

# A guide for families

## Fine Motor Development

Physical development is important for parents to understand because it helps them support their child's growth, recognise what is typical for each age, and identify any potential delays early. Knowing the stages of physical development—such as when a child should start holding a spoon, stacking blocks or holding a pencil — helps parents provide the right environment, activities, and nutrition to encourage healthy development.

### What is fine motor development?

Fine motor development refers to the growth of small muscle movements in the hands and fingers that allow children to perform tasks like holding a pencil, buttoning a shirt, or using scissors.

Although every child is different, fine motor muscles typically develop after gross motor muscles. To be able to develop fine motor skills, which require control and dexterity in their hands and fingers, children must have the strength in their core, shoulders and arms.

Fine motor skills involve the use of the smaller muscles of the hands, in everyday activities such as using pencils or scissors, playing with construction resources such as Lego or Duplo, and getting dressed, doing up buttons and managing shoe fastenings.

Children with efficient fine motor skills will be able to complete these fiddly tasks more quickly, more accurately and with greater confidence and feeling of success. Once children start school, their fine motor muscles enable them to use pencils and scissors for writing and creative activities, turn pages in books, use cutlery at mealtimes, use a mouse or computer to complete IT programs and manage their own self care such as doing up their coat buttons and zips.

Developing fine motor skills involves children learning to use coordinated small movements to move and handle everyday objects. It requires strength in children's hands and wrists, the ability to pinch, squeeze and twist and links between their brain and bodies to manage hand-eye coordination.

These skills are essential for daily activities at home and school. As children grow, they build strength, coordination, and control through play and practice. Supporting fine motor development at home helps your child gain confidence and independence in everyday tasks.

“BEFORE WE EVER PUT A PENCIL IN A CHILD'S HANDS, THOSE HANDS SHOULD DIG, CLIMB, PRESS, PULL, SQUISH, TWIST, AND PINCH IN A WIDE ARRAY OF ENVIRONMENTS AND WITH A VARIETY OF MATERIALS”

- Amanda Morgan

Physical development is one of the three prime areas of the Early Years curriculum and is a really big part of our everyday learning in both Team Nest and Team Wild.

The best way for children to develop fine motor skills is through plenty of active play so we give them lots of time, space, and opportunities to participate in a large variety of activities that will help them to develop these.

Even big active play can benefit our fine motor muscles at the same time - swinging and climbing are great ways to strengthen forearms and small hands. Carrying and manoeuvring the construction resources is a great wrist and hand workout too.

# Supporting fine motor skill development at Hordle Explorers

At Hordle Explorers Nursery, we try to encourage and develop children's fine motor skills through play and day to day activities and tasks. Below are some examples of how typical day to day activities in Hordle Explorers help to support your child's development.



## Helping at home

There are many fun everyday activities that your child can do when they are not at nursery that will support their fine motor development. Below are some ideas of activities that families can do together that will support their child's fine motor development and hopefully have fun with too!

- ★ Baking and decorating cupcakes or mixing, kneading and baking bread (yummy!)
  - ★ Planting seeds and plants, picking blooms and helping in the garden
  - ★ Using sponges to wash cars or other toys (maybe even your windows!)
- ★ Pouring and spraying whilst in the bath, using emptied and cleaned jugs and spray bottles
- ★ Playing with puzzles, constructing houses using bricks or magnets or building train tracks
- ★ Threading string through pasta (which you can also paint and decorate beforehand) to make jewellery such as bracelets or necklaces
- ★ Having water fights using water pistols or anything your child can use for filling and pouring
  - ★ Threading string or pipe cleaners through a colander
  - ★ Helping to peg clothes on a washing line
- ★ Building sandcastles and decorating with shells, pebbles and sticks, using buckets of water to pour water in the moat
  - ★ Tearing and screwing up pieces of paper to have a 'snowball' fight
  - ★ Practising doing up zips and buttons and playing with shoes velcro and/or laces

