



Month 6: Developing Functional Hand Skills Infant Activities

Sticker Time

Place a large sticker or ball of masking tape on the palm of your child's hand. Wait to see if she will take it off with the other hand. If she doesn't, take her other hand and help her remove the sticker.

Math in the Bath

During your child's bath, provide plastic cups, pitchers, measuring cups and sponges. Let your baby practice holding, pouring, and squeezing (not to mention making it fun to take a bath!).

Grabbing

Nuzzle your baby's tummy with your face to encourage touching your head with both arms. Use plastic sunglasses to promote your baby to reach and pull them off your head, or place a toy between your lips for reaching and removing.

Creep Crawly

Pick a toy that your child loves, and attach a string to the toy. Place the toy away from the child the length of the string. Start by you pulling the string to get the toy to you and play with it. Then place it back away from the child and hand the string to the child so they can pull it to themselves. As your child becomes more mobile they can crawl holding the string so the toy goes with them!

Musical Pots

You will need pots and pans and wooden spoons to make your child a little drummer. Have your child sit on the floor with the pots surrounding him. Show him how to bang a pot with the spoon, then it's his turn. Have one pot right side up so he can put the spoon into the pot and bang the inside walls.

Stay On The Glue Road

Using poster board and a bottle of glue construct some glue roads. To make each road, slowly drizzle a single continuous line of glue (craft or glue gun) from one edge of the poster board to the other. Be certain to include curves and zig-zags. Put the board with the variety of roads on the table or floor. Let the children pretend that their fingers are cars. Drive the cars along the different roads. Encourage the child to use only their index finger as the car. You can also have the children drive small vehicles on the roads. Add houses, stop signs, etc. for dramatic play.

Colour-In

As your infant gets older they need to start exploring holding a crayon and colouring. Choose a simple large shape or picture and outline it with a glue line at least ¼' thick is best. Allow the glue to dry to form a raised border. Once dry place the paper in front of the child with crayons. Show the border to the child and allow them to feel it before beginning to colour. Say to the child, "Colour on the paper and stay inside the raised border." The raised borders keep the child from colouring off the page and increase her awareness of the boundaries of the paper. Encourage her to use one hand to colour and the other to hold the paper.

Newspaper Crumple

Using newspaper and a basket and you have an instant activity. Take the sheet of newspaper and tear it into strips about 2 inches wide. Then allow your child to crumple them up into balls with both hands. Then throw to the basket.

Finger Painting

Start painting with your infant while seated in the high chair. Use pudding, applesauce, etc. as "paint". Model using one finger to "paint" and make a road through the paint. Or use a small carrot to use as a paint brush.

Grasping Cheerios

Encourage your child to feed themselves with small pieces of food or Cheerios on their tray of the high chair. As they get around, to encourage a pincer grasp (thumb and index finger) place the small pieces of food into a small cup or sections of an egg carton.

Blocks

Provide your child with opportunities to play with small blocks (1"-2"). Encourage her to grasp them in her fingers (and not resting into the palm). Encourage her to bang them together. Create a container to put them in, by using a coffee can and cutting a X in the lid so she can push the blocks through the top.

Spoons

While eating give your child a spoon to explore. Watch out it will be messy but she'll love it! Encourage her to put her spoon into a container and stir.

Blackboard Masterpiece

You can skip the chalk and eraser for this instant chalkboard activity. All your child needs is a paintbrush and a cup of water to create dark swirls in the residual chalk dust. Remember to try and have your toddler imitate your lines (vertical, horizontal and circles).

More Water Painting

Give your child that same paintbrush and water, then let her create a temporary work of art on dark construction paper. Or head outside and have her paint on the sidewalk, house, fence, etc.

Ephemeral Ice Drawing

Here's a very cool project for a hot day. Supply your child with several sheets of coloured paper and an ice cube to draw with. As the ice cube melts, it will create a trail of dark marks that fade as they dry and then – poof!- disappear completely. For an easy to hold twist you can make the ice in a plastic ice pop mold with a handle.

Personalized Peekaboo Board

This custom-made lift-the-flap craft has a special surprise waiting behind each door: Grandma! Teddy! The family dog! Your child won't realize he's learning about object permanence, he'll just know great peekaboo fun when he sees- and doesn't see – it. When the excitement fades, turn the picture board insert over to reveal a new set of images on the other side. This also works on he's ability to isolate his fingers into a pincer grasp to target the flap and lift!

What you will need to create a peekaboo board:

- 2 (12 X 12 pieces of card stock, one white, one decorative)
- Clear Con-Tact paper
- Pencil and ruler, or attached template
- Craft knife
- Electrical tape
- 16 (1 to 2 inch) images, such as family photos, stickers, and pictures from magazines
- Glue stick

Instructions:

1. Cover one side of the decorative card stock with ConTact paper. Fold the card stock in half, Con-Tact paper side facing out.
2. Unfold the card stock and lay it flat, uncovered side up. Using the pencil and ruler or the template, mark eight 1 ½” squares on one half of the card stock as shown. Cut open three sides of each square with a craft knife, then lightly score the fourth side to create a hinge.
3. Fold the card stock in half again and seal the sides with electrical (or book tape) to form an envelope.
4. Cut the white card stock in half. Trim a half-inch off one short end of one half, then insert the trimmed piece into the envelope. Lift the flaps, then trace each square onto the insert. Remove the insert, flip it over, and repeat the tracing. Remove the insert again and glue an image on each drawn square, then cover both sides with Con-Tact paper. (Repeat with the other card stock half, if desired.) Place the insert back into the envelope, and it's ready to use with your tot.

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