

Hand gym for fine motor skills

by Ruth Stephens, Paediatric Occupational Therapist

During time spent indoors, consider making some time to do fun fine motor activities. Many children struggle with fine motor skills and this in turn affects their writing skills, ability to do buttons, use cutlery and join in with play. It can have a knock on effect on confidence and also in turn on regulation. If you have additional time at home you can make the opportunity for some fine motor activities. This is the time to dig deep in the cupboards, go in the loft and dig out those old fashioned games!

Take a shoe - sized box and make it into your "Hand Gym" placing the following objects inside it:

- **A stopwatch:** to time activities and encourage you to beat your previous timings.
- **Therapeutic putty and small buttons and beads:** Find 10 beads in your putty.
- **Laminated black and white pictures of favourite characters (these must be simple line drawings):** Push the putty into the shape of the picture.
- **Pipe cleaners, plastic laces, pasta tubes, big beads and buttons:** Thread 10 beads/pasta tubes onto a shoe lace or pipe cleaner.
- **Large and mini clothes pegs and 'pretend clothes' made out of paper (see page 3 for ready made paper clothes):** Peg all your clothes onto the side of your hand gym box using your pegs
- **A tennis ball with a mouth cut in it "tennis ball head" (adults cutting the hole with care) and some mini pom poms:** Feed your tennis ball head 10 pom poms.
- **Paperclips:** Link 10 paper-clips together and/or un-link 10 paper-clips.
- **Pom poms in a tray of dry rice (and other small objects such as buttons, beads) and a pair of toast style tongs and/or tweezers to pick objects out with:** Transfer 10 beads or buttons with tweezers between two containers.
- **Coins:** Turn over 16 coins from heads to tails.

Do a selection of these activities each day for 10-15 minutes. Keep a record of timings to give an incentive. You could also try doing the activities with a blindfold on! (See page 2 for a chart.)



YOUR HAND GYM:

See how long it takes you to do each of the hand gym tasks OR see how many of each task you can do in 1 minute! Can you beat your time?

Activity ↓

Date →



Paper Clothes for your Hand Gym

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