Ideas for Fine Motor Play

Early Years

Fine motor skills involve using the small muscles of the hand to grasp and manipulate small toys and objects. They are important for getting dressed, eating, drawing, printing and cutting. Here are some fun play ideas for fine motor skills:

❖ Play games such as: Connect 4, Operation, Snakes and Ladders, Ker-Plunk, Pick Up Sticks, Lite Brite, Lego, pegboard or card games, Tinkertoys, Pop-Up Pirate, etc.
❖ Try Rainbow Loom
❖ Do crafts that involve ripping paper, gluing small objects, coloring, drawing, cutting, beading, lacing
❖ Use smaller wax crayons, pieces of chalk to color and draw
❖ Draw with sidewalk chalk, in sand, using finger paint or shaving cream.
❖ Have your child do simple mazes, dot-to-dots and tracing
❖ Paint or draw at an easel
❖ Make shapes and letters out of play dough, cookie dough, pipe cleaners, popsicle sticks
❖ Play with magnetic shapes, letters and numbers on the fridge
❖ Use stamps and stamp pads
❖ Do puzzles, including formboard puzzles with small “knobs” to grasp
❖ Clip clothespins onto a container
❖ Build with blocks
❖ Put money in a piggy bank
❖ Play with finger puppets, do finger songs (Itsy-Bitsy Spider, Where is Thumbkin, etc.) and clapping games
❖ Help to dig and plant in the garden; sand and water play (squeeze: sponges, eye droppers, turkey basters)
❖ Pretend play with kitchen sets, tool sets, dress up clothes, dolls, etc.

These activities are meant to give you play ideas. Remember, you know your child best; you can also use similar activities that your child enjoys. And as always, with younger children, be mindful of using smaller toys and objects.

Have fun!

Prairie Spirit School Division Occupational Therapists

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