

## Play and Leisure Functional / Manipulative Play

### Finger Isolation

Finger isolation is an important stage in the development of grasp. It is the ability to move certain fingers apart from the rest of the hand/fingers. When children begin using their hands, all fingers move together at the same time. As they grow and develop, they gain the ability to move individual fingers. It helps with being able to fasten and unfasten buttons, hold and control a pencil for drawing and writing, cut with scissors, type on a keyboard, play a musical instrument, tie shoelaces, and many other daily living skills.



### Activity Ideas

- Get your child to use their index finger for drawing in shaving foam, sand and/or steamy windows. Cut the index finger off an old glove to help your child isolate their index finger.



- Playing finger songs - 'Tommy Thumb Song', 'Two Little Dickie Birds', 'Round and Round the Garden' and 'Incy Wincy Spider'.
- Finger painting.
- Try blowing bubbles and getting your child to pop them with their index finger only.
- Play 'finger football' with cotton wool balls by flicking them across a table to score a goal.
- Water play with spray bottles and water squirters using their index finger on the trigger.
- Have fun pressing doorbells or light switches.
- Small hollow cylinders are great to put on index fingers, encouraging the child to take them off and put them back on again, e.g. Smarties tubes. You can also put Hula Hoops on individual fingers.





- Poke fingers into playdough (see below for homemade playdough recipe).

Please be aware that playdough (both shop bought and homemade) may contain wheat. Make sure you use a wheat free alternative if there is a known wheat allergy.

- Read a book with your child and get them to point to different items in the book with their index finger.
- Finger puppets – made out of paper or old fingers cut off gloves.

2 cups of plain flour  
2 tablespoons of vegetable oil  
½ cup of salt  
2 tablespoons of cream of tartar  
Up to 1 ½ cups of boiling water  
Food colouring (optional)

Mix the dry ingredients and oil in a large mixing bowl, add the colouring to the boiling water (if using). Gradually add the water until it comes together. Once the mixture is cool get your child to knead the dough until the stickiness has gone.

The playdough should last for up to 6 months if stored in an air tight container.



## Playdough Recipe