

Month 6: Developing Functional Hand Skills Introduction

Objectives of this month:

1. Caregivers will learn the progression of the development of functional hand skills
2. Caregivers will learn the progression of pencil grasps
3. Caregivers will learn fun and easy ways of incorporating age-appropriate fundamental hand skills into their environments.
4. Children will use their hands in a purposeful manner in order to complete meaningful activities.

Importance of Developing Functional Hand Skills

- Children develop their ability to use their hands functionally in response to the environmental and cultural needs they are exposed to; the earlier we expose children to those functional activities, the more opportunities they have to learn and develop their hand skills.
- When children enter school, the majority of the curriculum activities are based on their ability to functionally use their hands (i.e. printing). If children do not have those base skills, it will be more difficult for them to be successful. By exposing children to functional hand skills and developing those abilities at a developmentally appropriate age, children are more likely to be successful and willing to learn.

References

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Developmental Expectations for Functional Hand Skills

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 a pen/marker/crayon with a palmer grasp Baby grasps & holds a block, when supported in a seated position
6-8 months:	Baby moves rattle through space 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/crayons with a radial digital grasp Baby crumples paper with 1 or 2 hands
9-11 months:	Baby claps hands together 3 times Baby removes both socks Baby grasps cheerio with pincer grasp* Baby places 3-7 blocks into a cup Baby brings blocks together at midline to bang them together
12-14 months:	Baby begins to scribble on paper using a marker Baby opens a cardboard book Baby stirs a spoon in a cup
15-18 months:	Child grasps marker with thumb and 1 st finger toward paper, and remaining fingers are around the marker Child releases a Cheerio in to a small container
19-24 months:	Child turns pages in a book one at a time Child stacks 4-6 blocks Child snips paper Child makes circular scribbles Child imitates* a vertical line Child removed shoes with laces untied Childs drink from a cup using 2 hands
25-30 months:	Child imitates* a horizontal line Child fold paper in half Child unzips and zips up a zipper once clasped Child drinks from a cup using 1 hand

31-36 months:	Child copies* a circle Child uses a digital pronate grasp with crayons Child brushes teeth in imitation
37-42 months:	Child unbuttons at least 3 buttons Child copies* cross Using scissors, child cuts paper in 2 pieces Child uses a static tripod grasp Child stabilizes the paper when cutting and colouring with his helper hand Child brushes teeth with verbal cues Child washes face and hands
43-48 months:	Child buttons & unbuttons 1 button Child cuts along a line
49-54 months:	Child draws a square Child cuts out a circle and square Child begins to print uppercase letters
55-60 months:	Child colours between vertical lines Child begins to print lowercase letters (if uppercase letters are mastered) Child cuts complex shapes within 1/8" of all lines

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Functional Hand Skills Equipment

Crayons (thin, broken in half)

Scissors

Stickers

Small pip-squeek markers (thin)

Cherrios

Finger paints (pudding, applesauce, and paint)

Potatoes

Toothpicks

Coloured hair gel

Zip plastic bags

Straws

Yarn

Variety of craft supplies (twine, cardboard, styrofoam, waxed paper, newspaper, etc.)

Bingo chips

Q-tips

Variety of paper (cardboard, cardstock, construction paper, newspaper, tissue paper, etc.)

Squeeze bottles

Beads (variety of sizes, large, medium, and small)

Hole punchers

Clothes pins

Medicine Droppers



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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- Family Fun June 2009 www.familyfun.com*
- Busy Bee Kids Crafts www.busybeekidscrafts.com*

Month 6: Developing Functional Hand Skills Toddler Activities

Green Thumb

Materials:

- Large plastic cup
- Handful of small stones
- Dirt
- Seeds (marigold or bean seeds grow easily)
- Small hand shovel
- Small cup of water

Have your child place a layer of stones in the bottom of the cup. Encourage her to pick up the stones using her thumb and index finger. Help your child use the shovel to scoop dirt into the cup, filling it to 1 inch from the top. Have the child poke a hole into the dirt in the centre of the cup with her index finger. Have her put one of two seeds into the hole, using her thumb and index finger. Help the child scoop more dirt into the cup, filling it to ½ inch from the top. Show her how to pat the dirt to pack it. Help your child pour enough water to moisten the soil. Set the plant in the window. Continue to water the seed and watch the plant grow.

Potato Porcupine

In order to make a potato porcupine you will need a potato and some toothpicks. To start demonstrate to your child your to make the quills of the pretend porcupine by sticking the toothpicks into the potato. Encourage your child to hold the potato still on the table surface with one hand and push a quill into the porcupine with the other hand, using the pads of the index finger and thumb. Don't forget to get creative by adding eyes, nose and a mouth with other foods or items.

To make this activity easier: Make the potato softer, peel it or put it in the microwave for a few minutes.

To make this activity harder: Use a variety of vegetables or fruit for different amounts of resistance.

Squash, cucumber, pear or kiwi will work.

Gel Writing

In order to make your child their own gel writing pad you will need coloured hair gel (such as Dippity-Do brand) and a self-sealing (Ziploc) plastic bag. If the gel isn't dark enough add some food colouring. Place the gel into the plastic bag. Have your child help you with this step, either squeezing the tube of gel or using a spoon to scoop the gel from the jar to the bag. Make sure not to fill the bag too much and once there is enough seal the bag, in order to avoid any accidents or spills you may want to double bag the gel. Now you're ready to write in gel. Lay the gel bag flat and using your index finger like a pencil, model simple impressions in the gel such as dots, simple lines or shapes. Encourage your child to hold all other fingers in a fist while using just the index finger to write. It may help if they hold something small in their hand. Erase the image by gently patting on the surface. Encourage the child to imitate your impressions.

Thumbuddies In Ink

To make Thumbuddies you will need non-toxic inkpads, paper and markers. Demonstrate how to make fingerprints, one at a time, by straightening each finger and pressing the pad into the inkpad and then onto the paper. Encourage the child to use all fingers to decorate his paper with fingerprints. Make sure your child tucks the remaining fingers into his palm. Invite the child to use a marker to attach arms and legs to each fingerprint.

To add challenge to the activity tape the paper to the wall.

Snip-It Designs

This activity is very similar to the tear-it-up designs explained above. Provide your child with ½” strips of paper (the stiffer the paper the easier the activity, so you may want to start with cardstock and progress to construction paper). Instruct your child to hold the strip with one hand and use the scissors with a thumbs up pattern with the other hand. Have your child to target the strip and snip numerous times to make small pieces. Glue the cut pieces of paper onto a paper to create a design. Or have your child fill in a template to create a design. If your child has difficulty with snipping paper have her snip straws and par-cooked pasta noodles, they are easier to handle in order to be success in snipping.

*See attached templates of a mitt and snowflake to fill with the snipped paper.

Make a Straw Necklace

In order to make a straw necklace you will need, coloured plastic straws, scissors and wool or thread. Have your child hold the scissors with one hand and the straw with the other (if he needs help holding the straw that's o.k. just make sure you are placing the non-cutting hand on the straw so he can get used to the pattern). Allow him to cut the straw into pieces. Once cut thread the straw pieces onto the wool that was previously cut to the proper size. After the straw pieces have been threaded tie the ends of the wool together and you will have a straw necklace ready to wear.

Stencil Fingerpainting

Fingerpainting is always fun! Before you start cut 8-10 stencils out of coffee can lids or Styrofoam meat trays. Let the child choose the stencil they would like and tape it to construction paper. Then let her spoon a small amount of finerpaint into the middle of the stencil and using her finger to spread it around until the whole area inside is covered. Encourage her to use only one finger to spread the fingerpaint and the opposite hand to hold the stencil.

Variations:

- Stencil Murals: Cover the table with craft paper or butcher paper and stencil all over it.

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.

Kooky Cut-Ups

Put several different materials in a shoe box (yarn, twine, straws, cardboard, Styrofoam meat trays, packing peanuts, waxed paper, etc.) and give your child a pair of scissors and the same number of small boxes as materials or a collage box. Let the children cut the materials into small pieces and put them into the collage box (or sort each material into their own container). Use these materials for gluing and pasting activities.

Sticky Fingers

To play sticky fingers you will need bingo chips, child-sized gloves and self-adhesive Velcro dots. Adhere a Velcro dot to each chip and to the fingertips of each glove. Lay the chips on the table, Velcro side up. Have the child put the glove on one hand. Let him pick up chips by touching the Velcro on his fingers to that on the chips keeping his fingers apart. After a child has filled his glove with chips he can remove them and put them back on the table. Allow him to repeat, using the same or opposite hand.

Colour-In

Choose a simple shape or picture and outline it with a glue line at least $\frac{1}{4}$ " 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 you are ready for a game of Newspaper Crumple. Take a sheet of newspaper and tear it into strips about 2 inches wide, or start the strip and allow your toddler to finish tearing the length of the paper. Then have your child crumple the paper into balls and then throw to the basket!

Q-Tip Flips

Using paint and Q-Tips its time to create. Hold the Q-Tip in the middle with a tripod grasp (thumb, index and middle fingers). Dip it in one colour paint. Using only the thumb, index and middle fingers, flip the Q-Tip over and dip it in another colour paint. Now paint a picture, letter, or design with coloured dots, alternating between the two colours. Be sure the student is flipping the Q-Tip with fingers, not wrist. Keep checking to make sure the student is using a tripod grasp.

Sticker Pictures

Make a picture using stickers! Have fun! Use the index finger and thumb to take the stickers off the backing paper. Try to encourage the child use the other hand to stabilize.

Straw Cut & String

Cut straws into inch-long pieces, using proper scissor grasp. Now it's time to string the straw pieces. Using two fingers to hold the straw pieces and the other hand to hold the string (or pipecleaner). Push the string through the straw. Continue pushing it through but never letting go, until the straw piece is at the end of the string. Make a bracelet by knotting the two ends together once the straw pieces have been strung.

Popcorn Sheep

All you need is some popcorn and glue and your toddler is ready to make a sheep. Draw a picture (or use a colouring page template) of a sheep. Uses popcorn have them glue inside the sheep to create.

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.

Papier Mâché Bowls

This cute craft introduces toddlers to papier-mâché, and she'll love the process of goopy hands transforming tissue paper into a colourful little container that will delight your little artist. To create this bowl you will need: 2 small bowls, cooking spray, plastic wrap, ¼ cup of flour, ½ cup of water, paintbrush, 2 sheets of tissue paper cut or torn into roughly 2" x 2" pieces, and a bowl of vinegar (optional). To prep for the creation your child can help by cutting or tearing the strips of tissue paper into squares.

Instructions:

1. Coat the outside of one small bowl with cooking spray, then cover it tightly with plastic wrap.
2. In the other bowl, whisk the flour and water together until smooth (remember this is for the kids so let them pour ingredients and stir).
3. Have your child brush the paste onto the plastic wrap, then cover it with pieces of tissue paper. She may need your help pressing down the pieces so that they stick to the paste. When the bowl is covered with one layer, have her brush on more paste and add another layer. Continue until you have a thick, defined bowl shape; you'll need at least five layers. If the brush gets too goopy dip it in white vinegar, then rinse it with water. Let the papier-mâché dry (at least 12 hours).
4. Gently remove the papier-mâché bowl from the bowl mold and peel the plastic wrap away. For a smooth edge, trim the bowl's rim with scissors.

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- Busy Bee Kids Crafts www.busybeekidscrafts.com
- Shirley's Preschool Cutting Activities www.shirleys-preschool-activities.com



Month 6: Developing Functional Hand Skills Pre-School Activities

Gel Writing

In order to make your child their own gel writing pad you will need coloured hair gel (such as Dippity-Do brand) and a self-sealing (Ziploc) plastic bag. If the gel isn't dark enough add some food colouring. Place the gel into the plastic bag. Have your child help you with this step, either squeezing the tube of gel or using a spoon to scoop the gel from the jar to the bag. Make sure not to fill the bag too much and once there is enough seal the bag, in order to avoid any accidents or spills you may want to double bag the gel. Now you're ready to write in gel. Lay the gel bag flat and using your index finger like a pencil, model simple impressions in the gel such as dots, simple lines or shapes. Encourage your child to hold all other fingers in a fist while using just the index finger to write. It may help if they hold something small in their hand. Erase the image by gently patting on the surface. Encourage the child to imitate your impressions.

To make this activity harder:

- Have your child hold a small pencil and press the gel bag with the eraser end.
- Have your child practice first tracing, then copying, then creating letters in the gel.

Thumbuddies In Ink

To make Thumbuddies you will need non-toxic inkpads, paper and markers. Demonstrate how to make fingerprints, one at a time, by straightening each finger and pressing the pad into the inkpad and then onto the paper. Encourage the child to use all fingers to decorate his paper with fingerprints. Make sure your child tucks the remaining fingers into his palm. Invite the child to use a marker to attach arms and legs to each fingerprint.

To add challenge to the activity tape the paper to the wall.

* See the Fingerprint Calendar attached as an example to use to create thumbuddies.

Snip-It Designs

Provide your child with ½" strips of paper (the stiffer the paper the easier the activity, so you may want to start with cardstock and progress to construction paper). Instruct your child to hold the strip with one hand and use the scissors with a thumbs up pattern with the other hand. Have your child to target the strip and snip numerous times to make small pieces. Glue the cut pieces of paper onto a paper to create a design. Or have your child fill in a template to create a design. If your child has difficulty with snipping paper have her snip straws and par-cooked pasta noodles, they are easier to handle in order to be success in snipping.

To make this activity more challenging:

- Have your child snip wider strips of paper so she'll have to make consecutive snips to cut across the paper.
- Have your child target a line to cut along.

* See the templates of the mitten and snowflake as shapes to fill in. Remember they can also fill in block letters or numbers.

Name in Lights

You will need some construction paper, a marker, a carpet square or carpeted area on the floor and a golf tee. To start print your child's name in pencil on the paper and then using the marker make small dots along the letters as a guide where to poke holes. Make sure she uses her thumb and index and middle fingers to hold the golf tee and the other hand to stabilize the paper on the carpet. Instruct her to push the tee through the paper at each dot. Direct her to poke the dots in a consecutive order, starting at the top and left and proceeding down and to the right, as in reading and writing. When the child is completed hold the name up to the window to see her name in lights!

Adaptations:

- Teach simple shapes by using the same procedure for creating circles, squares or triangles.

Big-Button Button-Up

To practice the skill of buttons you will need a buttoning board or vest with 3 or more buttons $\frac{3}{4}$ " to $1\frac{1}{4}$ " in diameter. Or you can make a buttoning board by sewing buttons and buttonholes on a piece of fabric. Before you begin demonstrate how to push the buttons through the buttonholes. Then instruct the child to button all the buttons and unbutton them again (the child should try at least 3 buttons). Encourage the child to continue practicing until he or she becomes proficient with them.

To make things more interesting use buttons that close a pocket (or make them yourself) and hide a treasure in the pocket for the child to find.

Adaptations:

- If you are noticing that this activity is very challenging and your child is becoming frustrated with it, make the buttonholes twice the size of the buttons, and once they become proficient with it decrease the size of the holes.
- When they get really good vary the size and type of buttons used.
- To make things more difficult have the child wear the garment to button up. Try to provide clothes with large buttons for the children to use when playing dress-up or house.

Tasty Shapes

In order to make some tasty shapes you will need a squeeze bottle of tube frosting, ketchup, pudding, or applesauce. And laminated sheets with shapes, letters, or numbers on them. And of course something to clean it up. Demonstrate to the child how to squeeze the bottle and follow the line of the shape without falling off the line. Now it's the child's turn. Be sure they use their dominant hand, and encourage them to go slowly. When the child is finished wipe the laminated sheet clean and start again!

Sticky Letters

Using glue and yarn the child will trace upper case letters with this activity. Start with the letters of the child's name, lay them out and see if she can identify the letters. Then using a bottle of glue (or glue stick) have the child trace over the lines of each letter with glue. Remember to instruct the child to always start the letter at the top. Then have the child go over the lines again (with the same pattern in starting at the top), sticking the yarn to the glue.

Options:

- Tracing shapes or numbers.
- Tracing their whole names.
- Have the child match their yarn letters to other letters in the classroom.

Stencil Finger-painting

Finger-painting is always fun! Before you start cut 8-10 stencils out of coffee can lids or Styrofoam meat trays. Let the child choose the stencil they would like and tape it to construction paper. Then let her spoon a small amount of finger-paint into the middle of the stencil and using her finger to spread it around until the whole area inside is covered. Encourage her to use only one finger to spread the finger-paint and the opposite hand to hold the stencil.

Variations:

- Stencil Murals: Cover the table with craft paper or butcher paper and stencil all over it.

Picture Puzzles

Encourage the children to draw and colour pictures large enough to cover or fill most of their construction paper (or use a colouring page with a ready made picture for them to colour in). As each child finishes his picture, ask him to help you draw several lines and curves from edge to edge thus making a puzzle design. Let the children cut out their pieces following the line (or tear along the line). Now the children can put the pieces together to remake their pictures.

Beads in a Bottle

To complete this activity you will need 5 beads (about ½” diameter) and a small bottle such as a spice jar or hotel shampoo bottle. Have the child hold 5 beads in the palm of one hand (dominant hand). Hold the bottle in your other hand. Work one bead at a time from your palm to holding the bead with your thumb and first finger. Then drop the bead into the small bottle. Do this with all 5 beads. Try not to let any beads fall!

Flippers

Using a plastic milk/juice container cap is all you need to get the game of Flippers started. The goal of the game is to see how far you can flip a milk top. Make a fist with your hand and have your thumb tucked in. Place bottle top on side of index finger and thumb. Flick your thumb out and see how far the top goes. Try this 10 times to see if you can make it go further. Be sure to position wrist so the cap flies away from body. To make the game more challenging try to flip the caps into a can.

Hole Punch Art

Using a 3” X 3” piece of paper and a hole punch a child is ready to create some art. Have the child draw a picture or a design on a piece of paper or imagine one in their minds. Use a hole punch to create or outline that picture. You can create letters or numbers this way. Or for holidays you can make hearts, pumpkins, or trees.

Paper Chains

These are always a great activity the children can do to help decorate for a party or for the Christmas tree. Give each child a piece of paper that’s 3 inches wide, on it draw a line every ½”. With “thumbs up” have the child cut along the lines. If the child is still struggling with scissors have them carefully tear along the lines. Then using some glue, glue both ends of the first strip together to make a circle. Loop the second strip through the first and then glue those ends together, so that the two circles are chained together. Keep going until all the strips are in a chain. Make sure while cutting the last two fingers are curled into the palm. If not, have the student hold a pom pom with the last two fingers.

3D Snowflakes

To make these 3D snowflakes you will need white paper, scissors, tape, glue and yarn. To make them you will need a template of strips about ¾” to 1” wide and have the child cut along the line to make the paper strips. If the child is still struggling with scissors provide assistance or you can let them carefully tear along the line. Roll each strip into circles, tape to secure. Make some circles big and some small. Glue your circles together to make your own unique snowflake. Make a bunch of these snowflakes and string them with yarn or twine, they make a great winter decoration for the home or classroom.



Q-Tip Flips

Using paint and Q-Tips its time to create. Hold the Q-Tip in the middle with a tripod grasp (thumb, index and middle fingers). Dip it in one colour paint. Using only the thumb, index and middle fingers, flip the

Q-Tip over and dip it in another colour paint. Now paint a picture, letter, or design with coloured dots, alternating between the two colours. Be sure the student is flipping the Q-Tip with fingers, not wrist. Keep checking to make sure the student is using a tripod grasp.

Straw Cut & String

Cut straws into inch-long pieces, using proper scissor grasp. Now it's time to string the straw pieces. Using two fingers to hold the straw pieces and the other hand to hold the string (or pipecleaner). Push the string through the straw. Continue pushing it through but never letting go, until the straw piece is at the end of the string. Make a bracelet by knotting the two ends together once the straw pieces have been strung.

Seedy Collage

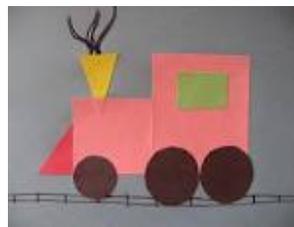
Using a large piece of green construction paper, glue, and several types of dried seeds and beans your child can create a seedy collage. Ask the children to squeeze out a long stripe of glue along the length of their paper. Have them spread the glue slightly, keeping the long thin shape, and sprinkle one type of seed along the glue strip. They should make two or three (or more) stripes of glue, adding different types of seeds to each. The finished collage should remind you of the rows of seeds planted in the garden.

Piggy Puppets

To make a piggy puppet each child will need one paper plate, pink constructions paper, paint, crayons, markers and glue. Have the children paint or colour their paper plates pink. Cut out a 3 inch circle (have children cut out following the line). Then cut that circle in half. This will be the ears. Also cut a two inch circle, this will be the nose. When the plate is dry (if you painted) glue on the ears and the nose. Then add the remaining facial features.

Cutting Shapes

Now that scissor skills are developing challenge the children to cut out shapes, circles, squares, triangles, etc. As always emphasize the importance of thumbs up with the cutting hand and manipulate the paper with the non-cutting hand. Go slow and follow the line. In order to have greater success have thicker lines to target and use sturdier paper until the children become skilled at cutting. Once the shapes are cut build something, an animal, a bug, a truck or a train!



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Month 6: Developing Functional Hand Skills School Age Activities

Snowflakes

A fun way for the children to help decorate the classroom for winter. Using a 8”X8” piece of paper (office paper works the best), and a pair of scissors every child can make their own unique snowflake. Instruct the child to fold one sheet of square paper in half, then in half again the other direction. Then instruct the child to fold the sheet again on the diagonal to make a triangle. Next have the child cut around the outside edges, with any desired designs. Make sure the child maintains the wrist in a “thumb-up” position while cutting. After the child has finished cutting, unfold the paper to reveal a snowflake. Finished snowflakes can be hung up around the room as decorations.

Beautiful Bugs

Everyone loves insects, especially ones you can create yourself! In order to make a bug the child will need 2-4 sheets of construction paper, markers, glue, hole punch, pipe cleaners or anything else to “decorate” their bugs. Have a template of an oval (a head and body together), or of two ovals of different sizes (one for a head and one for a body), and a template of strips of 1” the width of the construction paper for legs. Now making sure the child using a “thumbs up” pattern with the scissors have them cut out their desired number of legs and shape of body for their bug. Once everything is cut out have the child be creative with what their bug will look like, spots, glitter, eyes, etc. Then have them choose the number of legs their bug will have. For the legs instruct and demonstrate how to accordion fold the paper strips. Then using glue its time to assemble their bugs. Poking two holes in the bug’s back have the child lace a string through so they can hang them from the ceiling.

Picture Puzzles

Encourage the children to draw and colour pictures large enough to cover or fill most of their construction paper (or use a colouring page with a ready made picture for them to colour in). As each child finishes his picture, ask him to help you draw several lines and curves from edge to edge thus making a puzzle design. Let the children cut out their pieces following the line. Now the children can put the pieces together to remake their pictures.

Hand Manipulators Activities

Set up a spot in the classroom with an assortment of manipulatives to help develop the children’s fine motor skills.

1. Slide paper clips on a piece of cardstock.
2. Place plastic clothespins on an ice cream container.
3. Pin large safety pins into felt or material squares.
4. Place 12 pegs on a string tied between two chairs. Remove pegs using only one hand. Repeat with the other hand. How many pegs can you collect without dropping any?
5. Stack building blocks or similar objects one on top of each other. Create other ways of stacking blocks.
6. Use a pair of tweezers to pick up different objects and place in a container.

Match Castles

Child will need about 30 matches (CAUTION: Remove the heads of the matches.) Have child use preferred hand, to pick up one match at a time and lay carefully in a square pattern as shown. Build up the layers in this way. How high can you construct your castle before it collapses? Variation: use tweezers to pick up matches.

Beads in a Bottle

To complete this activity you will need 5 beads (about ½” diameter) and a small bottle such as a spice jar or hotel shampoo bottle. Have the child hold 5 beads in the palm of one hand (dominant hand). Hold the bottle in your other hand. Work one bead at a time from your palm to holding the bead with your thumb and first finger. Then drop the bead into the small bottle. Do this with all 5 beads. Try not to let any beads fall!

Coin & Water Drops

To start you will need some coins (quarters, nickels, or pennies), an eye dropper, water and paper towel. The goal of the activity is to see how many drops of water will a coin hold before the water run over the edge? Prepare the area by placing a paper towel on the table, and fill the eye dropper with water. Hold the coin with the fingertips of your other hand. Add drops of water, one at a time. Keep count of the drops until the water goes off the coin.

Dot to Dot

Using a Dot to Dot board (see attached sheet) and 2 different colour markers, two players can start the game of dot to dot. On the dot board the first player draws a line with one colour marker to connect two of the dots. The second player uses a different colour marker to connect two more of the dots. The object of the game is to complete a square, and to keep the other person from completing his square. When you finish a square, put a dot of your own colour or your initial in it. At the end, count up how many squares each person made.

Flippers

Using a plastic milk/juice container cap is all you need to get the game of Flippers started. The goal of the game is to see how far you can flip a milk top. Make a fist with your hand and have your thumb tucked in. Place bottle top on side of index finger and thumb. Flick your thumb out and see how far the top goes. Try this 10 times to see if you can make it go further. Be sure to position wrist so the cap flies away from body. To make the game more challenging try to flip the caps into a can.

Hole Punch Art

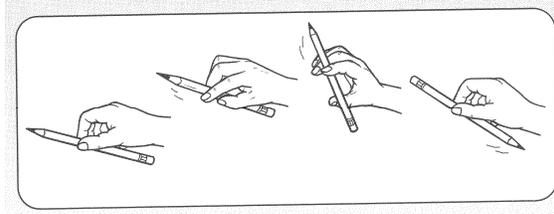
Using a 3” X 3” piece of paper and a hole punch a child is ready to create some art. Have the child draw a picture or a design on a piece of paper or imagine one in their minds. Use a hole punch to create or outline that picture. You can create letters or numbers this way. Or for holidays you can make hearts, pumpkins, or trees.

Paper Chains

These are always a great activity the children can do to help decorate for a party or for the Christmas tree. Give each child a piece of paper that’s 3 inches wide, on it draw a line every ½”. With “thumbs up” have the child cut along the lines. Then using some glue, glue both ends of the first strip together to make a circle. Loop the second strip through the first and then glue those ends together, so that the two circles are chained together. Keep going until all the strips are in a chain. Make sure while cutting the last two fingers are curled into the palm. If not, have the student hold a pom pom with the last two fingers.

Pencil Twirl

While the children are seated at their desks and ready to work on writing have them perform some pencil twirls to start. To make a pencil twirl start by holding a pencil in the hand you write with and try to turn it over and over with that hand only, using your thumb, index and middle fingers. First, make the pencil go in a clockwise direction. Then make it twirl in a counter-clockwise direction.



Merry Mice

Whether used as gift tags or just given as sweet presents all by themselves, these candy Christmas mice are sure to cause a stir.



To make a mouse you will need: red and green felt, scissors, glue, pom-poms, candy canes, googly eyes, and tape.

<p>Cut a 6-inch-long teardrop-shaped body from red felt. Near the centre, cut 2 parallel slits that are 1 inch long and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch apart.</p>	
<p>For a pair of ears, cut a 5-inch-long rounded bow-tie shape from green felt. This will be used to make the ears.</p>	
<p>To put the mouse together, fit the ears through the slits in the body. Glue on googly eyes and a pom-pom nose.</p>	
<p>Finally, add a curly tail by slipping a candy cane beneath the mouse and tucking the straight end between the body and the ears to hold it in place.</p>	

Paper Drops

These graceful paper shapes come together with two snaps of a stapler.



To make a paper drop you will need coloured construction paper, stapler and ribbon.

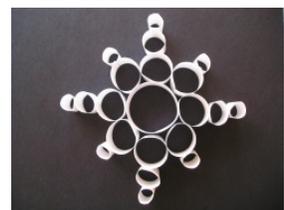
Ornament	Cut two 12-inch strips, two 10-inch strips, and one 8 ³ / ₄ - inch strip. Line them up in this order: 12, 10, 8 ³ / ₄ , 10, 12, with one set of ends even. Staple this end. Line up the other ends evenly (bending the outer strips as needed) and staple.
Heart	Cut two 12-inch strips and two 9 ¹ / ₂ inch strips. Line them up in this order: 9 ¹ / ₂ , 12, 12, 9 ¹ / ₂ , with one set of ends even. Staple this end. Now bend the unstapled ends into a heart shape, so a small heart lies inside a larger heart. Align the ends and staple together.
Teardrop	Cut two 12-inch strips, two 10 ¹ / ₂ inch strips, and one 9-inch strip. Line them up in this order: 12, 10 ¹ / ₂ , 9, 10 ¹ / ₂ , 12, with one set of ends even. Staple this end. Next, make a crease 1 inch from the unstapled ends of the 12 and 10 ¹ / ₂ inch strips. Finally, align the ends of all the strips and staple them together.

Use the completed shapes to dress up a window or spin in midair from a light fixture or a ribbon. To hang each, knot the end of the gold cord and place it between the loose strips of paper at the top. Staple it all together.

Remember to let each child cut the strips of paper. Just make a template so they have a line to cut along.

3D Snowflakes

To make these 3D snowflakes you will need white paper, scissors, tape, glue and yarn. To make them you will need a template of strips about ³/₄" to 1" wide and have the child cut along the line to make the paper strips. Roll each strip into circles, tape to secure. Make some circles big and some small. Glue your circles together to make your own unique snowflake. Make a bunch of these snowflakes and string them with yarn or twine, they make a great winter decoration for the home or classroom.



Foot Print Penguin

This Foot Print Penguin is so easy to make. Even though Penguins live in the snow all year round, we often associate them with winter time. To make a penguin you will need construction paper, pencil, scissors, glue, black marker and googly eyes.



<p>You will need to trace the child's foot print and have them cut it out. You will need 2 black and one white foot print. Tracing around a foot with the shoe on will make a better Penguin shape. You will also need to cut out two penguin feet.</p>	
<p>Glue your two black foot prints onto a piece of construction paper. You will need to over-lap them. Next glue on your penguin's feet, underneath the black body. Glue your white foot print over your black foot prints and your ready to draw on your penguin's face!</p>	

Cutting Shapes

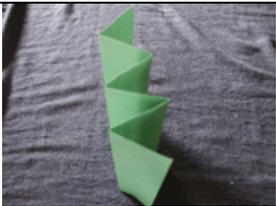
Now that scissor skills are developing challenge the children to cut out shapes, circles, squares, triangles, etc. As always emphasize the importance of thumbs up with the cutting hand and manipulate the paper with the non-cutting hand. Go slow and follow the line. In order to have greater success have thicker lines to target and use sturdier paper until the children become skilled at cutting. Once the shapes are cut build something, an animal, a bug, a truck or a train!



Concertina Shapes

(This is a great challenging craft, so in order to encourage success make sure students have refined scissor skills.)

To create a concertina shape each child will need paper, scissors, pencil, a stencil, cereal box card (or similar), and sticky putty. Before you start ensure that you have adequate paper for each child, plus some extra paper as they are bound to make mistakes or want to make more than one set of shapes in this cutting activity. Place the stencil patterns (shapes, people, trees, etc.) on card and trace around the edges to make a stencil. Each child or group of 4 children should have one stencil. You may need to pre-fold the paper for younger children.

<p>Using a sheet of paper, concertina fold the paper. Ensure that the panels are wide enough to fit the stencil and that all the folds are equal width. This is very important.</p>	
<p>Place the stencil on the fold of the paper with the straight edge of the pattern along the folded edges of the paper. Trace around the stencil. You can use the sticky putty to hold the stencil in place while tracing, if necessary.</p>	

Holding the paper securely, cut along the traced lines.	
Unfold the row of concertina shapes and decorate or colour them if desired.	

Here is an assortment of concertina shapes you can do. Remember if scissor skills are just developing keep the shapes simple.



Piggy Puppets

To make a piggy puppet each child will need one paper plate, pink constructions paper, paint, crayons, markers and glue. Have the children paint or colour their paper plates pink. Cut out a 3 inch circle (have children cut out following the line). Then cut that circle in half. This will be the ears. Also cut a two inch circle, this will be the nose. When the plate is dry (if you painted) glue on the ears and the nose. Then add the remaining facial features.

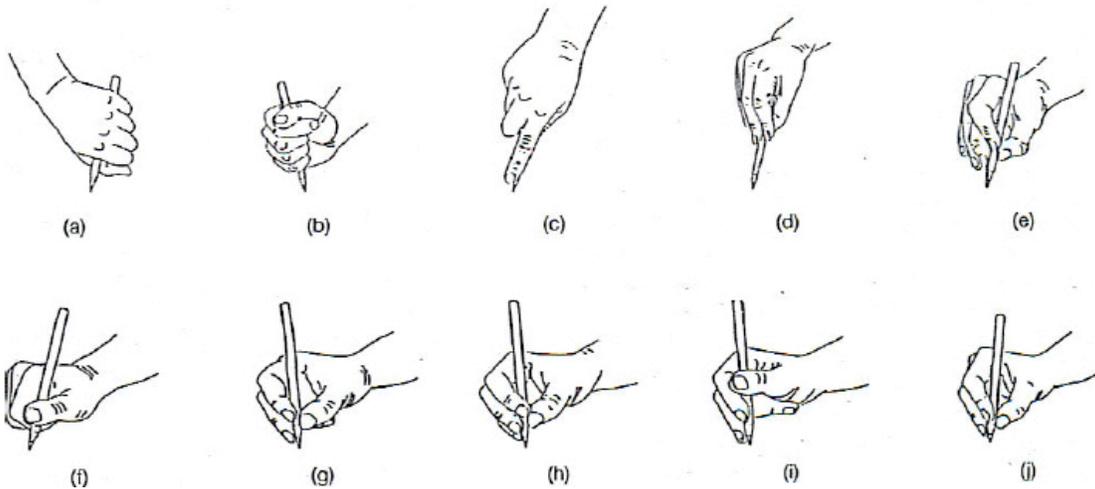
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Pencil Grasp

Children's pencil grasp typically follows a developmental progression, from least mature to most mature. Research has shown that changes in grasp can continue until the child is approximately 10.5 years of age. The following is a development of pencil grasp created by Schneck and Henderson.

- (a) radial cross palmar grasp
- (b) palmar supinate grasp
- (c) digital pronate grasp, only finger extended (*age child should use: 26 to 36 months*)
- (d) brush grasp
- (e) grasp with extended fingers
- (f) cross thumb grasp
- (g) static tripod grasp (*age child should use: 42 months*)
- (h) four fingers grasp
- (i) lateral tripod grasp
- (j) dynamic tripod grasp (*age child should use: 50 months*)



Pollock et al (2009).

It is important to note that although a child may not be using a tripod grasp, the grasp they are using may be just as functional and efficient.

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Printing

Pre-Printing Skills

- Before children can begin printing the letters of the alphabet, they must first master basic shapes, such as vertical and horizontal lines, circles, “X’s”, and squares. All letters are formed by these basic shapes.

Preparation for Printing

- Posture
 - o the child should be sitting with his feet flat on the floor, his knees bent, and back resting on the back of the chair
- Paper placement
 - o for *right hand dominant* children, the paper should be placed to the right and slanted with the left corner nearest to the edge of the table.
 - o for *left hand dominant* children, the paper should be placed to the left and slanted with the right corner nearest to the edge of the table
- Helping hand
 - o the child should be using their non-dominant hand to stabilize the paper on the table
- Pencil grasp (see handout on grasp)
- Paper
 - o limit the variability of paper used to print since this will confuse the child i.e. make sure workbook and activity worksheets are as similar as possible so the child learns where to print his letters and how big



Writing Instrument

- The type of writing instrument you provide for your children can work to facilitate appropriate grasp and printing skills or inhibit them
- When it comes to writing instruments, the *smaller the better!* Try using broken crayons, golf-sized pencils, or thin, short markers. Smaller writing instruments force the child to use their fingers to hold on and encourage an open web space.

Printing

- The adult should always demonstrate the correct model of the letter and then the child should imitate the letter.
- Consistent verbal and visual cues should always be used
- When teaching children the letters, try to avoid dot-to-dot letters; use tracing instead.

E F L

- Capital letters should be taught first. Why?
 - o they are all the same height
 - o they all start at the top
 - o they are easy to recognize and identify
 - o they are frequently used in the community i.e. STOP, H (hospital), EXIT
- Although it makes sense for adults to teach the letters in alphabetical order, it is developmentally easier for children to learn the letters by the strokes needed to form them
 - o L F E H T I (*horizontal and vertical lines*)
 - o U C O Q G S J D P B (*curves*)
 - o R K A V M N W X Y Z (*diagonal lines*)
- Lower case letters should also be taught in groups of similar strokes. Why?
 - o When a child learns a specific stroke, several letters can be mastered using that stroke
 - o The child builds on what he has previously learned

Please refer to the handouts provided in the binder

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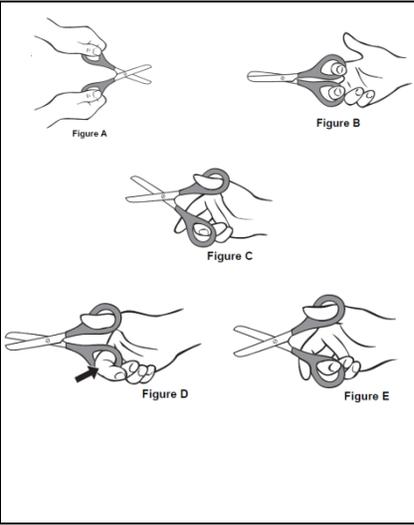
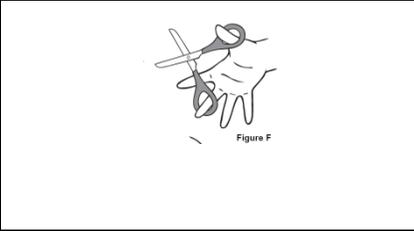
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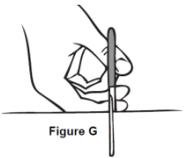
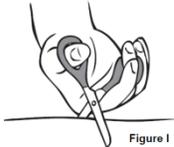
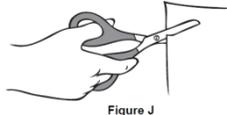
Scissor Skills

Pre-Requisite Skills

- ✂ Good sitting balance so they can use their arms and hands freely
- ✂ Strong wrist and hand muscles to open and close the scissors
- ✂ The ability to use his/her dominant hand to hold the scissors while the other turns the paper
- ✂ Good hand-eye coordination for cutting around shapes
- ✂ An ability to use the thumb, index and middle fingers while the other fingers remain fairly still
- ✂ Shoulder, forearm, and wrist stability

Development of Scissor Skills

STAGE 1: How to Hold Scissors (18-19 months)	
<p>Initially, many children try to manipulate scissors using both hands to open and close the blades (Figure A).</p> <p>Children will then attempt to place their fingers in the loops. Often children will place the index and middle fingers in the loops but not the thumb (Figure B).</p> <p>The most efficient grasp is the thumb in the top loop and middle finger in the bottom loop (or middle and ring fingers, depending on the size of the hole). Placing the index finger below the bottom loop provides stabilization and directional guidance (Figure C).</p> <p>If children do not have the necessary shoulder, forearm, and wrist stabilization, or if the scissors are too big for their hands, they will hold the scissors close to the knuckles of the hand rather than near the middle joints of the fingers (Figure D). Holding the scissors near the middle joint of the fingers provides better scissor control (Figure E).</p>	
STAGE 2: How to Open and Close Scissors (20-23 months)	
<p>Once children can hold the scissors correctly, they are ready to practice opening and shutting the scissors. At this point, children are not ready to use paper. Additional tools to practice opening and shutting include picking up items with tongs, using a small squirt gun or spray bottle, and using a small, hand-held hole punch.</p>	
STAGE 3: How to Snip Paper (23-29 months)	
<p>In this stage, children make random snips on paper. Cutting is not directional and there is no forward of the scissors. During this stage, children often open and shut the entire hand, which causes an exaggerated opening and closing of the scissors (Figure F).</p>	
STAGE 4: How to Snip Paper (30-35 months)	

<p>During this stage, children begin to push the scissors forward to cut across a piece of paper. To start, children often do well cutting a one inch strip of heavyweight paper (such as an index card). This allows the child to cut across the paper with one snip. Heavyweight paper provides additional stability, allowing the student to concentrate on manipulating the scissors rather than stabilizing the paper. As the child's ability progresses, increase the width of the paper.</p>	 <p>Figure G</p>
<p>STAGE 5: Cut on a Straight Line (36-41 months)</p>	
<p>In this stage, children begin to manipulate the direction of the scissors to stay on a line. Manipulation of the paper is still limited mainly to stabilization. Scissors cut most efficiently when held at 90 degrees to the paper (Figure G). This requires forearm stability, as children must hold their hand with the thumb up and their arm in mid-position between pronation (palms down) and supination (palms up) (Figure H). Children with decreased forearm stability often have a hard time keeping the scissors at 90 degrees to the paper which leads to the bending and tearing of the paper (Figure I).</p>	 <p>Figure H</p>  <p>Figure I</p>
<p>STAGE 6: Cut on a Curve Line (41-47 months)</p>	
<p>Children are now learning to turn and manipulate the paper as well as the scissors to stay on lines. During this stage, children often have better control opening and shutting the scissors, generally only opening the scissors half way which provides a smoother, less jagged and more controlled cut (See Figure J).</p>	 <p>Figure J</p>
<p>STAGE 7: Cut out Simple Shapes (42-47 months)</p>	
<p>The child cuts out simple shapes like circles and squares. Once children have mastered this stage, they are ready to cut various weights of paper and non-paper materials. Easiest to cut is heavy paper like index cards, then thinner paper such as copy paper, and lastly, non-paper materials.</p>	
<p>STAGE 8: Cut Complex Shapes and Figures (48-57 months)</p>	

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Functional Hand Skills Glossary

Copy: child makes the shape after looking at a picture of the shape

Imitate: child observes someone else make the shape before making it them self

Palmer grasp: the primitive ability to hold an object in the palm by wrapping fingers and thumb around it from one side

Pincer grip: the ability to hold objects between thumb and index finger

Web space: the space in between the child's writing instrument and the palm of their hand; their forefinger and thumb should form an oval

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