

Play and Leisure Functional / Manipulative Play

Pincer Grasp

The development of grasp is influenced by a child's growing interest in objects and desire to hold them. The pincer grasp is an essential grasp to develop as it is the basis for many functional tasks e.g. fastenings and tool use e.g. pencil grasp. The activity ideas below aim to develop pincer grip.



Activity Ideas

- Cut out the thumb and index finger of an old glove and get your child to do things with these fingers only e.g. unwrap a sweetie or pop the bubbles in a piece of bubble wrap.



- Fill a bowl with a mix of dried pasta, raisins, dried beans, marbles, buttons etc and then ask your child to sort them into jars and cups. Also give your child small food items for snack or cut food up small when they are finger feeding. Try grapes, raisins, apple, carrot etc. They could help you to dish the snack out into a bowl or onto a plate.
- Get your child to scribble on paper (with short chunky crayons) or the pavement (with short chunky chinks).
- Playdough – hide small toys in the playdough (see below for homemade playdough recipe) and have your child find them and pull them out, you could use marbles or 5p pieces. Making small balls with the playdough and flick them to a goal.

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.



- Tongs and tweezers - Pick up items using tweezers and salad/kitchen tongs. Start with tongs and larger items e.g. balls of cotton wool or balled up tin foil or paper and move onto smaller items with tweezers.

Precautions: Supervise your child whenever they are playing with small items as these pose a choking hazard.

Further Activity Ideas

- **Threading** - use cotton reels and laces, dried pasta tubes and wool, large beads (or drinking/craft straws cut into pieces) and buttons onto thinner laces, lacing cards (or a piece of card with holes punched into it). Encourage your child to hold the lace and the item being threaded between “Tommy Thumb and Peter Pointer”.



- **Coin Races** - ask your child to place coins in a piggy bank (or a box with a slot cut in the lid). Encourage your child to pick up the coins with their “Tommy” thumb and “Peter Pointer” finger and use their helping hand to hold the piggy bank.



- **Pegs Races** – ask your child to place clothes pegs on the side of an ice-cream tub as fast as they can. Encourage them to use their “Tommy” thumb and “Peter Pointer” finger to squeeze the pegs open. They should use their dominant hand to hold the pegs and their helping hand to hold the tub.
- **Tongs and Tweezers** - Pick up items using tweezers and salad/kitchen tongs. Start with tongs and larger items e.g. balls of cotton wool or balled up tin foil or paper and move onto smaller items with tweezers.

- **Craft Activities** – gluing and sticking are great fun. You could make collages with pieces of a magazine, dried pasta, rice, wool, string, tissue paper etc. Ripping and tearing and scrunching tissue paper is a great way to develop pincer grasp.



Precautions: Supervise your child whenever they are playing with small items as these pose a choking hazard.



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

Precautions: Supervise your child whenever they are playing with small items as these pose a choking hazard.