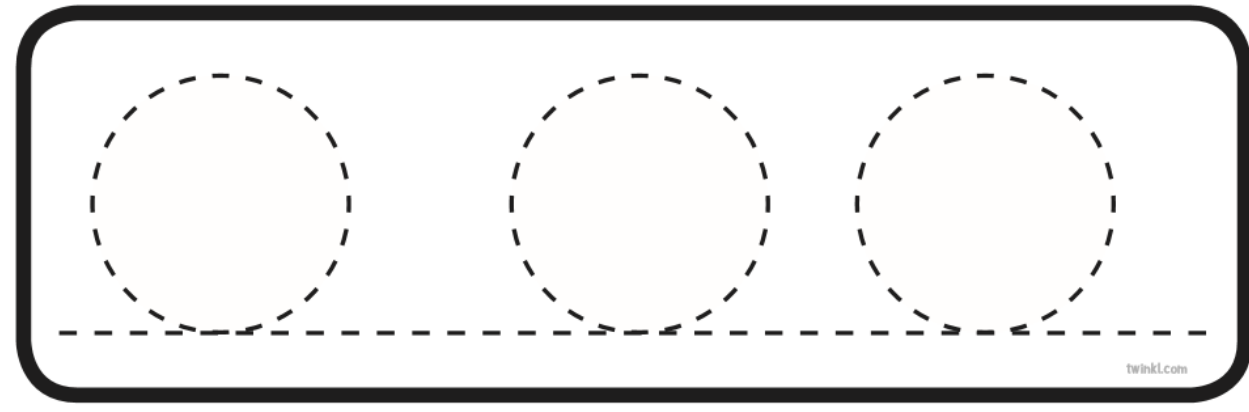
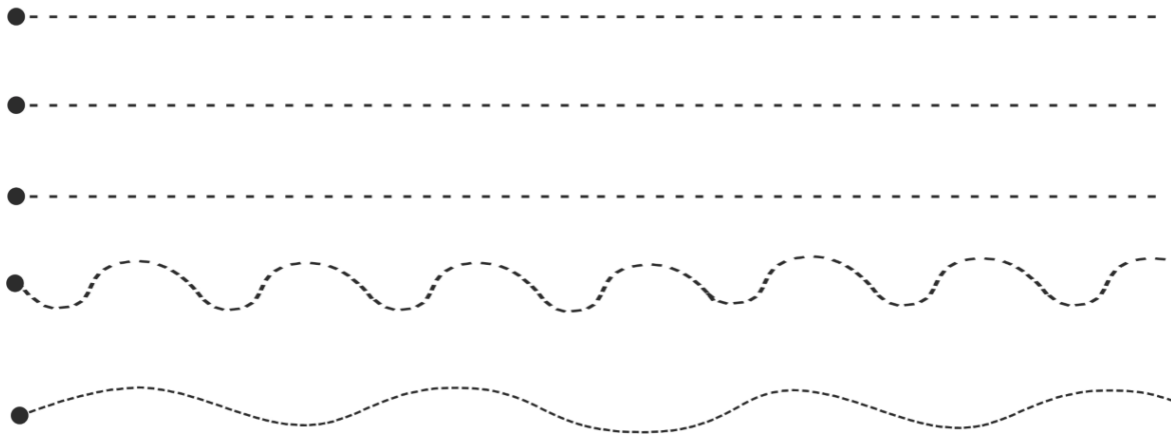


Use your third finger to help grip the pencil

This link shows a great demonstration of the Nip, Flip, Grip technique! <https://youtu.be/UPg9qpq6Hhg>

Once correct pencil grip is established, we can then learn to control the pencil to follow patterns. Tracing activities like the ones below really help to develop this skill:

Start from the dots and trace the lines from left to right.



Once we are really good at following different shapes and patterns, we can then begin forming letters and this is where your child's writing skills begin!

### Letter Formation Practice Sheet



Sheets like these are very useful when teaching your child how to form letters correctly.

# Remember that practise and more practise makes it perfect!

Remind your child that by making their writing as neat as possible means that:

- our work looks neat
- we can read our own writing easily
- other people can read our writing too

