

Getting Ready for Kindergarten!

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Motor skills are VERY IMPORTANT for success in school! Fine motor skills are small hand movements; gross motor skills are large muscle movements; and eye hand coordination is using eyes and hands together. All three of these are very important for success in school. Motor skills develop through lots of practice. To help support your child in getting ready for kindergarten, the following activities are designed to be "**fun activities**" that you can do with your child. They are also a fun way to just connect and engage in play together... we all need more play in our busy lives ☺

1. **Play is very IMPORTANT** in building motor skills, imagination, turn taking, problem solving, following directions (i.e., up, down, front, back, etc.), body awareness (i.e., where your body is in relation to your surroundings) and building your child's confidence.

Outdoor Play Ideas:

- *Playground play: monkey bars, slides, swings, climbing structures
- *Drawing with sidewalk chalk, ball play
- *Rolling down hills, obstacle courses
- *Wheelbarrow races, three legged races, hopscotch
- *Riding a bicycle, nature walks, digging in the sand or dirt



Indoor Play Ideas:

- *Board Games such as: Bingo, Candy Land, Kerplunk, Connect Four, Operation, or Trouble
- *Card games such as: Go Fish, Memory, or Crazy Eights
- *Building forts with sheets, chairs or other furniture; using sheets on the floor to pretend on a boat or stranded on an Island; make an obstacle course by crawling over cushions and under tables, and jumping over objects.

2. Encourage your child to **hold their pencil/crayon or marker with the pencil grasp shown below**. Colour together with your child and encourage your child to colour as often as possible as this will build strength in their fingers and improve their fine motor skills. **Broken crayons** promote a tripod grasp. You can also use:

- *Dot to dot books
- *Colour by Number books
- *Maze books www.krazydad.com/mazes



- *Drawing pre-writing shapes such as: **lines, circles, squares and triangles** - see pre-writing handout

3. Encourage your child to **use scissors** as often as possible as they will be using them in school a lot! Using scissors helps develop fine motor skills and hand strength. You can make scissor activities very simple at first by having them cut paper into pieces, then move to cutting straight lines and more complex shapes. Use **LEFT HANDED SCISSORS** if your child is left handed. Try having your child cut:



- *Straw
- *Play dough
- *Playing or Cue cards
- *Junk mail or flyers
- *Toilet paper rolls
- *Cereal boxes
- *See scissor skills checklist

4. Using **playdoh or putty** is a great way for children to develop strength in their hands and fingers as well as their imagination. Try playing alongside your child to encourage them to use it different ways - Kids love when you hide things in play dough too! See handout for play dough activity ideas.



5. **Puzzles:** 9-12 piece puzzles for ages 5 to 6 years can help your child's development. Building puzzles develops hand and visual skills that will be important for printing and reading. An easy way to make puzzles is to cut up used greeting cards and have your child put the card back together.



6. **Self-Care:** Some of the best ways to help your child get ready for kindergarten in terms of outdoor recess and snack/lunch/bathroom routines are to encourage them at home to:

*Dress and undress themselves on their own (e.g., putting on their own coat and shoes, zipping their own coat, doing snaps or buttons)

*Opening snack packages
 *Using a fork and spoon
 *Washing and drying their hands and face
 *Independence with toileting



7. **Chores:** Having your child also help out with simple home chores will help them get ready for classroom chores. Some home chores for young children include:



*Loading the dishwasher
 *Taking out the recycling
 *Wiping the table
 *Setting the table

*Cleaning the windows
 *Matching socks
 *Folding dish towels or towels
 *Feeding pets, etc.