

## Fine Motor Fun

### The beginnings..... Tips for building interest and skills for paper activities:

- Why build fine motor skills early? Because we use our hands for everything (e.g. eating, dressing, writing, texting, typing, open doors, etc...)
- Paper activities do not always involve using a pencil, crayon or marker
- Build strong fine motor skills before, or in addition, to working on pencil skills
- Make activities fun and meaningful: Sing songs, make noises, get messy
- Start short: Aim for your child to participate for 1-2 minutes at the beginning. End the activity when the child is happy.
- Introduce, Practice and Repeat: Your child will not get bored from using the same materials over-and-over again. For example, finger painting can be done on a variety of pre-cut designs to make seasonal crafts. Repetition builds skill, familiarity and confidence.
- It is about the process not the end result. Allow your child to do as much as possible without support. It is okay if it does not look like a craft at the end.

### Build strong hands

A “bad” (inefficient) pencil grasp can be the result of a child starting to colour and draw before they are developmentally ready. The child will find a way to hold the pencil or crayon in a way that feels stable to them. Drawing and colouring requires a significant amount of fine motor strength and control. Don’t let coloring and drawing be the child’s only fine motor tasks – kids should be exposed to a range of activities that will strengthen little hands and improve the movement of your fingers:

- Play with playdough- roll snakes, pinch off small pieces, squish a ball into a pancake or roll small peas using only the fingers of one hand.
- Introduce scissors- Snip thin strips of construction paper or thin drinking straws
- Beading- large beads on pipe cleaners or small beads on strings
- PegBoards- play fun games such as Lite Brite™ or Pop-up Pirate™
- Sand play- Shoveling, scooping, pouring, building
- Put coins or bingo chips into a piggy bank (or container with slot cut in the lid)
- Open containers and jars- Have snacks in a container/jar and encourage child to open it (start with the lid loose until skill develops)

### Build Interest

Build interest in paper activities by introducing fun and developmentally appropriate crafts. Some examples of paper crafts can include:

- Finger painting- can use paints, pudding, shaving cream
- Squeeze white glue and shake glitter
- Bingo dabbers
- Stamping or making hand prints
- Ripping paper into small pieces