

Month 4: Developing Hands and Fingers Toddler Activities

Finger Painting

Using only their fingers, have the children paint a picture or draw specific shapes with nothing but their hands. Simple shapes like circles, vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines, and scribbles could be drawn.

Exploring Lids

Choose a variety of containers with lids that your child can practice taking off and putting back on: Plastic food and cosmetic containers, cleaned detergent bottles, cans and pots with knobbed lids. Tuck small surprises into the containers (ball, small car, cracker, piece of cheese or fruit, empty spoons) to encourage the child to look inside.

Building Blocks

Give your toddler boxes, sponges, blocks and empty cans of various sizes to stack, balance and match to make a structure. Praise her when she tries to build with these objects.

Play-Dough

Enjoy this activity with your child and encourage her to explore! Show your child how to poke, roll, and press the play-dough using their hands, fingers, cookie cutters, or popsicle sticks. You could even use children's scissors to teach your child how to snip small pieces from the play-dough. This can also be a great time to practice using plastic utensils, showing your child how to stab small pieces of play-dough with her fork, cutting small pieces with a knife or scooping them up with her spoon.

Home-made Play-dough Recipe:

GOOP

Like play-dough this activity will encourage your child to explore.

Recipe:

- 16 oz box of cornstarch
- Food colouring
- Large, square plastic storage container or dishpan
- ½ cups of water

After opening the box of cornstarch, have your child pour it into the plastic container. Encourage her to touch the cornstarch. Give your child the water and ask her to pour it on the cornstarch and mix it together with his hands. (Note: for the best consistency of goop, the mixture should be completely wet, yet thick enough to provide some resistance when

grasping. You might need to add a small amount of water to get it to this consistency.) Place two or three drops of the desired food colouring into the mixture. Encourage your child to mix the goop again. Encourage your child to play in the goop and imitate simple movements, such as grasping the goop and imitate simple movements, such as grasping the goop in one hand and releasing it onto the other, or making it “rain” down into the container.

To make this activity harder: Use cups and utensils for stirring and pouring the goop. Add less water and more cornstarch to the mixture, increasing the strength needed to grasp and pull the goop from the container. Encourage your child to imitate simple letters and shapes in the mixture by using her index finger as a pencil and pushing through the goop. Have your child put her thumbs behind the edge of the container and, with her fingers in the goop, act like a steam shovel and scrape the goop toward the edge of the container closest to her.

Have your child assist more in the setup process by opening the box of cornstarch or twisting off the top of the squeeze dye container and squeezing the drops into the mixture.

Dressing up!

Kids love to play dress-up and not only does this lead to great imaginations, it can also lead to strengthening of arms, hands and fingers as children work to dress themselves and manage all the fasteners. Have larger fitting clothes or costumes available and take the time to teach your child how to engage and pull up a zipper, snap snaps, to do up and undo buttons. It is even appropriate to introduce early tying skills. Just encourage your child to try after you’ve taken the time to show them. Provide as much assistance as they need to be successful and praise their efforts! These dressing skills can also be practiced as children try to dress their dolls, and you can ask them to help you dress younger siblings.

Turtle – finger play

This is a turtle (make a fist)

He lives in a shell.

He likes his home,

Very, very, well.

He pokes his head out when he wants something to eat

(stick out thumb from fist)

And puts it back in when he goes to sleep (fold them into fist again)

Thumbs Up Please

Sitting with your child ask them to listen to your questions. Explain that their thumbs not their voices will answer the questions. If the answer is yes then its THUMBS UP, if the answer is no then its THUMBS DOWN. Some examples are:

“Do you like ice cream?”

“Do you like to play outside?”

“Does a cow give juice?”

Paper Basketball

In order to make a paper basketball you will need tissue paper or newspaper works well. And don't forget you'll need a "basket" and a waste basket works well for this game. Have the child crumple the paper into the smallest balls possible. Then have the child "make baskets" by throwing the balls into the container. The primary purpose of this activity is crumpling paper not making baskets. Therefore, allow the child to stand close enough to the container to make baskets fairly easily.

Confetti Makers

Cut paper into long strips approximately 6 inches by ½ inch. One snip of the scissors should cut the width of the strip completely. Show your child how to open and close the blades of the scissors. Say "open" and "close" as you demonstrate. Help your child place a pair of scissors in one hand. Demonstrate holding the paper with one hand and snipping the paper into little pieces of confetti with the other. After a small pile of confetti has been made, encourage the child to throw a handful of confetti into the air. During the cleanup phase, encourage the child to pick up each piece using the index finger and thumb. You can also use the confetti to create artwork, by gluing the confetti on a piece of paper, either randomly or following a pattern.

To make this activity easier: Use firm paper i.e. Cardstock, straws, index cards, etc. Hold the paper for your child.

To make this activity harder: Increase the width of the paper to encourage consecutive snips. Make lines on the paper and ask your child to "snip on the line".

Sponges and Buckets

You will need: 2 kitchen sponges, water and 2 small buckets or bowls. Fill one of the buckets 1/3 full of water. Demonstrate how to place a sponge in the bucket of water and fill the sponge with water. Show the child how to move the full sponge to the other bucket and then squeeze the water out of the sponge into the bucket. Encourage your child to move the water from the first to the second bucket using the sponge. When she understands how to use the sponge place the buckets further apart so that she will need to run between the buckets. Make it a race and make it fun.

Tear-it-up Designs

In order to create a tear-it-up design you will need construction paper and glue. Demonstrate how to rip paper. Show your child how one hand moves away from you and one hand moves toward you when ripping. Have your child place his hands at the top of a medium sized piece of paper. Place your hands over his hands and demonstrate how to rip paper. Make sure your child is using the pads of the fingers and thumbs rather than a whole hand grasp when ripping. Continue ripping smaller and smaller pieces of paper. Glue the ripped pieces of paper onto a paper to create a design. Or have the child fill in a template to create a flower, pumpkin, letter, shape or number. You can use a variety of types of paper like tissue paper, newspaper or magazines. Thin paper is harder to control, and thick paper provides more resistance to the fingers and thumb. Challenge your child to tear out simple shapes such as circles or squares.

Button Rub (please be careful with small pieces and your toddler)

To create this piece of artwork you will need: flat buttons or poker chips, poster board, paper, tape and crayons with paper removed. Let the children help you spread the buttons and chips on the table/floor or make “button boards” by gluing the buttons and chips on large pieces of poster board. Cover the chips with a piece of paper. Tape the corners of the paper down and have the crayons ready and close by. With the children lying on their stomachs around the edges of the paper and with a crayon have the children use their hands to feel around on top of the paper to locate the objects, and then rub their crayons over them so that the outlines appear. Continue feeling and colouring until all the objects have been discovered and coloured.

Variations:

Shape Rub: Cut out large poster board shapes, letters and/or numbers. Put them under the paper and do more rubbings.

Starlight: Use black paper and white crayons. Try it with your eyes closed or while wearing dark sun glasses.

Pinch of Play dough (please be careful with small pieces and your toddler)

To work on hand strength, everyone likes to play with play dough. In this activity give each child a large batch of play dough and have the children hide poker chips or buttons. Let the children then pinch off small pieces of play dough from the large piece. While they are pinching the play dough, have them search for the chips. When they find a chip have them clean it off and put it in a small container and then keep searching!

NOTE: Encourage the children to “pinch the play dough” with their index fingers and thumbs.

Turkey Baster Blasters

This is a fun water activity where you will need turkey basters, a small plastic swimming pool (or water table), and small margarine tubs. Fill the swimming pool with water. Float the margarine tubs in the pool. Give each child a turkey baster (found at the dollar store) and have them lie down next to the pool. Each child fills his baster with water from the pool and then squirts it into one of the floating containers. Continue until the containers are full and have sunk. Dump the water back into the swimming pool and play again.

Finger Soccer

To start create a soccer field on a 11” X 17” piece of construction paper. Your soccer ball will be a cotton ball. The object of the game is to shoot the cotton ball off the paper at the opponent’s end. The two players lay on the floor propped on their elbows, with the paper field between them. One player shoots the cotton ball by flicking it with his index finger keeping other fingers tucked into palm. The second student tries to catch the cotton ball when it crosses the middle line. If not, the first student gets to flick the cotton ball again. Then switch and have second student flick the cotton ball while the first student catches.

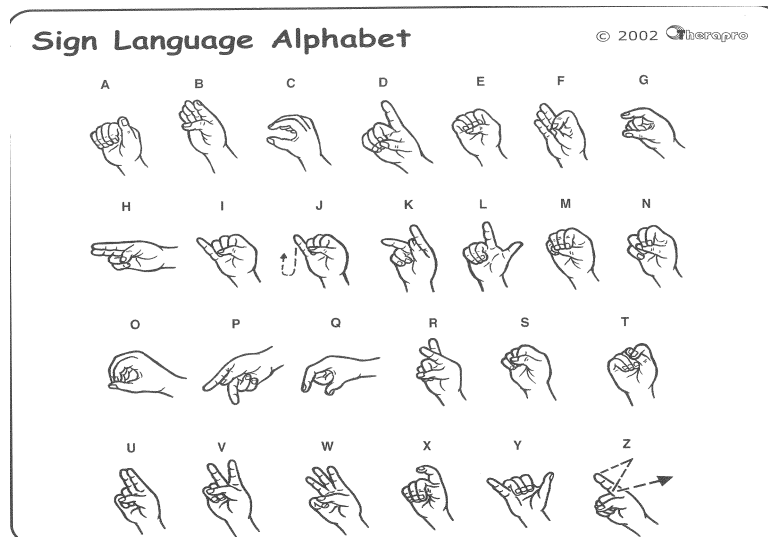
Finger Statues

All you need is your fingers to play. Start with all players putting their hands behind their backs. Adult or leader shapes fingers into a pose (for example, close hands into a fist and straighten up only the thumbs and index fingers of both hands, or use sign language alphabet). The leader shows this pose to the other players. The other players put their hands into the pose they are being shown and bring hand to front.

Variations:

1. Choose finger poses that are easier to imitate.
2. Bring one hand out in front to copy the pose while the other stays behind the back and tries to copy it.

Have the student imitate the pose with both hands in front of the body.



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