

FINE MOTOR SKILLS

“Fine motor” refers to the movements we make with the small muscles of the hands. Children start to use their hands right at birth to explore their own bodies and the world around them. Their fine motor skills develop as their whole body starts to move and become more stable. They also learn to do more things with their hands as their cognitive and social/emotional skills improve.

INFANT DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

Between the ages of 0-4 months, your baby will:

- Turn her head toward sounds and voices
- Stare at bright objects and follow them with his eyes
- Move her arms together and apart
- Bring his hands to his mouth, and possibly suck on his own hands or fingers
- By 4 months, lift his head and shoulders off the floor when laying on his tummy

Between the ages of 4-8 months, your baby will:

- Grab onto objects within her reach
- Roll over to explore and get to objects
- Prop himself up on his arms when laying on his tummy
- Sit independently for brief periods
- Pass objects from one hand to the other hand

Red Flags for Fine Motor Development (0-8 months)

- She still keeps one or both hands clenched in a fist
- His arms seem very stiff
- She is not able to prop herself up when laying on his tummy
- She is not able to pick up objects within her reach
- He is not able to sit by himself for short periods
- He is not able to roll over to get objects

Between the ages of 8-12 months, your baby will:

- Reach, grab, and put objects in her mouth
- Pinch small objects (e.g. cheerios) with thumb and pointer finger
- Move objects from one hand to the other
- Drop and pick up toys
- Bang two objects together
- Let go of objects on purpose
- Put things into containers (with large openings) and take them out again
- Bite and chew toys
- Hold a spoon (but not yet feed herself)
- Hold his own bottle
- Hold out an arm or leg to help with dressing
- Wave hello or goodbye

Red Flags for Fine Motor Development (12 months)

- He is not able to grasp toys and let them go again
- She does not bring toys to her mouth or bang them together
- He is not able to bring his hands together at the middle of his body (e.g. clapping)
- She is not able to feed herself finger foods, using her thumb and pointer finger to pick up food
- His movements seem shaky or stiff
- He is not able to move around on the floor to get the toys he wants
- She is not able to put objects into a large container
- His hands are kept in a fist position
- She is not able to hold her bottle by herself

TODDLER DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

Between the ages of 12-18 months, your child will:

- Point to pictures in books
- Build a tower using 2 blocks
- Use her hands together to hold a toy at the middle of her body
- Scribble with a crayon
- Point with his pointer finger
- Hold her own cup and drink, with some spilling
- Feed himself using a spoon, with some spilling
- Remove his own socks
- Put her hat on her head

Red Flags for Fine Motor Development (18 months)

- Your child is not able to use a pincer grasp (thumb and pointer finger) to pick up small objects
- Your child does not point at things using his pointer finger (e.g. pictures in a book)
- Your child is not able to put things into containers
- Your child is not able to use both hands during play (most children do prefer one hand over the other)
- Your child's movements seem shaky or stiff

Between the ages of 18 months and 2 years, your child will:

- Build a tower with 4-6 blocks
- Put 4 rings on a stick
- Put large pegs in a pegboard
- Turn pages of a book, 2 or 3 at a time
- Scribble
- Turn knobs
- Throw a small ball
- Paint on paper using her whole arm to move the paintbrush
- Imitate you drawing a vertical line (|) and a circle (it may not be accurate)
- Begin to string large beads
- Feed herself using a fork and spoon
- Pull up a large zipper
- Start to hold a crayon with her fingers, usually with her hand at the top of the crayon
- Put large shapes into a shape sorter

Red Flags for Fine Motor Development (2 years)

- She cannot imitate you drawing a vertical line (|)
- He is still putting lots of toys in his mouth
- He is not able to put a simple, large puzzle piece into a wooden puzzle
- She is not able to put a simple shape into a shape sorter
- She cannot feed herself with a spoon
- He cannot stack 2-3 blocks on top of one another

Between the ages of 2-3 years, your child will:

- Fold paper in half
- Draw straight lines and circles
- Imitate you drawing a cross
- Turn single pages in a book
- Snip the edges of paper with scissors (by 30 months)
- Hold crayons using the thumb and fingers
- Use one hand more often than the other for most activities
- Build a tower of up to 9 large blocks
- Put together large linking blocks, such as Megablocks
- String ½ inch sized beads
- Cut across a piece of paper (by 3 years)
- Use a fork to eat
- Manage large buttons
- Put on some items of clothing with supervision

Red Flags for Fine Motor Development (3 years)

- His movements seem shaky or stiff
- His arms or hands seem very weak
- She is still holding a crayon with a full fist
- He is not able to hold scissors and snip on paper
- He is not able to draw straight lines or circles
- She cannot stack up several blocks

PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

Fine Motor Skills (colouring, cutting, beading, lego, drawing)

Between the ages of 3-4 years, your child will:

- Build a tower of 9-10 small blocks
- Use playdough to make balls, snakes, cookies, etc.
- Build things with large linking blocks, such as Megablocks or Duplo
- Draw a circle by herself
- Copy a cross (+)
- Imitate you drawing a square
- Start to hold a crayon or pencil with a mature grasp (like an adult)

- Cut across a piece of paper
- Start to cut along a straight line
- Manage buttons
- Put on most items of clothing by herself, but may still need help with shirts and jackets
- Feed himself well with a spoon and fork

Red Flags for Fine Motor Development (4 years)

- His movements seem shaky or stiff
- Her arms and hands seem very weak
- She is not able to cut across a piece of paper with scissors
- He cannot copy a cross (+)
- She is not able to draw a circle and straight lines by herself
- She cannot string ½ inch beads onto a lace
- He cannot use a fork and spoon well
- She is not able to put on her own pants, loose socks and shoes

Between the ages of 4-5 years, your child will:

- Start to use one hand consistently for fine motor tasks
- Cut along a straight line with scissors
- Start to cut along a curved line, like a circle
- Draw a cross by herself (+)
- Copy a square
- Begin to draw diagonal lines, like in a triangle
- Start to colour inside the lines of a picture
- Start to draw pictures that are recognizable
- Build things with smaller linking blocks, such as Duplo or Lego
- Put on his own clothing, but may still need help with fasteners like buttons/zippers
- Start to spread butter or cut soft foods with a small table knife (with supervision)
- Start to learn to print some capital letters

Red Flags for Fine Motor Development (5 years)

- His movements seem shaky or stiff
- Her arms and hands seem very weak
- He is not able to cut along a straight line
- She is not holding her crayons or pencils with her thumb and fingers
- He is not able to draw a circle, square and cross (+)
- She is not able to put on her own shirts, pants, socks, and shoes (with some help with fasteners)
- He is not able to feed himself well with a spoon and fork

From Children's Therapy and Family Resource Society in Kamloops, BC

- See more at: <http://www.kamloopschildrenstherapy.org/fine-motor-skills-preschool-milestones#sthash.Sr1ix6fo.dpuf>