

Month 4: Developing Hands and Fingers Introduction

Objectives of this month:

1. Caregivers will learn the progression and principles of fine motor development.
2. Caregivers will learn fun and easy ways of incorporating age-appropriate fine motor activities into their environments.
3. Children will gain strength and coordination in their hands and fingers. This will improve their ability to carry out many daily activities.

Importance of Exposure to Hand and Finger Strength and Dexterity

- There are over 25 muscles in each hand; we need to strengthen each of those muscles so they can work together to complete tasks. When some of the muscles in the hand are weaker than others, certain movements and grasps become difficult to do.
- By developing the strength of hand muscles, the endurance of those muscles also increases. The child's tolerance and persistence to complete fine motor activities will increase since they won't feel tired or sore.
- Strength and dexterity are both required to complete functional hand skills, such as doing up zippers and buttons, eating with a knife and fork, and printing their name.
- Children with weak wrist muscles often compensate by hooking their wrist (bend it forward so their palm gets closer to forearm); it is harder to move the fingers and thumb together in this position and therefore harder to complete an activity.

References:

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Developmental Expectations for Hand Strength Development

0-2 months:	When a finger is placed in baby's palm, baby closes fingers in a tight grasp Baby grasps rattle and holds it for 3-5 seconds
3-5 months:	Baby picks up a rattle and moves it While on her tummy, baby grasps string and pulls it to obtain toy Baby grasps & holds a block, when supported in a seated position
6-8 months:	Baby moves rattle through space Baby hold one block in each hand Baby grasps block with thumb and 1 st & 2 nd fingers Baby bangs a cup on the table and will poke fingers in holes Baby grasps cheerio using a raking motion securing more than one, however progresses to grasping cheerio with thumb against side of curled index finger Baby holds a pen/marker/crayon with a radial palmer grasp* Baby crumples paper with 1 or 2 hands
9-11 months:	Baby claps hands 3 times Baby removes both socks Baby grasps cheerio with pincer grasp* Baby brings 2 blocks together at midline to bang them together Baby voluntarily releases and accurately releases an object Baby places 3-7 blocks into a cup
12-14 months:	Baby opens a book, Baby turns over a bottle to dump contents out Baby puts a cheerio into a small bottle Baby picks up 2 blocks with one hand and holds them Baby beginning to place large puzzle pieces into a form board, or correct shape into shape sorter Baby stacks rings on a peg Baby grasps two small objects in one hand
15-18 months:	Child stacks 2-3 blocks Child places 2 large puzzle pieces into a form board
19-24 months:	Child turns pages in a book one at a time Child stacks 4-6 blocks
25-30 months:	Child removes screw-on lid from a bottle Child stacks 8-10 blocks Child strings 2-4 beads Childs snips paper

Child translates* objects from fingers to palm, and from palm to fingers
Child can isolate her fingers
Child folds paper, producing a crease

31-36 months: Child copies 3 and 4 block patterns

37-42 months: Child unbuttons at least 3 buttons
Child laces 3 holes
Child cuts a piece of paper in 2 pieces

43-48 months: Child buttons & unbuttons 1 button
Child cuts along a line

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